

CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVE WORLDS  
IN MIMETIC AND ANTI-MIMETIC FICTION:  
A CRITICAL READING OF POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY

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IN MIMETIC AND ANTI-MIMETIC FICTION:  
A CRITICAL READING OF POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY**

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## ABSTRACT

### CONSTRUCTION OF NARRATIVE WORLDS IN MIMETIC AND ANTI-MIMETIC FICTION: A CRITICAL READING OF POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY

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This study explores the construction of narrative worlds in mimetic and anti-mimetic fiction through a critical reading of Possible Worlds Theory. A canonical example of mimetic fiction, Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1850), is analyzed by means of the literary critical tools offered by the theory. The mimetic principle and the realist assumptions are at work in this novel and it is argued that this proves to be effective in examining the functioning of narrative worlds in the light of Possible Worlds Theory. However, the same theoretical tools fall short while investigating two typical examples of anti-mimetic fiction, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767), a metafictional novel, and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), a historiographic metafictional novel. Anti-mimetic practices such as self-reflexivity and narratorial interruptions result in a counteractive movement between the narrative worlds in Sterne's novel and this requires a revision in the theory, which originally depends on mimetic genres. Similarly, Rushdie's novel, with its political agenda of reclaiming history together with its metafictional features, cannot be thoroughly analyzed through the original version of the theory; and, therefore, another revision is

needed so as to accommodate the anti-mimetic practices of the novel. In this respect, this study tests and revises Possible Worlds Theory in such a way that it comes to be an effective means of analysis for both mimetic and anti-mimetic fictional genres.

**Keywords:** Possible Worlds Theory, mimetic fiction, anti-mimetic fiction, narrative worlds

## ÖZ

### MİMETİK VE ANTİ-MİMETİK ROMANDA ANLATI DÜNYALARI KURULUMU: MÜMKÜN DÜNYALAR KURAMI’NIN ELEŞTİREL BİR OKUMASI

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Bu çalışma, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı’nın eleştirel bir okuması yoluyla mimetik ve anti-mimetik roman türlerinde anlatı dünyaları kurulumunu inceler. Mimetik kurgunun önemli bir örneği olan Charles Dickens’ın *David Copperfield* romanı (1850), söz konusu kuramın sunduğu edebi eleştirel araçlar aracılığıyla çözümlenir. Bu roman mimetik ilke ve gerçekçi varsayımlar üzerine kurulu olduğu için romandaki anlatı dünyalarının işleyişini Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı ışığında etkili bir şekilde inceleyebiliriz. Bununla birlikte, aynı kuramsal araçlar, anti-mimetik kurgunun iki tipik örneğini, Laurence Sterne’nin üstkurmaca romanı *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) ve Salman Rushdie’nin tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca romanı *Geceyarısı Çocukları* (1981)’ni incelerken yetersiz kalmaktadır. Özdeşünümsellik ve anlatıcı müdahaleleri gibi anti-mimetik uygulamalar, Sterne’nin romanındaki anlatı dünyaları arasında karşıt bir hareketle sonuçlanır ve bu, orijinalinde mimetik türlere dayanan Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı’nda bir revizyon gerektirir. Benzer şekilde, Rushdie’nin romanı, üstkurmaca özellikleriyle birlikte tarihin yeniden yazılmasına yönelik siyasi gündemi ile kuramın orijinal versiyonu üzerinden kapsamlı bir şekilde analiz edilemez



ve bu nedenle romanın anti-mimetik uygulamalarına uyum sağlamak için başka bir revizyona daha ihtiyaç duyulur. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma Mümkmn Dnyalar Kuramı'nın hem mimetik hem de anti-mimetik kurgu türleri için ne derece etkili bir çözümleme aracı olduğunu test etmekte ve daha kapsayıcı olabilmesi için kuramsal öneriler sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mümkmn Dnyalar Kuramı, mimetik roman, anti-mimetik roman, anlatı dünyaları

*To the men of my life: to Nesim, unquestionably the most patient man on earth;  
and to my big boy Enes, who is exactly at the same age as this thesis*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to test and question Possible Worlds Theory and its ontological implications in literary texts in the light of some selected mimetic and anti-mimetic fiction. To this end, Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1850), Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) will be employed. Dickens' novel has been chosen for this study since it is a typical example of mimetic fiction. Sterne's and Rushdie's novels have been selected as representatives of anti-mimetic fiction from the historical periods that precede and follow, respectively, the era to which Dickens' novel belongs. All these novels involve narrator-characters looking back at and narrating the past, which paves the way for an analysis of narrative worlds constructed through retrospective narration. This analysis of narrative worlds will be carried out paying particular attention to the application of Possible Worlds Theory in literary studies with an aim to explore how and to what extent it functions efficiently as a theoretical framework in the case of these three novels in particular and in mimetic and anti-mimetic fiction in general.

Since the thesis will study *David Copperfield* as an example of mimetic fiction and *Tristram Shandy* and *Midnight's Children* as examples of anti-mimetic fiction, it is useful, at this point, to clarify the categorical distinction between these two terms. Mimetic fiction, in this thesis, refers to "those works of fiction that model themselves on or substantially resemble nonfictional works" in terms of representation and "that systematically attempt to depict the world of our experience in a recognizable manner"; which is "the traditional goal of works that strive for realism or verisimilitude" (Richardson, 2015, p. 3). In a similar vein, mimetic fiction corresponds to the traditional notion of realist novel which takes for granted the reader's linguistic competence in determining the order of phenomenal reality in the fictional universe; this type of fiction represents the fictional universe as a copy of the experiential reality

(Trebicki, 2014, p. 485). Anti-mimetic fiction, on the other hand, refers to works of fiction containing events, characters, settings, or frames that “contravene the presuppositions of nonfictional narrative [representation], violate mimetic expectations and the practices of realism, and defy the conventions of existing, established genres” (Richardson, 2015, p. 3). In this respect, anti-mimetic fiction takes for granted, similarly, the readers’ linguistic competence in determining the order of phenomenal reality but endows the fictional universe with magical or supernatural elements and creates a different model of the experiential reality (Trebicki, 2014, p. 385). Richardson further explores anti-mimetic fiction with his categorical differentiation between the terms “anti-mimetic” and “non-mimetic”. He contends that an anti-mimetic text is anti-realist, defying the conventions of mimetic or realist representation; while a non-mimetic text is non-realist, such as a fairy tale, and “employs a consistent, parallel storyworld and follows established conventions, or in some cases, merely adds supernatural components to its otherwise mimetic depiction of the actual world” (2015, p. 4). The term “anti-mimetic fiction”, instead of “non-mimetic fiction”, will be employed to refer to the metafictional novels analyzed in this thesis since anti-mimetic practices go beyond non-mimetic practices as they violate rather than simply extend the conventions of mimesis. Consequently, in this thesis, *David Copperfield* will be examined as an example of mimetic fiction since it is a canonical realist novel, which is the main category of the mimetic tradition in fiction. *Tristram Shandy* and *Midnight’s Children* will be studied as examples of anti-mimetic fiction since they are both metafictional novels, which defy actual reality and self-reflexively foreground their fictionality.

This thesis argues that Possible Worlds Theory is compatible with the mimetic referential conventions of realist fiction. However, when employed as a framework for the analysis of anti-mimetic texts such as *Tristram Shandy* and *Midnight’s Children*, it fails to function specifically with regard to points identified below. Marie-Laure Ryan’s (1985, 1991, 2001, 2005, 2014, 2016, 2019) and David Herman’s (2009, 2013) arguments have contributed immensely to the formulation of this claim of the study. Ryan draws on ideas from analytic philosophy and modal logic to argue that narrative universes are recognizable because of a shared modal structure which consists of a

central world that counts as an actual world and various satellite worlds that can be accessed through counterfactual constructions voiced by a narrator or by the characters, and also through what the characters think, dream, read, narrate etc. At this point, Herman remarks that not every narrative faithfully exemplifies this structure; indeed, the basic postulation of anti-mimesis is its refusal to stick to ontological boundaries and hierarchies. The ontological subversiveness, here, can be examined in order to show how such texts deviate from the default template for world-constructing. Analyzing a mimetic and two anti-mimetic works of fiction, this study will problematize Possible Worlds Theory in terms of the following three points:

1. Possible Worlds Theory, as applied in literary studies, creates a modal stratification in the narrative universe of a literary text. This depends on a binary logic and results in constructing clear-cut boundaries, such as the strict demarcation of the “textual actual world” and “satellite relative worlds” that we see in Ryan’s arguments. This logic works perfectly well for the narrative worlds of mimetic fiction, but runs contrary to those of anti-mimetic fiction, which goes against all kinds of binarisms and boundaries. In designating the structure of a narrative universe, Ryan sees the actual world as an unproblematic, stable and ontologically distinguished reference world. This is essential for the mimetic, realist fiction. Both the actual world of reality and the actual world of the text are stable and distinguished in mimetic fiction. Anti-mimetic fiction, however, problematizes this hierarchical approach. It opens up room for a new system of actuality and possibilities in which all kinds of ontological demarcation or categorization are challenged.
2. Possible Worlds Theory, as applied in literary studies, does not problematize the authority and control of the author or the narrator over the narrative worlds created in literary texts. The author and the narrator are considered to be the source and center of coherence in a narrative universe. This theoretical assumption may hold true for some examples of mimetic fiction which do not render problematic the notion of authorial and/or narratorial authority, but it definitely does not work in relation to anti-mimetic fiction, which challenges

the notions of authority, center, and coherence regarding the author and the narrator.

3. The notion of (anti)mimesis is an important factor for categorizing the worlds and explicating the universes in Possible Worlds Theory. In this respect, violating the Aristotelian principle of “the excluded middle” differentiates anti-mimetic fiction from mimetic fiction. The principle of the excluded middle is binary valued; in other words, it excludes any middle ground between truth and falsity and it dismisses any kind of impossibilities, inconsistencies, ambiguities in the ontological domain of fiction. It is clear that mimetic fiction, with its claim to imitate reality, respects this principle, while anti-mimetic fiction contravenes it by creating a different model of reality. Thus, the philosophical principle of the excluded middle is compatible with mimetic fiction, but it is conflicted with anti-mimetic fiction.

Consequently, Possible Worlds Theory offers an account of narrative worlds that are strictly demarcated and determinedly constellated in a narrative universe. Designation of a textual actual world at the center of the narrative universe and its relative worlds dependent on or related to the actual one results in a strict formulation which easily and effectively applies to the analysis of mimetic texts, but whose validity is questioned and problematized in the analysis of anti-mimetic texts. In this respect, Possible Worlds Theory provides an efficient critical framework to analyze mimetic fiction but needs to be revised and extended in order to be valid for anti-mimetic fiction as well. Chapters Three, Four, and Five include originally-designed diagrams that display the revisions that this study proposes. The diagrams are drawn with respect to the literary application of Possible Worlds Theory and illustrate the suggestions regarding how it may be modified and customized while analyzing different fictional subgenres.

Possible Worlds Theory has been the focus of many philosophical and logic-ontological debates and literary criticism has made use of its terminology to set a framework that investigates the narrative domains of literary texts. There is an ample amount of theoretical research on the adaptation of Possible Worlds Theory into literary criticism, which will be discussed in Chapter Two in detail. The following

survey presents a brief review of milestones in possible-worlds-based approaches to literature and narrative.

Possible Worlds Theory made its entry into literary criticism in the mid-seventies. The first scholar to pay attention to the philosophical concept of possible worlds and to adapt it to literary studies was Thomas Pavel in his 1975 article "Possible Worlds in Literary Semantics," which was later expanded in his 1986 book *Fictional Worlds*. In this article, Pavel claims that in constructing a fictional world, the literary text imposes its own laws on this world and frames a new set of possibilities. Consequently, the reader must adopt a new ontological perspective to decide what exists and what does not. In this respect, Pavel anticipates the cognitive turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and indirectly validates its compatibility with Possible Worlds Theory. The next milestone is David Lewis' 1978 article "Truth in Fiction." According to Lewis, the construction of fictional worlds must exceed the propositions explicitly asserted by the text and their strict logical implications so as to stimulate the imagination. He differentiates fictions from counterfactuals with the claim that the former are told as true of a possible world, but the latter make statements about the actual world. By allowing fictions to be comparable with counterfactuals, he makes room for numerous ways to imagine and interpret fictional worlds. The work of Lubomir Dolezel, starting in 1976 as a series of articles that led to his 1998 book *Heterocosmica*, adopts the concept of possible worlds delicately in order to maintain a distinction between the ontological completeness of possible worlds as postulated by logicians and the incompleteness of fictional worlds. Dolezel claims that it is impossible to imagine a world in all its properties and thus fictional texts present areas of indeterminacy. The play between blank and filled areas or specified and unspecified information gets to be a significant part of literary meaning.

In 1977, Lucia Vaina published a short article, "Les Mondes possibles du texte," which had a strong influence on the work of Umberto Eco and later of Marie-Laure Ryan. This short but condensed paper remains on a highly abstract level and describes fictional worlds as complete states of affairs, and narratives as successions of such states mediated by events. Making use of this concept of possible worlds in *The Role of the Reader* (1979), Eco regards narrative texts not as representations of a

single world, but as universes made of a constellation of possible worlds. A literary text, he claims, operates through a production of possible worlds. In this process, he distinguishes the world imagined by the author, which corresponds to all the states of the fabula; the worlds imagined, believed, wished by the characters; and the possible worlds imagined, believed, or wished by the reader. Marie-Laure Ryan's 1991 book *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory* develops several issues related to the concept of possible worlds as theorized in literary criticism. Ryan turns Lewis' counterfactual analysis of truth in fiction into what she calls the "principle of minimal departure" through a proposal of accessibility relations between the actual world in which the reader is situated and the fictional worlds evoked in a literary text. She also develops Eco's narrative semantics into a comprehensive model of narrative universes, which necessarily includes a textual actual world and alternative possible worlds. Ruth Ronen's 1994 book *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* also offers a useful and sophisticated survey of the philosophical notion of possible worlds and investigates the use of the term in literary criticism. She first touches upon the philosophical sources of thinking about possible worlds, then examines the process of transferring possible worlds to the literary domain and how the concept becomes a metaphor for literary analysis.

In its original formulation, Possible Worlds Theory is meant to be a valid tool of analysis for literary texts without any specific reference to any genres, subgenres, or modes of representation. However, as the analytical chapters of this thesis aim to illustrate, this is not the case. Whereas it functions as an efficient device for the analysis of mimetic fiction, it needs to be reworked so that it can entail the divergent ontological features of anti-mimetic fiction. In this respect, there is not any other study which investigates the validity of Possible Worlds Theory with regard to the notion of (anti)mimesis in fiction or which brings together examples of mimetic and anti-mimetic fiction as is done in this thesis to test the theory. Indeed, the number of critical studies exploring the question of to what extent the theory lends itself well to the analysis of literary narratives is also small.

George Shamshayooadeh's dissertation titled "An Examination of the Key Features of Salman Rushdie's Historiographic Metafiction: A Possible Worlds Theory

Approach” (2018) is one of these studies. Shamshayooadeh explores Rushdie’s historiographic metafictional works, *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame*, through a multifaceted approach that goes beyond the apparent magical realist and politico-historical concerns. Shamshayooadeh believes that Rushdie’s fiction exhibits features such as “spatialization” and “metanarration” that are intricately intertwined with the magical realist elements in that they create politically loaded and self-conscious “possible” histories. This, for Shamshayooadeh, aims at critiquing the actual social, political, and historical trajectory of the Indian subcontinent. He proposes Dolezel’s arguments on Possible Worlds Theory to analyze the magical-realist reconstruction of the politico-historical trajectory of India-Pakistan’s postcolonial history. This theory, Shamshayooadeh asserts, is functional to analyze *Midnight’s Children* and *Shame* in terms of their “spatialization” and “metanarration” features, which distinguish Rushdie’s works from other magical realist works. Since the works of historiographic metafiction are compound in their representation of multiple worlds in the narrative text at differing levels of distance from the empirical actual world, Shamshayooadeh acknowledges the Possible Worlds Theory as the apt framework for the analysis of such fictional worlds and universes. That is why, he endeavors to propose a multifaceted approach informed by Dolezel’s possible worlds theory account, which analyzes the “magical realism”, “spatialization” and “meta-narration” components in Rushdie’s historiographic metafiction through the multidimensional possible worlds/histories that are constructed with the insertion of narratorial comments and episodic interventions. Shamshayooadeh’s dissertation employs the same theory with this thesis, though from a different perspective. He takes Dolezel’s arguments, which basically underline the modalities in the construction of fictional worlds in literary texts, as a possible worlds approach; whereas this study makes use of Ryan’s possible worlds related arguments delving into the ontological sphere of the literary texts for world-construction. Other than that, Shamshayooadeh’s research is limited in generic terms as it only examines two examples of historiographic metafiction; while this study gives room to both mimetic and anti-mimetic practices in fiction by analyzing three novels employing different modes of representation. However, the major difference between the two dissertations is that while Shamshayooadeh’s study employs Possible

Worlds Theory to analyze works of fiction belonging to the same subgenre, this study aims at looking at the theory in the light of works of fiction signaling different modes of representation, with the ultimate purpose of contributing to the theory and expanding its limits.

Another book-length study, Raghunath's *Possible Worlds Theory and Counterfactual Historical Fiction* (2020), provides a comprehensive theoretical framework informed by possible worlds discourse to analyze counterfactual historical fiction. Raghunath explains counterfactual historical fiction as a literary genre which counts profoundly on pre-existing knowledge about history and which includes narratives set in worlds offering contrary histories to the actual history, usually answering questions such as what would have happened if an historical event had taken place in a different way. The author formulates a critical approach based on Possible Worlds Theory and supplements it with cognitive concepts that help to explain the different processes the readers experience while reading counterfactual historical fiction. Raghunath chooses three World War II novels, Robert Harris' *Fatherland*, John William Wall's *The Sound of his Horn*, and Stephen Fry's *Making History*, on which to apply her customized possible worlds approach. In her analysis of *Fatherland*, she stresses the importance of the images and quotations employed in the textual actual world for defining the ontological domain of the novel's narrative universe through a reader focused approach. For *The Sound of his Horn*, Raghunath examines two textual actual worlds, the first one being the world accommodating the protagonist, the second one offering a counterfactual dystopian world to which the protagonist travel. The author lays bare the relation between the two actual worlds of the text by touching upon the unreliable narration of the protagonist and its effects on the ontological status of the novel's narrative universe. As for *Making History*, Raghunath focuses on contradictory chapters and statements included in the text. She claims that the contradictions facilitate the links between the worlds of the narrative universe through her customized possible worlds approach enriched with cognitive narrative terminology. Raghunath's book presents a detailed systematic study of Possible Worlds Theory, aiming to seek answers to the questions of how it can be revised to be adapted to a specific literary genre, and how three



contextually similar literary texts can yield to a rich analysis by means of a customized possible worlds theory approach. Like Raghunath's study, this thesis also proposes suggestions for revising Possible Worlds Theory to be applied to selected examples of fiction. However, there is a significant difference between the two studies in terms of the functioning of the theory. Whereas Raghunath comprises ontological concerns and cognitive narrative practices in her adaptation of the Possible Worlds Theory, this study only sticks to ontological parameters and presents deeper investigation of the ontological domains of the selected novels. Furthermore, this study intends to make a contribution to the theory through the analyses of different modes of representation by means of three novels belonging to different eras and tries to reach more comprehensive conclusions.

The few studies which make use of Possible Worlds Theory in the analysis of literary texts offer valuable insights for possible-worlds-based narrative research. The aim of this thesis is to build on that work by examining epitomic examples of mimetic and anti-mimetic fiction through a revised model of the theory. Accordingly, the following section, Chapter Two, presents a theoretical framework for Possible Worlds Theory. It explains how the philosophical concept of "possible worlds", as a logic-ontological term, is borrowed by literary criticism; what the term "world" means in fictional contexts; and, how the fictional worlds are "constructed". It also delves into key concepts related to the adaptation of the theory in literary criticism such as "narrative world", "narrative universe", "minimal departure", and "fictional recentering" so as to prepare a background for the succeeding analytical chapters.

Chapter Three examines the construction of narrative worlds in mimetic fiction focusing on Charles Dickens' novel, *David Copperfield*. The narrator of this novel looks back at his past and tells his life story chronologically through retrospective narration. In this way, a narrative universe encompassing two sets of hierarchically demarcated narrative worlds is constructed and the narrator gains a split positioning as a narrating and a narrated self. This structure is enhanced by the mimetic representation and the realistic content of the novel. Consequently, the analysis suggests that Possible Worlds Theory functions smoothly in the analysis of mimetic fiction in general. The remaining analytical chapters provide analyses of two examples of anti-mimetic

fiction, metafiction and historiographic metafiction respectively, which entail suggestions for revising Possible Worlds Theory since, as will be discussed in detail, it falls short for the dynamic characteristics of anti-mimetic fiction.

Chapter Four focuses on Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as an example of metafictional text in which the narrator tells his life story together with his reflections, observations, and stories related to other characters, in a non-linear fashion. This narration results in the construction of a narrative universe comprising two sets of narrative worlds and a split positioning for the narrator, as in *David Copperfield*. However, the anti-mimetic practices at work do not allow a hierarchical structure between the narrative worlds of the novel because they interact and counteract with each other incessantly. As a result, a revision of the Possible Worlds Theory, which highlights the anti-mimetically complicated relations between the narrative worlds and narrator selves, is proposed in this chapter.

Chapter Five concentrates on a historiographic metafictional text, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. This novel is also retrospectively narrated by a narrator whose life story, along with stories related to many other characters, is presented. Two hierarchically set narrative worlds constitute the narrative universe of the novel and the narrator acquires a split positioning in the process. This is quite similar to the narrative structure of *David Copperfield*. However, while Dickens' narrator is autonomous in his teleological tale and completes his journey at the end of the novel, Rushdie's narrator is prone to digressions and can only reach the end, as a fragmented self, with the motivation of a narratee. In this sense, a revision for Possible Worlds Theory is projected in this chapter as well, since in its original formulation, the theory does not pay attention to such a deviant mimetic, or anti-mimetic practice in fiction. The final chapter of this study aims to conclude the theoretical and analytical discussions and revisions and underlines the major argument that Possible Worlds Theory works efficiently in relation to mimetic fiction but needs to be revised so as to accommodate the deviant ontological characteristics of anti-mimetic fiction as well.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **A CRITICAL REVISITING OF POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY**

This chapter will provide a framework of Possible Worlds Theory in order to form a solid background for the analyses of mimetic and anti-mimetic fiction in the upcoming chapters. The concept of possible worlds, which was initially introduced in philosophical logic and has lately expanded into interdisciplinary areas of research, will be explored in detail in terms of the structures and contexts it provides for the study of literary texts. Since Possible Worlds Theory is considered to be a useful device in literary theory to describe the concept of fictional worlds, the notion of fictionality is studied in an interdisciplinary manner by means of this theory. For literary studies, fictionality is a characteristic feature of literary texts and thus it is a basic concern; and it also becomes an interest to philosophers and logicians as fictional texts construct a reality specific to themselves, which challenges the main premises of philosophical logic.

#### **2.1. Possible Worlds Theory and its Application in Literary Studies**

Until the 1970s, fictionality was thought to be a concept of separate disciplinary research: it was understood as “a property of texts” by literary scholars and “either excluded as logical abnormality or entirely ignored” by philosophers (Ronen, 1994, p. 1). Fictionality was regarded as an intra-textual property of literary works. However, in recent years, literary theorists have made significant attempts for exceeding the boundaries of literary texts in order to explore the notion of fictionality from within a larger framework. In line with these developments, philosophical logic produced analytical devices to bring new perspectives to fictionality. Thus, philosophy and literary studies began to cooperate for examining the concept of fictionality, bringing about an interdisciplinary approach to this notion. According to this approach, fictionality is not an inner organization of literary texts; being fictional signifies “the

relations between a world and what lies beyond its boundaries” (Ronen, 1994, p. 1). In this interdisciplinary approach, philosophical and literary discourses act together in order to account for ontological questions, the distinction between the fictional and the non-fictional, and the problems of mimesis and anti-mimesis with regard to literary texts.

Some researchers in the field of literary studies, motivated by philosophical logic, have adopted a pragmatic position on the concept of fictionality. Rather than regarding fictionality as an immanent intra-textual property of literary texts, this position offers a pragmatic definition of fictionality which highlights non-immanent and contextual features. According to Ruth Ronen, possible worlds as a philosophical concept is employed in literary research for this purpose in a number of ways:

- (1) Possible worlds legitimize an interest in referential problems and in everything that concerns the relations between literature and the actual world.
- (2) Possible worlds supply, for the first time, a philosophical framework for explaining fiction, thereby turning fiction into a legitimate topic of philosophical discussion.
- (3) The framework of possible worlds attests to the fact that fiction is not an extraordinary phenomenon. It is one among other categories of cultural products that present non-actual states of affairs through language.
- (4) Possible worlds offer a way of escaping hermeticist claims about the literary text and the intra-systemic tendency of literary studies. (1994, pp. 20-21)

Possible Worlds Theory, then, holds significance for literary studies since it provides a legitimate framework for explaining the representational concerns between literature and reality, becomes a solid means of philosophical discussion for literary texts, proves literature to be a cultural product constructed through language; and transgresses the boundaries of the interior realm of critical analysis.

### **2.1.1. The Relation between Possible Worlds in Philosophy and Worlds in Literary Studies**

The main premise of the philosophical concept of possible worlds is the belief that things may have been different than they are in their current situation and there may be alternative progressions they might have taken. To put it in David Lewis’ words, “things might be otherwise than they are” (as cited in Loux, 1979, p. 182).

Possible worlds produce a composite model that paves the way for possible modes of existence. The concept ascribes a semantic explanation and a concrete ontology to the modalities of necessity and possibility. According to this, counterfactual propositions must be regarded as propositions about non-actual states of affairs and about alternative courses, which are taken as related or parallel worlds. Possible worlds thus “turn abstract logical categories into concrete sets and states of affairs” and “tie an exotic piece of metaphysical machinery to the subject matter of modal logic” (Loux, 1979, p. 30). The actuality of possible worlds is a much debated philosophical issue and it is related to the extent to which one commits himself/herself to an alternative existence through a counterfactual or modal discourse. This debated issue may be clarified by referring to distinct versions of possible worlds models, which are directly correlated to the degree of realism to be attributed to possible worlds. In this respect, three basic models on the validity of possible states of affairs and the facticity of the alternative possible worlds come to the fore:

The model of “modal realism” presents a radical view on the degree of realism ascribed to possible worlds. It claims that the actual world and all the possible modalities are equally actualised in some logical spatial platform in which they acquire a material existence. The major proponent of this model is Lewis who, in *Counterfactuals* (1973), claims that “the actual” does not stand for the world we inhabit or to any conception of reality; it is an indexical notion whose reference changes in relation to the speaker. Lewis explains the indexicality of the actual world as such: “Our actual world is only one world among others. We call it alone actual not because it differs in kind from all the rest but because it is the world we inhabit” (1973, p. 85). Since the actual is indexical, it is founded on the conditions of utterance for its reference in order to specify the world where the utterance is located. All possible worlds are actualised from the perspective of their inhabitants; that is, the inhabitants of all possible worlds may consider their own world as actual. This implies that no world is privileged ontologically in the model of modal realism. Ronen comments on this implication and says “possible worlds are parallel worlds, autonomous foreign countries with their own laws and with an actuality of their own” (1994, p. 22).

The second model on the validity and actuality of possible worlds is commonly termed as “moderate realism”. This model is also known as “actualism” which posits that possible worlds essentially exist within the limits of the actual world and are regarded as elements of the actual world. The actual world has a complex structure which includes both its actual elements, the way things are, and non-actual possibilities, the ways things might have been. Supporters of this model, like Saul Kripke, believe that possible worlds are the consequences of a rational behavior of mind. As opposed to the modal realists, they claim that possible worlds are abstract entities, hypothetical situations; they are not real parallel worlds (Kripke, 1972, pp. 15-16). The non-actual possibilities are the components of actuality since “a rationalist cannot believe that possibilities are literally there in a space causally disconnected from our world” (Ronen, 1994, p. 22). In this way, the moderate realists reject assumptions about what happens in worlds disconnected to our own and locate possibilities in the actual world.

The third model on the mode of existence of possible worlds is known as “anti-realism” as it adopts an anti-realist perspective. In this approach, possible worlds are deprived of any kind of ontological power and any question of being and existence cannot be associated with them. All possible states of affairs are absolutely denied any kind of actuality. The most commonly accepted rationale behind this rejection is that to believe in the existence of possible worlds brings along a belief in the existence, or at least the accessibility, of an actual world. Possible worlds are rejected because there is “no way to qualify the reality of the actual or the real in relation to which other worlds present a variety of alternate possibilities” (Ronen, 1994, p. 23). Contrary to Lewis, the proponent of modal realism, who ascribes material existence to all worlds, Nelson Goodman (1978, pp. 95-96), a supporter of anti-realism, attributes existence and actuality to none of them. Lewis’ modal realism accepts all worlds as equally real and concrete; in contrast, Goodman’s anti-realism regards all worlds as merely contingent versions.

Despite the varied interpretations regarding the concept of possible worlds in philosophy, it is a commonly accepted feature of possible worlds that possibility is tied to the logic and probabilities of one world. In other words, although philosophers

question the facticity of possible worlds and attribute different degrees of realism to possible worlds, they generally adopt the belief that there must be one reference world, the state of affairs being actualized, in relation to which alternative states of affairs as possible worlds can be defined. From a philosophical perspective, different actual and possible states constitute a single world within a logical space: “the different possible worlds we talk about are usually all this single world under the different aspects of the ways it might be or have been” (Sanford, 1989, p. 162). The assumption that the plurality of worlds occurs within one single world is directly related to the understanding of possible worlds as abstract logical constructs. In other words, philosophers employ the notion of possible worlds so as to depict the world as a “complex modal structure, consisting of subsystems of worlds of various degrees of possibility (accessibility) relative to the world actually obtaining” (Ronen, 1994, p. 25). The use of the concept of possible worlds in literary studies necessarily requires a deviation from the original multiplicity of meanings that defined possible worlds in philosophy. Literary theorists draw on possible worlds because the concept of possibility allows them to scrutinize “the accessibility relations between fictional worlds and reality” (Ronen, 1994, p. 25). In other words, literary theorists interpret the philosophical notion of accessibility as a specific kind of possibility relations between fiction and reality. In this way, the concept of possible worlds is used as a means to examine the distance between works of fiction and the real world.

Possible worlds are not regarded as independent, autonomous worlds by most of the philosophers. For Kripke, it would be a misuse to see possible worlds as “distant planets” (1972, p. 15) since possibility is defined in relation to an abstract set which is actualized. Even Goodman, with his anti-realist perspective, claims that possible worlds do not invade the boundaries of the actual world as all of them are true descriptions of actuality and that all possibilities are placed within the confines of one world: “all possible worlds lie within the actual one” (1983, p. 57). Literary theorists, who make use of the concept of possible worlds so as to define the position and construction of fictional worlds, separate the concept of possibility from any abstract idea of relative probability of occurrence as initially articulated in possible worlds discourse. Literary worlds are seen as possible “not in the sense that they can be viewed

as possible alternatives to the actual state of affairs, but in the sense that they actualize a world which is analogous with, derivative of, or contradictory to the world we live in” (Ronen, 1994, p. 50). Generally speaking, literary theorists find similarity between possible worlds and fictional worlds since both include constellations of states of affairs which are non-actualized in the world. Yet, it is clear that possible worlds are indeed “non-actualized but actualizable”, while fictional worlds are “non-actualized in the world but also nonactualizable” as they belong to a different domain of possibility (Ronen, 1994, p. 51). Consequently, it would be appropriate to claim that fictional worlds are not constituted by non-actualized possible states of affairs but by fictional states of affairs that are actualized and actualizable in that fictional world in accordance with the different ontological sphere to which fiction belongs. The fictional events do not occur in the world and are not essentially possible in relation to the world; but they occur in the fictional world within its specific ontological structure.

The status of the fictional world in relation to the world being actualized necessitates a different explanation from what philosophy offers for the discussions about the possibility of worlds. Literary scholars who employ the logical concept of possible worlds seem to believe that this concept may serve to solve the problematic position of the fictional world in relation to the actual world. But it is necessary to acknowledge that fictional worlds are deviant from possible worlds because “fiction assumes a different logic (of incompleteness, of inconsistency) or because fiction actualizes in fiction specific states of affairs that do not remain in the state of virtual occurrences (which would distinguish it from worlds of belief, desire and the like)” (Ronen, 1994, p. 52). In this respect, a fictional world is regarded as a possible world which possesses an ontological independence unique to itself and not available to other possibilities. Fictional worlds constitute an autonomous modal system, and that is why, they are less directly connected to the actual world than possible worlds.

The parallelism between possible worlds and fictional worlds is not only related to the concept of possibility but also the notions of actuality and necessity. In philosophical logic, necessity refers to “a state of affairs obtaining in all worlds”, whereas possibility refers to “a state of affairs obtaining in at least one possible world” (Ronen, 1994, pp. 52-53). The concepts of necessity and possibility in terms of the



possible worlds discourse are re-evaluated in literary theory. “Propositions about the real world fall under the modality of necessity. Propositions in fiction, by contrast, are governed by the modality of possibility; they require, in short, suspension of belief as well as of disbelief” (McHale, 1987, p. 33). In other words, theorists of fiction correlate necessity and actuality, and also possibility and fictionality. They ascribe the possible and the contingent to the fictional realm, and, in this way, fiction is empowered with the capacity of actualizing possible and contingent properties that are not actualized in our world. Fiction falls under the category of the possible; however, this, for Ronen, does not exclude the notion of the necessary from the fictional domain. The necessary in fiction refers to “what is actualized in the fictional world”; “fiction possesses its own necessity and possibility and the actuality of fiction is privileged with an essentiality of its own” (Ronen, 1994, p. 54). Similarly, Umberto Eco associates necessity with what is actually obtaining and what is essentially related to a given world (1989, p. 350). By divorcing the notions of necessity and possibility in fiction from the logical concepts of necessity and possibility in this manner, literary theorists endorse an intrinsic logic specific to fiction.

The possible worlds discourse is also employed to separate the nonactual possible states of affairs from impossible states of affairs. As Ryan suggests, “every world that respects the principles of noncontradiction and excluded middle<sup>1</sup> is a possible world” (2001, p. 100). By taking this statement into account, we can describe a proposition as “necessary” if it proves to be true in all worlds connected to the actual world; as “possible” if it proves to be true in some of these worlds; and, as “impossible” or “contradictory” if it proves to be false in all of them. One of the problems facing literary theorists who make use of the possible worlds discourse is related to impossible fictional worlds. Fictional worlds can contain impossibilities and the violation of the law of the excluded middle seems to stimulate a whole literary school, namely postmodernism. Although logically impossible states of affairs are not specific

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<sup>1</sup> Two of the three laws of logic as formulated by Aristotle and developed by numerous subsequent thinkers into our own day. The first of these is the law of identity, which states that *A* is *A*; the second is the law of non-contradiction, which dictates that something cannot be both *A* and *not-A*; and the third, the law of the excluded middle, holds that something must be either *A* or *not-A*. These laws, which can be regarded as the same law expressed from three different perspectives, have served for over two millennia as the (almost) unshakeable foundation of Western thought. (Habib, 2011, p. 16)

to any literary periods or genres, with postmodernism, logical impossibilities have turned into a dominant poetic device, which means, for Ronen, that “contradictions in themselves do not collapse the coherence of a fictional world” (1994, p. 55). For literary scholars, the concept of possible worlds is taken in a literal sense, which means a fictional world refers to a world in its literal meaning and a fictional world including impossibilities is not impossible because it is in the ontological domain of fiction. The concepts of possibility and impossibility pertain not to the ontological possibilities of worlds but to the alternative conventions of world-construction. Lubomir Dolezel argues that worlds including impossibilities and contradictions use narrative moves as self-annulling devices: though an impossible world may be constructed, it is not authenticated; impossibilities are denied the authenticity of the fictional existence (1989, p. 231). In this respect, it can be claimed that impossibility may serve as a new domain for experimentation in writing fiction, not a constraint blocking creative powers. Consequently, impossibilities are included in fictional worlds because they are seen as world-construction devices that produce inauthentic impossible worlds. Including impossible states of affairs in the fictional world is thus not regarded as a violation of a possible worlds framework. Indeed, as David Herman suggests, it illustrates how such impossible worlds “deviate from the default template for worldmaking” and how they create their own ontologically subversive world-construction devices (2009, p. 121).

Philosophical logic and literary theory offer different interpretations also of the notion of possibility and concreteness ascribed to worlds and their inhabitants and this is a major difference between the two disciplines. For philosophical logicians, possible worlds are taken as abstract forms constructing alternative world models. Logical possibility is the only criterion, according to which abstract world models are constructed. For the construction of fictional worlds, on the other hand, logical possibility is not a necessary criterion as discussed above. Possible worlds, in philosophical logic, are abstract constructions and represent alternatives to actuality. This, it may be claimed, contradicts the nature of fictionality. Fictional worlds are “pregnant” worlds, concrete constellations of objects, and not abstract constructs, as explained by Eco:

A possible world is not a bare but an overfurnished set. We shall speak not of abstract types of possible worlds that do not contain a list of individuals but a pregnant world of which one must know all the acting individuals and their properties. (1979, p. 218)

Ronen elaborates on the concept of the pregnancy of fictional worlds and claims that “the possibility of fictional ontologies depends on the presence of concrete fictional entities” (1994, p. 60). In other words, fictional worlds possess some kind of concrete reality. The philosophical view that possible worlds are abstract sets runs contrary to the description of fictional worlds in literary theory. The notion of the world is used differently in two disciplines: in a philosophical context worlds are depicted as hypothetical constructs, while in literary theory worlds are literally considered as constellations of concrete constructs.

### **2.1.2. Definitions and History of the World Concept in Literary Studies**

The concept of the world to define what is presented to the mind by a narrative text has been used in literary studies and particularly in narratology for a very long time. In the traditional understanding of earlier days, world was conceived to be “a totality of meanings” associated with an artistic consciousness and authorial composition (Ryan, 2016, p. 12). Roman Ingarden and Jurij Lotman represent this traditional interpretation of the concept.

Ingarden (1973) interprets the concept of world from a phenomenological perspective, which asserts that fictional worlds are constituted by an aesthetic consciousness. To explain the construction of a fictional world as an aesthetic product, Ingarden defines the literary work of art as a stratified entity: “it is a formation constructed of several heterogeneous strata” (1973, p. 29). From the first stratum, the stratum of word sounds and phonetic formations, arises the second stratum, the stratum of meaning units; these two strata generate an amalgam of syntactic structures out of which arises the third stratum, the stratum of the represented objects (Ingarden 1973, p. 30). According to Ingarden, the represented objects

do not lie isolated and alien alongside one another but, thanks to the manifold ontic connections, unite into a uniform ontic sphere. In doing so they always constitute ... a segment of a still largely undetermined world”. (1973, p. 218)

In this respect, world denotes a group of represented objects within an ontological domain constructed through a process of gradation realized by a deliberate consciousness. Ingarden also emphasizes that the world of a literary work is infused with spots of indeterminacy, which, he claims, is the characteristic feature for represented worlds (1973, p. 251). In literary worlds, indeterminacies cannot and need not be resolved. Consequently, world refers to correlated objects that are typically and essentially indeterminate. Literary worlds are not destined to exist anywhere; their state of existence is limited to what meaning-units the text offer. In other words, they are kept within an intrinsic domain of being.

The concept of world has an important place in Lotman's semiotic treatment of artistic texts (1977) and it deviates considerably from Ingarden's view of the concept. According to Lotman, world, as in Ingarden, refers to a stratified entity of artistic composition; but, it also denotes the relations between an artistic work and reality. Lotman employs the concept of world to illustrate how a work of art models an infinite universe by means of its spatially finite system. He defines a work of art as "an area of space demarcated in some way and reflecting in its finitude an infinite object: the world which lies outside the work of art" (1977, p. 217). According to Lotman, a work of art models an infinite object, that is reality, through a finite text and thus creates its own space, not only for a part but also for the entire reality (1977, p. 211). In this respect, an artistic text models concurrently a particular and a universal object. Consequently, the concept of world, for Lotman, can be regarded in two ways: the infinite world, or the entire reality somehow reflected in the artistic text, and the finite world produced by artistic modelling. The world of the artistic text attains the capability of modelling through two aspects as explained by Lotman: (1) The artistic text models the infinite universe by linking the textual with the extra-textual through its world. (2) The artistic text constructs a world by organizing the extra-textual, extra-systemic reality: "literature imitates reality; it creates a model of the extra-systemic out of its own inherently systemic material" (1977, p. 59). From these two aspects, it can be deduced that the world of art represents the real world not through being related to it, but through being its model, which implies a semiotic interaction between the textual and the extra-textual.

Ingarden's and Lotman's interpretations of world seem to differ greatly. While Ingarden approaches the concept from a phenomenological framework, which labels world as a product of a mental act, Lotman addresses it from within a semiotic framework in which the focus is on the infinite object, that is reality. Both emphasize the gradations of literary works as fundamental for the construction of worlds. However, whereas Ingarden uses this multilayeredness so as to illustrate the non-referentiality of art, Lotman considers it as a means to reveal how the artistic text can reflect the infinite universe. Yet, it is also possible to find similarities between Ingarden's and Lotman's views about the concept of world. Both of them employ the concept in a way to suggest that art is disconnected from non-artistic reality. Ronen points to another similarity between Ingarden and Lotman in that in both approaches world refers to "a certain mode of representing or organizing knowledge" (1994, p. 100). Furthermore, world is seen, principally, as a set of components situated in time and space by both thinkers. What ascribes worldliness to art is the states of affairs and spots of indeterminacy for Ingarden; in Lotman's case, it is the world components and the semiotic rules related to the artistic system. In view of these differences and similarities, Ingarden's and Lotman's views can be taken as two ways the concept of world is traditionally interpreted in literary studies.

A pragmatic definition of fictionality, which brings together philosophical and literary principles about the nature of fiction, has gradually altered the concept of world in literary studies. While the above-mentioned traditional literary interpretations employed the concept to refer to "the closedness of the artistic system", more recent studies see the concept of world as "a different theoretical entity reflecting the inter-world perspective that has emerged from philosophical discussions" (Ronen, 1994, p. 96). The evolution of the concept of world in literary theory illustrates the impact of the philosophical concerns about non-actual ontologies and possible worlds on literary discourse. Kripke represents the philosophical tradition that offers possible worlds concepts to be adopted by and applied to literary texts.

Kripke's logico-ontological interpretation of the concept of world is based on the notion that a world is attributed with a set of objects which are regarded as the domains for possible worlds. As opposed to the above-mentioned thinkers, Kripke

does not see world as a stage in artistic world construction; he approaches the concept on the basis of a general semantic model for modal logic. Kripke's attempt to connect a formal modal theory with the concept of world is reflected in his treatment of possible worlds. He explains "I argued against those misuses of the concept that regard possible worlds as something like distant planets, like our own surroundings but somehow existing in a different dimension" (1963, p. 15). For Kripke, non-actual possibilities are abstract states of affairs which should not be treated as hypothetical assumptions corresponding to the actual world. A world, for Kripke, is not "a distant country that we are coming across, or viewing through a telescope"; it is a semiotic model and a language-dependent construction and entails ontological significance (1963, p. 44). In a philosophical debate about the logico-ontological significance of a possible world, like Kripke's, the concept of world refers to a counterfactual set of propositions signifying states of affairs. This is a remarkable deviation from Ingarden's and Lotman's arguments which confirm that world regulates the internal structure of the artistic work from an inner perspective looking at the outside of the artistic system, the reality. Unlike Ingarden and Lotman, Kripke deals with the concept of world in relation to possible worlds and worlds constructed by modalities. Consequently, for Kripke, the ontological significance of the concept of world lies in the positioning of a set of states of affairs in relation to what exists beyond the set limits, not in its constituting components or the rules regulating and connecting its constituents, as in Ingarden's and Lotman's theorizations.

However, employing the possible worlds discourse for the description of world and the determination of the ontological status of fictional worlds does not "result either in a mimetic or an anti-mimetic stand" (Ronen, 1994, p. 106). It blends intrinsic structural issues (as shown above with Ingarden's and Lotman's arguments about the concept of 'world') with exterior referential concerns (as shown above with Kripke's understanding of 'world'). World as a pragmatic definition, therefore, is related to three areas summarized by Ronen as follows:

- (1) Each world is defined by its unique ontic position relative to worlds of other ontic determinations. A fictional world has a distinct ontic property distinguishing it from other worlds and their beings.

(2) Each world is a domain subjected to one modality that ensures its distinctness from other worlds and secures its autonomy. ... The autonomy of fiction relative to reality is in line with traditional views of the worlds of literary texts as hermetic or partially closed artistic systems.

(3) A definition of a world does not require the existence of a stable ontology, neither within the world concerned nor as an external background. ... Modes and degrees of reliance of fictional worlds on the real world reflect different representational conventions and not a fixed similarity. The concept of a world hence eludes the question of mimeticism in the relations between the fictional and the actual. (1994, p. 106)

Consequently, the concept of world which was traditionally bathed in philosophical logic and later adopted by literary critics characterizes the intersection between intrinsic structural issues and extrinsic referential concerns in the fictional domain. In this respect, a world is a group of entities which is constructed through their ontological positioning in relation to other systems.

Marie-Laure Ryan builds on this pragmatic interpretation and sides with Thomas Pavel, Lubomir Dolezel, and Umberto Eco (representatives of schools and disciplines dealing with the ontological status of imaginary entities; namely philosophy of language and in particular Possible Worlds Theory), to use the term *fictional world* or *narrative world* to refer to the worlds in literary studies. She defines narrative worlds as “totalities that encompass space, time, and individuated existents that undergo transformations as the result of events” (2019, p. 63). In her account, worlds can be seen as “containers for entities that possess a physical mode of existence” and as “networks of relations between these entities” (2019, p. 63). Ryan’s interpretation of worlds with its focus on existents, events, and transformations coincides with David Herman’s definition of worlds as “global mental representations enabling interpreters to frame inferences about situations, characters, and occurrences either explicitly mentioned or implied by a narrative text or discourse” (2009, p. 106). Herman prefers to use the term *storyworld* instead of fictional world or narrative world, which hints at his background in cognitive approaches to literature and linguistics along with Richard Gerrig and Paul Werth. However, as Ryan suggests, the connection between the narrative world/ontological approach and the storyworld/cognitive approach is not a totally exclusive categorization as narrative worlds may include

cognitive operations and storyworlds may deal with ontological issues (2016, p. 12). They differ mainly in methodology. The ontological approach influenced by the Possible Worlds Theory tries to find solutions for problems such as defining fiction, the truth value of fictional propositions, the ontological status of fictional entities, the classification of literary worlds, describing the mechanisms of plot in terms of conflicts, and organizing the semantic domain of literary texts as a universe in which an actual world is opposed to various alternative possible worlds constructed by the mental activity of narrators and characters. The cognitive approaches, on the other hand, focus on how worlds are constructed and reproduced in the mind of the reader, what kind of cues prompt this process of reproduction, and the description of the narrative experience as an involvement. Clearly, the response of the ontological questions is an essential part of the cognitive processing of narratives; that is why, the ontological approaches can be interrelated with the cognitive ones. As illustrated, the terms “fictional world” and “narrative world” are used interchangeably by the Possible Worlds Theory critics to refer to the worlds evoked by literary texts. This study will stick to either of them instead of the term “storyworld” so as to underline the logico-ontological approach informing these terms.

## **2.2. Fictionality and World Construction in Literary Studies**

Worlds reflected by literary texts have no essential features representing their fictionality. Fictionality cannot be considered as a stable property of texts and cannot be associated “with cross-cultural or with meta-historical criteria”; indeed, “any manipulation of facts ... introduces the fictional into a text” (Ronen, 1994, p. 76). Possible worlds, as shown above, are connected to actuality in a different manner from the way fictional worlds are. Whereas possible worlds are considered as alternative possible but non-actualized sequences of events, fictional worlds depend on some principles that pave the way for their fictional actualization. As Ronen explains fictional worlds can be seen as “possible or impossible constellations of events and situations which are fictionally actualized or non-actualized” (1994, p. 87). Her example is quite illustrative of this difference:

if a history book documents Napoleon dreaming about conquering the world at a certain point of his military career in the history of France,



this hypothetical state of affairs can be defined as a possible situation that was never actualized in the world. The world of *War and Peace*, on the other hand, portrays and actualizes fictional (and sometimes historically deviant) situations in which Napoleon is engaged. (Ronen 1994, p. 87)

These two states of affairs are thus ascribed different status in relation to the states of affairs in the actual world. A fictional world, unlike a possible world, is not a modal continuation of the actual world; it is a world possessing its own modal structure. The relations between a text and its fictionality is manifested, by Ronen (1994, p. 88), in two aspects which underline the fluidity and context-dependency of defining a world as fictional: (1) A world may be ascribed with the generic label of fictional regardless of its resemblance to the actual world. The degree to which a fictional world resembles the actual world is not a problem for the actuality or fictionality of a world. (2) A fictional world may include historical figures, imaginary characters, or supernatural elements.

Since the fictionality of texts cannot be essentially identified through a stable set of textual properties, a pragmatic definition of fictionality, which entails “an integrated system of world-constructing conventions, cultural beliefs and reading procedures,” seems appropriate. (Ronen, 1994, p. 88). This system should denote logico-ontological properties and assumptions which would regulate the production/construction and reception/reconstruction of fictional worlds. The classical/structuralist narratologists ignored the referential or world constructing properties of literary texts under the impact of Saussurean language theory that excluded the referent in favour of the signifier and the signified. Narratologists assuming post-classical and/or post-structural approaches to narrative, however, see it a basic and abiding concern to investigate the textual clues that build up representations of fictional or narrative worlds. As proposed by Herman, narrative worlds are “mental models of the situations and events being recounted – of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why, and in what manner” and literary texts provide cues for the construction and reconstruction of such mentally constituted narrative worlds (2009, pp. 106-107). In literary texts, these cues include the means of written language like words, phrases, and sentences; and also typographical formats, the layout of space on the printed page, and (if any) diagrams, sketches, and

illustrations. Readers of literary texts draw on such cues to construct a narrative world, which consists of the following components as listed by Ryan (2014, pp. 34-36):

**Existents:** the characters of the story and the objects that have special significance for the plot

**Setting:** a space within which the existents are located

**Physical laws:** principles that determine what kind of events can and cannot happen in a given story

**Social rules and values:** principles that determine the obligations of characters

**Events:** the causes of the changes of state that happen in the time span framed by the narrative

**Mental events:** the character's reactions to perceived or actual states of affairs

Obviously, the fictional worlds created by means of these components have a different logico-ontological status from the worlds created by historians or physicists. Fiction necessitates a different kind of connection to the states of affairs of the actual world; objects populating the fictional world are supposed to have a specific nature; and fiction involves a different conception of truth. Grounded on these assumptions, fictional worlds are treated as a distinct class of worlds and ascribed a set of distinguishing conventions, which are examined by Ronen under two subtitles: World-constructing conventions and world-reconstructing conventions.

World-constructing conventions lay bare the logic and ontology of *fictional propositions* and are listed by Ronen as follows (1994, pp. 89-91):

1. "The non-claim about reality": Fictional propositions adopt a different fictional position of states of affairs in relation to the actual world. A fictional proposition refers to states of affairs which do not directly refer to the actual world.

2. "A type of modal quantifier operating on a given set": Sets of fictional propositions are logically restricted by their shared fictional property. The fictional property of a set of propositions serves as a type of modal quantifier regulating that set of propositions and determines its logical structure and the potential implications which can be reached through it.

3. No need to "follow requirements of logical possibility or logical consistency": Fictional propositions may present contradictory states of affairs. A given set of

fictional propositions possessing a shared fictional property is not required to follow consistency necessities of logic.

**4. “Indeterminate and incomplete” objects:** Fictional objects represented by fictional propositions are neither determinate nor complete. As Ingarden states: “Every literary work is in principle incomplete and always in need of further supplementation; in terms of the text, however, this supplementation can never be completed” (1973, p. 251).

**5. Denotation of “both existents and non-existents”:** Fictional propositions illustrate both existent and non-existent states of affairs. They may blend representations of imaginary beings in relation to historical entities.

**6. All fictional properties as “equally essential”:** The properties of a fictional object are equally essential to its existence. The fictional objects are destined to be a part of the fictional world they are bound to, and thus they cannot be separated from each other; they are structurally tied together. In other words, all fictional propositions are equally needed for the construction of a fictional world.

The above-mentioned world-constructing conventions illustrate the logico-semantic limitations put on a set of fictional propositions. A pragmatic definition of fictionality, hence, consists of a variety of restrictions which specify the kind of logical model appropriate for fiction. Such a model would take into consideration all of these issues determining the nature of fictional states of affairs.

World-reconstructing conventions, on the other hand, reveal the logic and ontology of *propositions about fiction* and enumerate the limitations put on the process of understanding fiction. They are identified by Ronen as such (1994, pp. 91-95):

**1. “Logically and ontologically parallel to the actual world”:** Fictional worlds are “not possible worlds *ramifying* from the actual state of affairs”, but they are “logically and ontologically *parallel* to the actual world”. Fictional claims, unlike counterfactual claims, do not refer to the ways the world could have been. They produce an autonomous world which may or may not stay close to the actual world.

**2a. “The presence of an author”:** The propositions about a fictional world do not only denote the entities marked by fictional propositions and entailed in the fictional world,

but also the presence of an author. The authorship of a fictional text implies that fictionality is an intended action.

**2b.** “The author as distinct from the narrator”: The personality of a fictional text’s author is split into an actual part and a fictional part: the author and the narrator. The author is bestowed with authority and control over the world that the fictional text constructs and the fictional text is the only source of information about that world.

**2c.** “A hierarchy of authenticity”: Some fictional propositions belong to an authorial source, while some others belong to narratorial sources with differing degrees of authorization, which can be exemplified with the authorial difference between an omniscient narrator like the narrator of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, a character narrating about his/her younger self in the first person as in the case of Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, and an unreliable narrator such as the narrators of Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion*. The authorship of a fictional proposition, thereby, enacts a hierarchy of authenticity on the propositions about fiction.

**3.** The author as “a source or center of coherence”: As the author is a center of control, he/she is also a source or center of coherence for the fictional world. The author is attributed with the utmost coherence through which the reader understands a fictional text. Propositions about fiction demonstrate how fictional worlds abide by the structural necessities of coherence, continuity and organization. Fictional worlds are constructed with meaningful states of affairs and propositions about fiction should represent this meaningfulness.

**4.** “Inconsistencies or impossibilities” allowed: The coherence of a fictional world is not damaged if it entails inconsistencies or impossibilities. In other words, the reader of fiction can make logically inconsistent or impossible propositions about fiction. A detection of an inconsistency or an impossibility does not prevent the reader from reconstructing a fictional world.

**5.** “Incompleteness as an inherent property”: For the propositions about fiction, incompleteness is considered as an intrinsic property of fictional states and objects; it is not seen as a gap to be filled. Since fictional worlds entail what is directly given or indirectly implied by the text, completeness is not an issue to be reconstructed for

fictional entities. In this respect, indeterminacies, open-endedness or ambiguities can be regarded as merits contributing to the literary value of texts.

**6a.** “A literal understanding of accessibility”: Accessibility refers to the position of the reader in relation to the fictional world. The reader is affected by the world constructed through fiction, though he/she is not part of that world. As Gerrig explains through his metaphor of transportation, the reader is transported by means of the fictional text as a result of the reading experience; and he/she goes some distance from his/her world of origin and then returns to it, somewhat changed by this transportation (1993, pp. 10-11). In other words, for the reader, fictional worlds are physically inaccessible but mentally accessible from the real world.

**6b.** “The logical meaning of accessibility”: Accessibility has to do with the possibility of a fictional state of affairs in relation to actuality. The accessibility of fictional worlds to the actual world can be explored in two ways: (1) All parts of fictional worlds are not equally possible. As fiction may blend historical beings with imaginary beings, senses of accessibility may differ in accordance with the corresponding domain in the fictional world. (2) The distance of fictional worlds from the real world varies in line with the reader’s position. The reader’s relation to the fictional world alters the way fictional states of affairs are defined, stressed, seen reasonable, abnormal and so on by the reader. Accessibility is, thus, not just an issue of linking two states of affairs, and world-reconstructing through accessibility relations should reflect this.

**7.** “The lack of correlation between fictional propositions and propositions about fiction”: The set of fictional propositions and the set of propositions about fiction are not taken as equivalent sets. This lack of correlation is illustrated in the fact that the world reconstructed from a fictional text contains more than what is explicitly stated by the author. A fictional world includes not only what is openly uttered by the author but also what is attached to the text by the reader’s understanding of that world.

When fictionality is defined as a pragmatic property, fictional worlds are considered as ontologically autonomous and this autonomy is not valid for the possible worlds connected, in one way or another, to actuality. Since fictional worlds are autonomous, unlike possible versions of actuality, they are not considered as ramifications of, or deviations from, the actual world. The autonomy of fictional worlds is an essential

principle required for a mimetic theorization of a specific logico-semantic model for fiction as proposed above through world-constructing and world reconstructing conventions. In this way, these logico-ontological conventions of the fictional texts serve to differentiate mimetic fiction from anti-mimetic fiction.

### **2.3. Plot as a Playground for Narrative Worlds and Narrative Universes**

Most classical narratological approaches to plot consider plot structure as a given. This is because the functioning principle of structuralism asserts that plot is always seen retrospectively and all of its parts are equally existent. The plot models offered by such kind of approaches emphasize the reliance of the plot structure on its ending. As Prince suggests “many narratives can be viewed as teleologically determined ... Narrative often displays itself in terms of an end which functions as its (partial) condition, its magnetizing force, its organizing principle” (1982, p. 157). Tomashevsky also touches upon the determination of the plot structure through the narrative ending and says: “[b]y simply retelling the story we immediately discover what may be omitted without destroying the coherence of the narrative and what may not be omitted without disturbing the connection among events” (1965, p. 68). Since plot is seen from a functional and retrospective point, the plot structure in these models is based on actually presented events. Prince, for instance, divorces non-actual possibilities from plot-structures: “If narrativity is a function of the discreteness and specificity of the (sequences of) events presented, it is also a function of the extent to which their occurrence is given as a fact (in a certain world) rather than a possibility or probability. The hallmark of narrative is assurance” (1982, p. 149).

Post-classical narratological approaches to plot have challenged the classical narratological approaches by claiming that the latter are not capable of plot orientation and direction. Post-classical narratologists have extracted ideas from analytic philosophy, modal logic, and linguistic semantics to illustrate the significance of modally-indexed situations and events for the understanding of plot. Eco, one of the pioneers of this approach, interprets plot-structure as a process of stimulating some semantic possibilities and narcotizing some others (1979, p. 27). The *fabula* (story) is constructed as a process of choice among alternative possibilities of actualization and

the plot structure is the product of this process. Bremond also deals with this problem in his account and defines plot structure as a mechanism of selection among alternative narrative sequences (1980, p. 406). In this respect, each point in a plot sequence brings about alternative options for actualization. Consequently, the plot is represented as a structure of differing alternatives and these options offered by the text require the reader's active participation to be deciphered.

The modally-oriented plot models were born out of a possible worlds discourse which has offered many useful metaphors for the study of narrative texts. Among these, possibility and multiplicity of worlds, which serve to depict the universe as a constellation of possible and impossible sets of affairs but not as a single predetermined set of actualities, come to fore and they are adopted skillfully by Eco's narrative semiotics. Eco considers the semantic domain of a narrative as a universe constituted by a constellation of possible worlds. A literary text, he claims, is not a single possible world, but "*a machine for producing possible worlds (of the fabula, of the characters within the fabula, and of the reader outside the fabula)*" (1979, p. 246). Eco goes on to describe these three types of worlds respectively as follows: (1) The possible worlds envisioned and affirmed by the author which entail all of the actual states as presented by the *fabula*. (2) The possible subworlds that the characters of the *fabula* think, believe, imagine, wish, and so on. (3) The possible subworlds that the readers outside the *fabula*, think, believe, imagine, wish, and so on while reading, and that the *fabula* either actualizes or counterfactualizes by following a different path (1979, p. 246). The first class of possible worlds depicts the *fabula* as a sequence of different states and these states correlate, factually, with the real physical states. In this respect, they can be considered as the actual world of the narrative universe. The second class of possible worlds refers to the mental process of the characters, that is, the ways they respond to the changes of state that take place in the narrative world. The third class of worlds reveals the movement of the story from the reader's perspective. Consequently, it is possible to extend the logico-ontological metaphors of possibility and multiplicity of worlds to the description of narrative universes and narrative worlds in terms of demonstrating the plot structure by means of modalities. As concluded by Ronen, this approach asserts that a fictional text produces a narrative

universe, a constellation of possible worlds that are modally indexed, and a potential actualization of possibilities produces a plot structure (1994, p. 170).

Vaina (1977), another critic studying the concept of plot from within a possible worlds framework, also approaches the possible worlds of a literary text from the perspective of a logic semantician by employing concepts of modal logic and semantics. The elementary model suggested by Vaina was elaborated by revised versions which more articulately integrate narratological concepts with the semantic concepts borrowed from the possible worlds framework, as in Pavel's "Narrative Domains" (1980). Pavel focuses on the propositions constituting the narrative domains, which in turn constitute the plot and asserts that "a plot is split into more than one narrative domain, and is accordingly divided into several distinct sets of propositions. The nature of these propositions is heterogeneous. A domain contains ontological, epistemological, axiological and action propositions" (1980, p. 106). Ryan appropriates Vaina's and Pavel's arguments and puts forward the assumption that narrative worlds are segmented in modal terms. According to her, "the worlds of the modal system of narration fall into two main categories: (1) those with an absolute or autonomous existence; and (2) those whose existence is relative to somebody, that is, which exist through a mental act of a character" (1985, p. 720). In other words, the distinction between the structure of narrative worlds is based on the essential distinction between actual propositions and modalized propositions. According to Ryan, the narrative universe has an actual world which is independent of propositional attitudes. This is the domain seen as actual by the characters of the narrative universe. Other domains of the narrative universe depend on propositional attitudes and thus they are related to the world constructing actions of the individuals. This modal stratification in the narrative universe, as proposed by Ryan, results in a hierarchy which labels one domain of states of affairs as the actual world of the narrative universe and marks the other domains as relative worlds of the narrative universe. Ryan explores the actual world and relative worlds in detail as follows (1985, pp. 720-732):

"The actual world" is the world regarded by the characters as real. It consists of the current states of affairs, its predecessors, and the range of possible future developments. It presents the sum of the laws, states and events that comprise the



actual domain of the narrative universe. The domain of the actual in the narrative universe may be contained in a single world governed by one set of laws or be divided into two or more autonomous worlds, each governed by its own laws.

The inhabitants of the actual world of the narrative universe build on their own modal systems by engaging in world-constructing acts such as forming beliefs, wishing, dreaming, predicting, and making up stories. This results in the emergence of diverse “relative worlds” in the narrative universe. These include:

**Epistemic or Knowledge Worlds (K-Worlds):** These are the worlds whose propositions are assumed to be true by the narrator or the characters within the actual world.

**Hypothetical Extensions of K-Worlds:** These are the worlds whose propositions are embedded under an operator of possibility or a conditional operator and represent a character’s projection of potential future events in his/her K-World.

**Intention Worlds (I-Worlds):** These are the worlds created when a character decides to reach a certain goal by following a certain path.

**Wish Worlds (W-Worlds):** These are the worlds whose constitutive propositions define what a character considers good or bad for himself/herself.

**Worlds of Moral Values (M-Worlds):** These are the worlds whose constitutive propositions define what a character considers good or bad for all the members of a specific group.

**Obligation Worlds (O-Worlds):** These are the worlds whose constitutive propositions define what the ruler or members of a specific group consider good or bad for the character.

**Alternate Universes:** These worlds are the mental creations such as dreams, hallucinations, fantasies, games of pretense, stories read or composed by characters, and worlds created through counterfactual statements. They are not revolving around the actual world of the narrative universe; they have their own actual world at their center and their relative worlds revolving around.

As stated above, narrative universes are constellations of narrative worlds, both actual and relative, and they are distinguished by their underlying modal structure. Ryan takes up this idea to describe narrative universes as modal systems in which the

exterior material facts affirmed by the narrator play the role of an ontologically central world that counts as actual, “textual actual world” (abbreviated as TAW in Ryan 1991) (1991, p. 112). Constellating this ontological center are the relative worlds, the numerous satellite “alternative possible worlds” (abbreviated as APWs in Ryan 1991) that can be assessed by means of counterfactual statements uttered by a narrator or by the characters and also via what the narrator or the characters think, believe, imagine, wish, and so on. As similarly suggested by Herman, narratives characteristically construct a variety of “private worlds or sub-worlds inhabited or at least imagined by characters”; these satellite worlds include “knowledge-worlds, obligation-worlds, intention-worlds, wish-worlds, and so on” (2013, p. 128). A narrative, however, cannot be statically condensed into a state of a modal system. The relations among the numerous worlds of the modal system undertakes continual oscillations as the story unfolds. As Ryan explains:

The plot is the trace left by the movement of these worlds within the textual universe. From the viewpoint of its participants, the goal of the narrative game -which is for them the game of life - is to make TAW coincide with as many as possible of their private worlds. The moves of the game are the actions through which characters attempt to alter relations between worlds. (1991, pp. 119-120)

The propositional composition of the private worlds result in a system of compatibilities that accounts for cooperation or antagonism between the characters and also the conflicts in the narrative universe. When a proposition in a modal world is unsatisfied in the actual world, the narrative universe goes through a state of conflict; the ultimate goal of characters is to work out the conflict by regulating their private worlds in relation to the textual actual world (Ryan, 2005, p. 448). The relations between worlds can bring about productive conflicts when the individual going through the conflict “is in a position, and is willing to take steps toward its resolution” (Ryan, 1985, p. 733). In other words, the mechanism that activates the narrative is the effort of the characters to remove the conflict and to bridge up the gap between the actual world and their modal worlds. Conflict can also emerge in between the modal worlds of different characters. Ryan exemplifies this with the antagonism of the hero and the villain; they are antagonists because their wish-worlds are incompatible (1991, p. 122). Apart from that, a character may go through conflict between his/her wish

world and obligation world and choose which world to attempt to satisfy (Ryan, 1991, pp. 122-123). In this respect, possible worlds terminology illustrates narrative dynamics as the progress of private worlds within the total narrative universe.

Consequently, the concept of possible worlds serves both as an account of narrative codes that construct the narrative universe in modal terms and as a theoretical tool for depicting the structure of plot and its movement towards resolution. That is why, describing a fictional world as a constellation of possible worlds proves to be productive. Ronen summarizes the advantages of such a model describing the narrative structure of plot within a possible-worlds framework (1994, pp. 172-173):

1. “The description of plot as a modal structure overcomes the theoretical discrepancy”: The semantic instructions that define narrative worlds and their relations are at the same time logical rules for illustrating the components of the narrative system and functional rules for depicting plot movement.
2. “The narrative unit is perceived as a relational situation holding between a set of possible worlds”: (a) A narrative situation represents its positioning in the whole plot structure, but it also includes situations constituting alternative choices for plot development. (b) The working mechanisms of plot are intrinsic to the demarcation of any narrative situation. (c) A narrative situation entails semantic rules deriving from the logic of narrative, but it also shows the specific laws determined by a given narrative world.
3. The concepts of “states of affairs”, “productive conflict” and “constellation of possible worlds” allow narrative semantics to go beyond the boundaries of the actual. Plot structure contains both actual and non-actual domains of a narrative.
4. “Productive conflict” is a comprehensive concept that entails the specific semantic rules functioning in a given narrative world. Describing the dynamics of plot in terms of this concept offers a productive approach for examining the logic of plot development.

All in all, the modally-oriented plot models nourished by possible worlds framework illustrate the urge to exchange a single principle of organization with a diversity of organizing possibilities and to describe plot as an inclusive structure in which actual states of affairs construct only part of the total narrative and the other parts are booked

for heterogeneous possibilities. In other words, Possible Worlds Theory aims to cast light on the processes of what the reader identifies as fact in the actual domain of the narrative universe; how to distinguish the actual and physical from the possible and virtual found in the mental activity of characters, and how to image these mental representations. These are considered to be the cognitive processes through which the narrative meaning is constructed and acknowledged during the reading experience.

#### **2.4. Departed from a World and Recentered in a World through Accessibility Relations**

Accessibility is defined as “relative possibility” in general terms; the determining principle of classifying a world as possible is related to another world and there are certain criteria according to which that relative possibility is settled (Ronen 1994:61). That is why, accessibility cannot be separated from the concept of possibility. Ronen explains the interdependence of possibility and accessibility:

Accessibility is destined to account for the truth values of modal and counterfactual propositions. Possibility ascribes a concrete content to relations of accessibility among sets, in that relative possibility determines inference in modal systems. Accessibility among worlds works as a restriction on the range of possible worlds; different models for accessibility define different formalizations for quantifying over accessible worlds, that is, not all possible worlds are compossible. (1994, pp. 61-62)

In other words, accessibility relations are what define possibility and compossibility of worlds. To exemplify, a state of affairs is taken as possible in one world if it proves to be true in at least one world that is accessible to that world. In other words, two worlds’ being relatively possible or accessible to each other mean that every state of affairs obtaining in the one is regarded as possible in the other. As Hintikka concludes: “Each statement has to be thought of as having been made in some possible world; and nothing can be said to be possible in such a world which would not have been true in some world realizable in its stead” (1979, p. 67).

The concept of accessibility is related to the problem of counterfactuals and the principle of similarity through which the counterfactuals are scrutinized. Counterfactuals conform to the “standards of validation determined relative to some notion of the (f)actual world despite being counterfactual”, and so as to specify these

criteria of validation, “some state of affairs external to them must be posited to serve as a reference point” (Ronen, 1994, p. 63). Lewis’ discussion on counterfactuals illustrate that we can deduce or determine the truth of propositions about possible worlds by depending on their similarity or closeness to the actually realized state of affairs. He claims that “whatever is logically necessary here and now must also be logically necessary in all the logically possible states of affairs that could have been realized instead of the actual one” and that “no new logical necessities can come about as the result of the realization of any logical possibility” (Lewis, 1973, p. 76). In this respect, two worlds are accepted as similar only when moving from one to the other does not necessitate a change in the logic of the world.

The discussions on the accessibility and similarity relation do not regard the real universe to be the world of reference. Hintikka (1979), for example, uses the concept of possible worlds to talk not about the real world but about its more general and abstract features. The modal logicians, like Lewis, see the real world an optional world of reference. They locate the reference world at the center of the system as a privileged member of the set of all worlds; however, this center does not require any kind of ontological distinction between the actual world and the other worlds that are accessible to it. The actual world is logically changeable though, and this is explicated by Lewis with his abovementioned commonplace statement: actual is an indexical term and relies on the circumstances of utterance for its reference (1973, p. 85). That is why, it can be concluded that the concept of accessibility does not entail the relations between the real world and its non-actualized possibilities; it offers relative possibility to be used as a determining principle of categorization of a world as possible in relation to another world.

Literary theories which employ the possible-worlds discourse propose a different interpretation of the notion of accessibility. In literary interpretations, accessibility is generally associated with “the relations between what we know about the world and what fiction tells us” (Ronen, 1994, p. 69). Some scholars believe that the actual world is a culture-dependent construct whereas some take the actual world as possessing a stable ontology. Eco (1979), for instance, equates the actual world with what one believes to be the actual world at a specific moment and rejects a stable

conception of reality in his discussion of accessibility. For him, accessibility is a matter of ontological similarity between the two worlds. As possible worlds are culturally defined rational constructs, they cannot be associated with the actual world which is something taken for granted (Eco, 1979, pp. 217-218). Therefore, the world of reference, that is the actual world, and all the possible worlds related to it are considered as cultural constructs. In Eco's account, the concept of actuality is replaced with one's "encyclopedia", a system of knowledge governing the production and interpretation of signs that constitutes one's reference world (1979, p. 218). In this respect, if one believes in a proposition, it implies that that proposition is compatible with his/her encyclopedia. The world of reference is, then, a historically and culturally varying encyclopedic construct and the propositions are dependent on the norms of a given encyclopedia. Consequently, accessibility is a formal and objective issue of comparing two cultural constructs (Eco, 1979, p. 222).

Ryan (1991), on the other hand, views the actual world as an unproblematic, stable and ontologically distinguished reference world and elaborately analyses the accessibility relations between the actual world and fiction. According to Ryan, we can consider the fictional world as accessible or inaccessible to such kind of a reference world through a series of parameters (Ryan, 1991, pp. 32-33):

1. "Identity of properties": The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if the objects common to both have the same properties.
2. "Identity of inventory": The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if both are furnished by the same objects.
3. "Compatibility of inventory": The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if the fictional world's inventory includes all the members of the actual world.
4. "Chronological compatibility": The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if it does not relocate a member of the actual world beyond the time of the events' occurrence as facts.
5. "Physical compatibility": The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if they are subject to the same natural laws.
6. "Taxonomic compatibility": The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if both include the same species characterized by the same properties.

7. “Logical compatibility”: The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if both obey the principles of noncontradiction and of the excluded middle.
8. “Analytical compatibility”: The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if objects named by the same words in both worlds have the same essential properties.
9. “Linguistic compatibility”: The fictional world is accessible from the actual world if the language of the fictional world can be understood in the actual world.

Through specifying these accessibility parameters, Ryan defines a particular set of conventions for world construction and thus generates a generic categorization of fictional worlds. The fictional worlds are categorized in accordance with the degree of their compatibility with the actual world as in the case of the worlds of mimetic texts and the degree of deviation from the actual world as in the case of the worlds of anti-mimetic texts.

Ryan (1985, 1991) deals in depth with the accessibility relations between the actual world and the narrative worlds in her profound account of narrative universes. She is influenced by Eco’s definition of the narrative text as “a machine for producing possible worlds” and also by the developments in artificial intelligence for the discussion of narrative universes. In general terms, narrative universes are constellations of narrative worlds which can be described as worlds evoked by narratives and detected by the textual clues relating to “what”, “when”, “where”, “why” and “how” dimensions. The reader depends on these textual clues to accommodate into the narrative world and this is a part of interpreting and making sense of the narrative texts. The process of accommodation works in different ways in different texts, which can be associated with the texts’ generic differences. At this point, Ryan’s notion of “fictional recentering,” (1991, p. 13) and her related concept of “the principle of minimal departure” (1991, p. 48) are functional so as to theorize the process. According to Ryan (1991), the narrative world evoked by a fictional text can be defined as an alternative possible world into which the reader is explicitly encouraged to accommodate. For the duration of the reading experience, “the realm of possibilities is . . . recentered around the sphere which the narrator presents as the actual world. This recentering pushes the reader into a new system of actuality and

possibility” (Ryan, 1991, p. 22). The reader of a fictional text can be seen as a traveller<sup>2</sup> to this new system in which he/she finds both a new actual world and a multiplicity of alternative possible worlds constellating around it. The distance between the narrative world evoked by the text and the world in which that text is written and read may change in accordance with generic differences. Some narrative worlds, for instance, a historical novel, may be more accessible to the physical real world, whereas some others, like a sci-fi novel, may be less accessible to the same reference point of reality; and this difference gives the basis for a typology of genres for Ryan (1991, p. 31). However, the reader of a fictional text sticks to what Ryan calls the principle of minimal departure if he/she is not directed by the textual clues otherwise. This principle confirms that “when readers construct fictional worlds, they fill in the gaps . . . in the text by assuming the similarity of the fictional worlds to their own experiential reality” (Ryan, 2005, p. 447). Ryan’s example is quite illustrative of this: “if a text mentions a blue deer, the reader will imagine an animal that resembles her idea of real deer in all respects other than the colour” (2005, p. 447). In other words, the deer’s having four legs will be true of this narrative world, but its having a single horn will be false unless it is offered by the text itself. Consequently, the reader is departed from his/her realm of actuality and possibilities and recentered in a new realm of actuality and possibilities in accordance with the accessibility parameters during the reading experience; and this results in the generic differentiation between mimetic and anti-mimetic texts.

In conclusion, Possible Worlds Theory, originally a notion of logico-ontological philosophy, has been adapted by literary critics in order to bring a new perspective to fictionality and fictional worlds. Correlating the term “possible world”, a philosophical concept, with the terms “fictional world” or “narrative world” in literary studies, the literary critics try to articulate the structural and thematic relations between the worlds evoked by a literary text. As in the philosophical designation of an actual world at the center of the universe and of possible worlds dependent on or

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<sup>2</sup> As in Gerrig’s metaphor of transportation (1993, pp. 10-11), the reader is posited as a traveller transported from his/her own physical actual world by means of reading experience to the narrative world possessing a different system of actualization and possibilities.



related to the actual one, a textual actual world and its relative worlds are strictly demarcated and determinedly constellated in a narrative universe in literary interpretation. While this strict formulation easily and effectively applies to the analysis of mimetic texts, its validity is questioned and problematized in the analysis of anti-mimetic texts. Consequently, Possible Worlds Theory as applied in literary interpretation provides a means to differentiate mimetic fiction from anti-mimetic fiction and needs to be revised in order to accommodate anti-mimetic fiction as well.

## CHAPTER 3

### MIMETIC FICTION & POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY: DAVID COPPERFIELD

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.  
(*David Copperfield*, 2004, p. 13)

The aim of this chapter is to explore the validity of Possible Worlds Theory as a theoretical framework in the analysis of a mimetic fictional narrative. Charles Dickens' realist novel *David Copperfield* will be used as an example of analysis. For this purpose, the meaning, origination, development, and revision of the term mimesis will firstly be given. Starting with the mimesis theories of the ancient philosophers, the study will continue into the mimetic principles of the Renaissance and Romantic thinkers, and end with more recent mimesis studies by contemporary critics. After that, mimetic fiction as a term will be scrutinized with reference to its relation with realism. The influence of the Enlightenment and modernity on the rise and flourishing of the novel genre and how it is reflected in the examples of mimetic fiction will be emphasized. Lastly, *David Copperfield* will be analyzed in terms of Possible Worlds Theory under three subheadings, which are the three main parameters that this study identifies to examine the validity of the theory in an epitomic example of mimetic fiction.

#### 3.1. Mimesis

The concept of mimesis basically refers to the principle that art imitates nature and that any form of representative art is actually a copy of nature. The term originally emerged from the ancient Greek philosophy of art, particularly from the discussions of Plato and Aristotle on the nature of art. Many subsequent thinkers and critics have

borrowed the term to explain their viewpoints on art, artist and artistic creation. This section will provide a comprehensive chronological trajectory of the concept of mimesis by referring to the leading literary critics who have offered insightful accounts of the term and guided intellectual and artistic environments in their era.

In his foremost Socratic dialogue about philosophy and political theory, *The Republic*, which includes his principles of representative arts, Plato claims that artistic creation is fundamentally a mode of imitation, namely mimesis. However, this imitation does not have positive connotations in Plato's account as he clearly states "everything of that sort [imitative art] seems to me to be a destructive influence on the minds of those who hear it" (2000, p. 313). This condemnation mainly results from the Platonic assumption that art is equated with mimesis and mimesis does not offer a true account of reality. Golden warns Plato's readers "never to confuse reality with mimesis", as artistic mimesis, in Plato's doctrine, is significantly removed from the idea [or the form], which can be described as the ultimate truth particularly attributed to God (1969, p. 150). Plato's own example of the comparison between the poet and the artisan, specifically the carpenter, is quite illustrative of this. In order to promote a negative image of artistic creation, which is, in his account, merely founded on the artist's imitation of nature, Plato asks a distinctive question about the poet's and the carpenter's closeness to the truth. He explains "I take it there are many couches, if you like, and many tables ... But when it comes to forms for these pieces of furniture, there are presumably two. A single form of a couch, and a single form of a table" (2000, p. 314). Consequently, the carpenter looks at the form of a piece of furniture and creates one of its copies. The poet, on the other hand, takes this copied form as a model for his art and thus ends up with a degraded imitation, which is twice removed from the truth. In this way, Plato gives all the privilege to the carpenter in this comparison as he himself asserts that the artistic products of the poet represent the things "as they appear to be ... not as they truly are" (2000, p. 315). Plato, here, uses the term representation to affirm his idea that poetry, or any kind of imitative art, is essentially far from the truth, and thus represents only a false illusion.

Aristotle's theory of mimesis, as expounded in his *Poetics*, which bears significance as one of the earliest treatises of literary theory, is widely compared to

Plato's discussions on the representative arts. Like Plato, Aristotle postulates that all kinds of representative art are fundamentally the products of the artist's imitation. He explicitly declares this in *Poetics* by referring to different forms of art: "Epic poetry and the making of tragedy, and also comedy and dithyrambic poetry, as well as most flute-playing and lyre-playing, are all as a whole just exactly imitations" (2006, p. 19). In other words, Aristotle, similar to Plato, defines art as "imitative in essence" (Hagberg, 1984, p. 365). However, while Plato degrades and rebukes the poet because of the mimetic essence in his work, Aristotle thinks that mimesis is a natural and distinctive ability bestowed upon the poet by God. According to Aristotle, the poet uses this ability to produce mimetic art, which evokes an action that is not actually performed; any mimesis is "an evocation of an action that does not really happen, that is not really performed, that only gives the illusion of actually taking place" (Murnaghan, 1995, p. 757). Since Aristotle does not think poets mislead the audience about the truth and the forms, he does not banish them as does Plato. Another important factor that differentiates Plato's and Aristotle's notions of mimesis is Aristotle's assumption that mimesis is a pleasurable process of learning for human beings who "differ from the other animals because they are the most imitative and produce their first acts of understanding by means of imitation; also all human beings take delight in imitations" (2006, p. 22). Plato sees mimesis and representative arts as having adverse effects on the audience's understanding of the truth. Aristotle, on the contrary, connects mimesis and learning through the pleasure effect on the audience. Since, in Aristotle's account, mimesis is a direct reference to reality rather than an imitation of it, it becomes a vehicle for the audience to understand reality more clearly and this brings about the pleasure of learning. Aristotle promotes poetry more by stating that poetry, a type of representative art, is more philosophical and inventive than history, which claims to present facts. This assumption results from the fact that history is essentially confined to what happened in the past; yet, poetry, as a product of mimesis, is unlimited as it refers to what may happen in the past, present or future. This differentiation results in the basic categorical demarcation between fact and fiction. Aristotle further crowns poetry with the claim that history, namely fact, refers specifically to particulars; however, poetry, in other words fiction, refers to things that

are more general and universal, which makes it even more philosophical than history (2006, p. 32).

Following Plato's and Aristotle's mimetic theoretical framework, especially Aristotle's understanding of mimesis, the English Renaissance poet, scholar and intellectual Sir Philip Sidney uses the same concept, imitation, in his literary discussions in order to define the seminal nature of poetry. In his most renowned work of literary theory, *An Apology for Poetry* (1595, 2007), the Aristotelian notion of mimesis functions as the starting point for Sidney's defense of poetry against the contemporary attacks on the literature of the time. He asserts in his defense of poetry that "[P]oesy ... is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in his word mimesis, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture; with this end, to teach and delight" (2007, p. 139). Acting upon Aristotle's mimesis, Sidney proposes that poetry is not only to be read, but also to be visualized in the mind as it is a product of the poet's imagination and ability to create images through words. Sidney considers the artistic imitation as a 'speaking-picture' with the ultimate aim to teach and delight and, in this way, develops Aristotle's theory of mimesis further with the extension of generating visible images. Another point that Sidney takes after Aristotle about mimesis and representative arts is the assumption that imitation is the defining feature of all literature and results in an improvement on nature and on the audience/reader through aesthetic pleasure. His examples are quite illustrative of this: "those things which in themselves are horrible, as cruel battles, unnatural monsters, are made, in poetical imitation, delightful" (2007, p. 145) and "comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life" (2007, p. 147). What Sidney achieves here is that he modifies meticulously the mimetic aesthetics, originally introduced by the classical philosophers Plato and Aristotle and recently rediscovered in the Renaissance England, and unites it with the contemporary understanding of poetry. As Heninger appreciates "[i]t was Sidney ... who introduced his countrymen to the *Poetics* of Aristotle. Before Sidney, no one in England had seriously broached the question of Aristotelian mimesis" (1989, p. 400).

In addition to the above mentioned aesthetic principles of the term mimesis that have been offered by literary theorists from the ancient Greece to the Renaissance

England, the Romantic English poet, literary critic and thinker Samuel Taylor Coleridge contributes articulately to the theorization of mimesis. In his *Biographia Literaria* (1817, 1930), which is one of the most influential works of literary criticism of the English Romantic period combining philosophical and literary concerns, Coleridge adopts an explicit mimetic stance with the assertion that “the composition of a poem is among the imitative arts” (1930, p. 201). However, Coleridge’s conception of imitation in terms of aesthetic creation depends upon the assumption that imitation is certainly different from the notion of simply copying nature. He reevaluates the concept of imitation as such: “imitation, as opposed to copying, consists either in the interfusion of the same throughout the radically different, or of the different throughout a base radically the same” (1930, p. 201). To achieve such kind of a mimetic effect, the artist’s active participation in the act of artistic production as a subjective entity is required. Consequently, the artistic imitation is more than passive copying; it is active interpretation. One of the most crucial keywords of Coleridge’s literary theoretical discussion related to this is the faculty of imagination. The poet, for Coleridge, is actively included in the process of artistic production through imitation, which constitutes a critical part of his faculty of imagination. Bringing together imitation and imagination for the composition of poetry, Coleridge introduces the faculty of imagination as “an attempt to develop a psychology for the special kind of imitation that is poetry” (Creed, 1954, p. 1164). According to Coleridge, the artist’s imitation is a natural process in which “the naturalness ... of the things represented, as raised and qualified by an imperceptible infusion of the author’s own knowledge and talent” is foregrounded in order to avoid any violation of representational fidelity by means of an authorial involvement. (1930, p. 180). The poet, asserts Coleridge, is essentially knowledgeable and talented with some specific faculties in terms of senses such as “the eye, the ear, the touch” and some powers such as “the imitative power, voluntary and automatic; the imagination, or shaping and modifying power; the fancy, or the aggregative and associative power; the understanding, or the regulative, substantiating and realizing power” (1930, p. 152) as part of his process of aesthetic imitation. These qualities distinguish the poet’s imitation from a mere copy. Therefore, imitation, according to Coleridge, necessitates

a meticulous combination of knowledge and talent on the artist's part and this combination works not on the apathetic representation of nature but on the effective recreation of nature through an artistic achievement.

Apart from the classical mimetic theories of Plato and Aristotle, Sidney's treatise on mimesis that is highly informed by the Renaissance values and Coleridge's account of mimesis through Romantic ideals, one of the most significant, and more recent, studies on mimesis in representative arts belongs to the German philologist and literary critic Erich Auerbach. Auerbach's *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946) is a notable work of literary criticism that particularly deals with the theory of representation by means of a number of significant texts of Western literature. Auerbach, in this seminal book, covers practically the entire history of Western literature starting from the classical period, namely Homer's *The Odyssey*, and ending with the works of twentieth-century modernist writers like Marcel Proust and Virginia Woolf to illustrate examples of mimetic representation throughout centuries. Auerbach introduces a hermeneutic close reading of a representative work in each chapter and attempts to draw out the essence of an entire period from the reading of a single text. Focusing specifically on the realistic details in his selected texts belonging to different eras, Auerbach claims that all realistic literature is "the imitation of real life and living" (2003, p. 119), "imitation of the sensory experience of life on earth" (2003, p. 191), and "the direct imitation of contemporary reality" (2003, p. 258). In other words, Auerbach takes up a mimetic position in his definition of realistic literature which depends on a presentation of human reality in its most common and ordinary aspects and imitation comes to be the most critical concept in his discussions on the notion of mimesis in terms of representative arts. To formulate a contrasting view, Auerbach gives romance as an example and asserts that romance, as a literary genre, cannot be seen as realistic imitation. He explains that "[t]he romance ... is—in the other specimens and fragments that have come down to us—so crammed with magic, adventure, and mythology, so overburdened with erotic detail, that it cannot possibly be considered an imitation of everyday life" (2003, p. 30). That is because, according to Auerbach, the nature of imitation necessitates displaying ample realistic details and describing ordinary everyday life on the part of the artist.

Auerbach correlates imitation and the artist's experiences of life to such an extent that the artist's deviation from this mimetic principle may result in aesthetic complications. He expounds on this by saying that

[i]mitation of reality is imitation of the sensory experience of life on earth—among the most essential characteristics of which would seem to be its possessing a history, its changing and developing. Whatever degree of freedom the imitating artist may be granted in his work, he cannot be allowed to deprive reality of this characteristic, which is its very essence". (2003, p. 191)

Reminiscent of the Aristotelian notion of the universality of poetry, Auerbach suggests that "the direct imitation of contemporary reality [has] served a timeless and universal purpose" since essential human nature has endured the same throughout history (2003, p. 258). That is why, the artist can never be diverted from the mimetic principle and his imitation of life should mirror the contemporary reality perceived through his life experiences.

Auerbach's ideas on mimesis can be related to his contemporary Georg Lukacs, the Hungarian Marxist philosopher and literary critic, who explores the concept of mimesis on a similar ground as Auerbach but also bathes it in Marxist ideology. The development of Lukacs' aesthetics is highly informed by his commitment to the general materialist premises of Marxism and is most accessible in the collection of his later works *Gesammelte Werke* (1968-1981, henceforth *GW*). In general terms, Lukacs' arguments about mimesis are built on the assumption that all artistic and literary phenomena are "reflections" or "mirroring" of an objective reality (*GW* 11, p. 22; p. 55). However, this reflection or mirroring does not depend on the immediacy of everyday practical engagements as it does in Auerbach's conception. According to Lukacs' definition of art as reflection, the function of art is to present "the totality of the objective, historical reality" within an "homogeneous medium" like visibility in painting or language in literature (*GW* 11, p. 642). Through such kind of a medium, art singles out and represents the general aspects of a specific form of human reality as a "closed world-in-itself" or as an "intensive totality" (*GW* 11, p. 238; *GW* 12: p. 232). In Lukacs' argument, the medium of each specific form of art establishes "strict laws that allow the work of art to adequately present the whole world of humanity from a specific standpoint" (Stahl, 2018). That is why, although works of art represent



objective reality, they are also subject-dependent. This conception of the work of art as a closed totality that is constituted by the strict laws of its medium and that objectively reflects the historical reality from a specific point is closely related to his understanding of mimesis. Mimesis, for Lukacs, enables humans to imitate natural processes and thus to represent the essential aspects of the world in a closed and totalizing manner. It is the aesthetic representation of life in a particular medium and, in this way, is separated from the immediacy and necessity of everyday practical reactions. In virtue of this feature, mimesis in representative arts is determinedly taken as a reflection which arouses an aesthetic effect on its audience (GW 11, p. 382).

One of the more recent literary critics who theorize on the term mimesis is Monika Fludernik, with her outstanding narratological study, *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology* (1996). In this work, Fludernik aims to reconceptualize the main premises of narratology after the poststructuralist thought, which is distrustful of and inimical towards the term “natural” that Fludernik acknowledges as the foundation of her theory. Fludernik’s book is groundbreaking in following a historical progress of narrative forms and structures and construing those constructs within the context of what she calls “natural narrativity”. Her ideas are revolutionary as she proposes to theorize narrativity in terms of universally valid cognitive parameters and constraints which are associated with the formal aspects of any given narrative. She claims that narrativity is constructed by experientiality, which she defines as “the quasi-mimetic evocation of ‘real-life experience’” (1996, p. 9). Fludernik uses the term “quasi-mimetic” to define experientiality since it is, in her account, not merely and purely imitation. This statement requires a clear understanding of her definition of mimesis. Fludernik states,

mimesis must *not* be identified as imitation but needs to be treated as the artificial and illusionary projection of a semiotic structure which the reader recuperates in terms of a fictional reality. This recuperation, since it is based on cognitive parameters gleaned from real-world experience, inevitably results in an implicit though incomplete homologization of the fictional and the real worlds” (1996, p. 26, original italics).

In other words, narrative’s experientiality entails its activation of some natural cognitive parameters which may be described as the “basic structures of human

engagement with the world that straddle the divide between real-life experience and semiotic representations of experience” (Caracciolo, 2014). That is to say, experientiality signifies the ways by means of which narrative provides readers familiarity with real life experience. In this sense, Fludernik equates mimesis with realism, the core of which lies in the mimetic evocation of a fictional world that cognitively and epistemically depends on real world familiarity. In her own words, “[r]ealist texts are, in the standard definitions, mimetic texts” as they portray a fictional reality that typically replicates the reader’s understanding of the real world (1996, p. 121).

Mimesis, in philosophical and literary critical terms, has essentially been formulated through the notion of imitation since its original conception in the classical theories of Plato and Aristotle. This formulation has brought about the general assumptions that the artist imitates nature in their aesthetic works and art is the imitation of life as it is. This has so far been the conventional reception of the term mimesis beginning with Plato and Aristotle’s philosophy of representative arts including poetry. Following them, later important critics of the western literature have paid attention to the concept of mimesis, namely imitative nature of artistic creation, in their literary critical works. Sir Philip Sidney, as a Renaissance critic, stresses the crucial role of imitation in artistic production and puts emphasis on art’s functions to both teach and delight. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, under the influence of Romanticism, shares the mimetic assumption that art is imitative in essence and adds that the artist should take active part in artistic creation through his imagination. More recently, Erich Auerbach, one of the most quoted scholars affiliated with the study of mimesis, has foregrounded the opinion that literature as an art is the product of the artist’s meticulous imitation of life which is enriched by everyday life details such as common incidents and artifacts. Auerbach’s contemporary Lukacs has similarly claimed that artistic and literary products are imitations or reflections of the external reality, but has also added that while doing so they represent the essential aspects of the world in a closed totality. The contemporary critic Monika Fludernik, on the other hand, averts the term imitation in her discussion of mimesis and stresses the importance of cognitive parameters through which the reader recuperates a fictional reality

constructed by means of mimetic representation of real life. Consequently, the concept of mimesis in representative arts has received much critical attention throughout centuries through the aforementioned, and many more, theorists that have developed interpretations bathed in the literary critical principles of their era.

### **3.2. Mimetic Fiction**

In contemporary literary critical environments, mimesis, or realistic representation, is intricately linked with the novel, which rose as a genre in Britain in the eighteenth century. The rise of the novel genre is basically interconnected with the rise of the middle class<sup>3</sup> and with the gradual change in attitude towards the referentiality of narrative<sup>4</sup> in the century. Since artistic and literary products rest heavily on political, financial, social, cultural and intellectual contexts of a certain time and place in history, it is highly important to observe the factors that contributed to the rise and spread of this new genre in detail. The novel emerged “with the birth of capitalism in Europe and the new bourgeois class”, which resulted in “an increase of literacy and the growth of a large, widely distributed reading public” (Kitsi-Mitakou 2015, p. 117). This new mode of narrative writing was, first of all, a challenge to the medieval romance and its literary progeny of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and revealed the socioeconomic changes succeeding medieval feudalism. The bourgeoisie, namely the newly rising middle class, disregarded the romance as it was a genre dedicated to upholding the feudal system and disguising its restrictions by presenting an ideal to the readers that would compensate for their own lives. The novel, on the other hand, was celebrated as “the new form of prose writing that promised to tell the truth about their everyday reality” in a time period opting for “a striking preference for true stories narrated in an unbiased objective mode” (Kitsi-Mitakou, 2015, p. 120). Through the conscious filtering of representation, the novel promised to illustrate a realistic image of external reality rather than an ideal compensation. As Richetti explains

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<sup>3</sup> Watt (1957), Clark (1975), Mitchell (2005), Boulukos (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Richetti (1996), Spacks (2006).

it very aggressively and insistently seeks to restrict meaningful, significant, and serious narrative to the actual and familiar world of more or less daily experience and to banish or trivialize the older and manifestly unrealistic genres of epic and romance. In this new set of attitudes to narrative, romance and epic are branded as preposterous and irrelevant in their unreality, in their distance from the everyday world and experience of most readers. For the novel, the ordinary and the specifically and concretely experiential (along with the everyday language specific to that realm) come in this new world of narrative to define the absolute boundaries or limits of reality and by extension of moral significance. (1996, p. 4)

In this manner, the novel became the new kind of fictional narrative which evolved through “a process of rejection, modification, and transformation of previous forms or practices of storytelling” (Richetti 1996, p. 2). The mimetic fiction or realist novel, then, rose over the course of the eighteenth century and signified a revision and reformation of older attitudes toward the referentiality of narrative.

The novel genre emerged in the modern period, and that is why realism of the novel is also related to the Enlightenment thought and assumption that the truth can be accessed by the individual through his senses and rational thinking. This proposition belongs to the prominent French philosopher René Descartes, who formed the basis for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century rationalism. In his notable works *Discourse on Method* (1637) and *Meditations* (1641), he framed the modern idea that the pursuit of truth depends on individual perceptions and dissociation from past ideologies and traditional forms and contexts. In other words, truth is considered as an entirely individual matter which is independent of and even deviant from the past traditions and concepts. For a rationalist like Descartes, there exists an external, material and objective world and it can only be perceived by the senses. In “Meditation 6” of his *Meditations*, he writes

it must be concluded that corporeal objects exist. Nevertheless they are not perhaps exactly such as we perceive by the senses, for their comprehension by the senses is, in many instances, very obscure and confused, but it is at least necessary to admit that all which I clearly and distinctly conceive as in them, that is generally speaking, ... really exists, external to me. (2004, p. 186)

Consequently, an external world exists in Descartes’ account; but, it is only a representative revision of the mind itself. The form of an external object, say a tree, is perceived by the senses and is modified as a representation in mind. Only in this

way can the tree be called a real object of the external world, and thus the external world depends upon sense impressions.

By the time the novel emerged as a genre, there was a general preference for mimetic and realistic prose representation of the particular and the external and distrust in medieval and classical forms of literature that had depended upon the universals and the abstractions fueled by the ancient and classical myths and legends. The intellectual demands of the growing middle class for reading ordinary stories about everyday life and the Enlightenment assumption about the accessibility of truth through the senses resulted in an inclination towards the representation of particular and material objects of sense perception. In this respect, mimesis and realism as theorized in philosophy can shed light on the generic features of the novel with its emphasis on realistic images and true accounts of external reality. According to Ian Watt, whose most quoted book *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) has influenced the critical analyses of the genre ever since<sup>5</sup>, the influence of realism on the novel can be observed in “the general temper of realist thought, the methods of investigation it has used, and the kinds of problems it has raised”:

The general temper of philosophical realism has been critical, anti-traditional and innovating; its method has been the study of the particulars of experience by the individual investigator, who, ideally at least, is free from the body of past assumptions and traditional beliefs; and it has given a peculiar importance to semantics, to the problem of the nature of the correspondence between words and reality. (1957, p. 12)

All of these features can be correlated to the generic characteristics of the novel genre, which draws particular attention to a correspondence between real life and fiction through the representation of everyday reality as perceived by ordinary people. Consequently, realism in the novel is inextricably linked with mimesis in

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<sup>5</sup> Ian Watt’s discussion on the novel genre is centered on the eighteenth-century English novel and declares the novels by Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding as the prominent cases of the era. Watt elaborates on philosophical realism and how it is reflected in the novel genre with particular attention to “formal realism” which he correlates with realistic representation and verisimilitude in fiction. Generations of critics that followed Watt have portrayed various complicated, compelling, and even confusing understandings of realism and have proposed different types of realism that lead to groundbreaking discussions on the subject matter (Ermarth, 2003; Spacks, 2006). In this respect, this thesis acknowledges the diversity and heterogeneity that the term “realism” embodies, yet makes use of Watt’s understanding of realism as it fits into how the narratologists Monica Fludemik (1996) and Brian Richardson (2015) define the term in relation to mimetic fiction.

representative arts as the novel's conception of mimesis develops from the premises of realism. It would not be wrong, then, to label the realist novel as mimetic fiction in Watt's account as Fludernik also does in her discussion of mimesis in relation to realism.

In its pursuit of truth and representation of reality, mimetic fiction, or realist novel, is bathed in the Enlightenment idea of accessibility of the truth through rational thinking and individual senses. As Auerbach (1946) and Lukacs (1968–1981) similarly argue, it depends on the imitation or reflection of sensory experiences related to external objective reality. In this way, it displays a strong trust in individual narratives, particular circumstances, ordinary characters, commonplace themes, and detailed descriptions of the external world. This feature distinguishes the realist novel from the previous literary genres which borrowed their forms and subject matters from the writers of ancient Greece and Rome and rested heavily on traditional universal themes and plots. As opposed to the medieval and classical genres like epic, tragedy, or romance, the realist novel does not illustrate the universal. The plots in this genre have to be “acted out by particular people in particular circumstances, rather than, as had been common in the past, by general human types against a background primarily determined by the appropriate literary convention” (Watt, 1957, p. 15). The realist novel also brings about the representation of individuals as characters who take part in particular circumstances and face trials which they may or may not cope with successfully. The individualized characters of mimetic fiction bear realistic names and surnames like Pamela Andrews or David Copperfield rather than general and abstract names loaded with predetermined assets like Everyman or Goodwill. These ordinary people with particular names are “in most cases coming from the lower strata of society and have nothing epic or heroic about them”; they are low and base since they “have more flaws than virtues, are more cowardly than valiant, and more often than not make human mistakes” (Kitsi-Mitakou, 2015, p. 120). As the novel makes room for non-heroic plots and puts emphasis on the representation of real life from the perspective of ordinary people, it becomes vital that the story and the characters are set in a particular spatial and temporal setting. The characters act in a distinguishable time period and in lifelike physical and social environments. That is why, the principle of

verisimilitude, with its focus on specificity of time and space and its commitment to portraying authentic and truthful situations, dialogues, and characters is essential to the realist novel, which separates itself from past traditions and craves for novelty and innovation in terms of representation.

### **3.3. Reading *David Copperfield* as an Example of Mimetic Fiction in the light of Possible Worlds Theory**

*David Copperfield*, in full title *The Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield the Younger*, is a novel by the prominent English writer Charles Dickens published in 1850. It has always been one of Dickens' most acclaimed novels and in his "heart of hearts a favourite child" as he himself states in the Preface to the book. The novel is the most autobiographical work of Dickens as he relates childhood and youth experiences that shaped his mature personality, that is, his labor in a factory, his education and learning, and his development from a parliamentary journalist into a successful novelist. The story is narrated in the first person by an adult David Copperfield who looks back at his past and tells his childhood and youth experiences that work quite an influence on his present life against a realistic 19<sup>th</sup>-century Victorian background abounding in sense impressions, individualized characters, ordinary lives, particular cases, recognizable settings, and detailed external descriptions. This realist, retrospective and autodiegetic narration frames the construction of two different sets of narrative worlds constellated in a narrative universe. The following parts of this chapter will discuss to what extent *David Copperfield* as an example of realist novel, or mimetic fiction, lends itself to an analysis from the framework of Possible Worlds Theory, specifically on the basis of the three critical parameters pertaining to the theory which this study identifies as the narrative universe, the narrator, and the mimetic principle.

### 3.3.1. The Narrative Universe of *David Copperfield*

Possible Worlds Theory functions as a useful tool in discussions of plot for post-classical narratologists<sup>6</sup>. The basic logico-ontological principles related to actuality, possibility and multiplicity of worlds provide a framework for the definition and working mechanism of narrative worlds and narrative universes in post-classical narratological studies. As opposed to the classical narratologists<sup>7</sup> who put emphasis on teleological development and certain closure in theories of plot, the narratologists adopting post-classical approaches propose a modally-oriented plot structure that allows for a semantic domain with a system consisting of one set of actuality and one or more than one set(s) of possibilities. This modally-indexed semantic domain is called narrative universe, which can be described, in possible worlds discourse, as a constellation of narrative worlds by means of modalities. Narrative worlds, that is, the constituents of narrative universes, are seen as the totalities of time, space, existents, physical and mental events, and consequent changes in literary texts. Any literary text produces a narrative universe, which entails actual and possible narrative worlds sharing the same modal structure and a potential actualization of possibilities is what constitutes the plot of the text.

In this respect, Ryan puts forwards a segmentation of narrative worlds of a narrative universe in modal terms (1985, pp. 720-732). She states there are two categories of narrative worlds in a modally-structured narrative universe: the absolutely and autonomously existing one, and contingently and relatively existing one(s). In Ryan's account, the autonomous world is the actual world which rests only on actualized propositions; the contingent world(s), on the other hand, is(are) the relative world(s) that depend(s) on modalized propositions. This creates a modal stratification and brings about a structural hierarchy prioritizing the actual world over

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<sup>6</sup> Post-classical narratology is seen as “an extension, an expansion, a broadening, a refinement” of classical narratology; it “includes classical narratology as one of its decisive stages or components, rethinks and recontextualizes it, exposes its limits but exploits its possibilities, retains its bases, reevaluates its scope, and constitutes a new version” (Prince, 2008, p. 116).

<sup>7</sup> Classical narratology is defined as “a scientifically motivated, structuralist inspired theory of narrative which examines what narratives have in common as well as what enables them to differ narratively from one another” (Prince, 2008, p. 115). Among its most famous representatives are Roland Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, A. J. Greimas, and Claude Bremond.



any possible relative world. In a further study, Ryan elaborates on this modally segmented narrative structure and names the actualized world of a narrative universe as “the textual actual world” and the relative worlds depending on modalized propositions are labelled as “alternative possible worlds” (1991, p. 112). The textual actual world of a narrative universe is determined by means of the external material facts affirmed by the narrator and acquires ontological privilege as it is founded on actualized propositions. Relative to, dependent on, or connected with this ontological center are alternative possible worlds which are constructed either through the counterfactual statements of narrators and characters or through what narrators or characters think, believe, imagine, wish, narrate, or dream. By means of this modally oriented plot structure that is bathed in Possible Worlds Theory, the actual and the material as signposted by the narrator is differentiated from the possible and the mental activity of narrator or characters.

In *David Copperfield* the story unfolds through the recollection of the past by the narrator and protagonist David. An adult and mature David looks back at his childhood and youth and tells his own story from a retrospective distance in a chronological fashion. In this respect, David is a homodiegetic/autodiegetic narrator depending on his memories, perceptions, feelings and thoughts, and also what he experiences and witnesses, and what was once revealed to him as a child or a young man. In terms of Possible Worlds Theory, this retrospective narration paves the way for the construction of a narrative universe entailing two distinctive sets of narrative worlds: the one occupied by the narrating David and the one inhabited by the narrated David. These two narrative worlds are attributed to the two selves of the protagonist: the narrating self is located in the textual actual world of the narrative universe as understood from the exterior remarks of the narrator; and the narrated self is positioned in a relative alternative possible world whose existence depends upon the protagonist’s act of narration. The narrative universe of *David Copperfield* including its narrative worlds and how they work in relation to each other and also in relation to the plot’s movement can be illustrated by the following diagram:

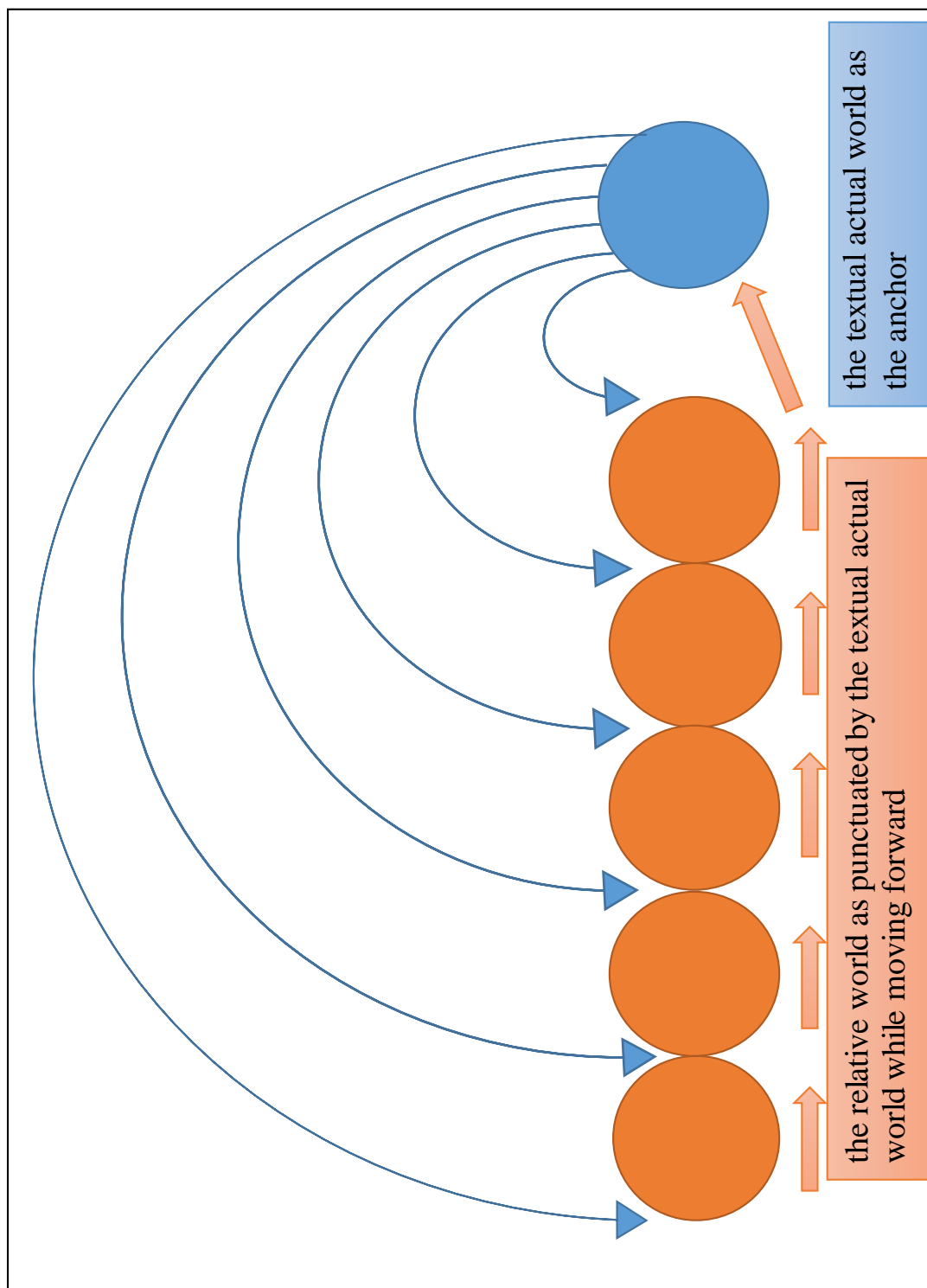


Figure 3.1 An illustration of the narrative universe of *David Copperfield*

The narrating David is a middle-aged man enjoying the peace and happiness of domestic order and the fame of a successful novelist. He narrates his life story through his memories, and the semantic domain in which this act of narration takes place becomes the textual actual world, which may be seen as the affirmed anchoring point of the narrative universe. The autonomy of this centralized narrative world is contrasted with a relative world produced by means of the act of narration. This relative world can be described as a knowledge world, or a K-world, as categorized by Ryan (1985), since what is narrated in this world is presented as a true account of a life story. This kind of relation between an autonomous narrative world and a narrative world relative to it is founded upon a hierarchical structure in which the one bestowed with autonomy is privileged over the relatively constructed one. The segmentation of the narrative universe into two sets of narrative worlds that work in a hierarchical system, however, does not impede unity or coherence of the narrative universe. On the contrary, this stratification ultimately provides the structural unity of the narrative universe. The narrating David starts his story from his birth, continues with his childhood experiences, advances into his youth years, and ends his story with an account of his adult life, which corresponds to the time in which his act of narration takes place. Thus, what he narrates ultimately merges into what he lives; and the relative world, which is constructed as a result of the adult David's act of narration, matches with the textual actual world, which is the exact domain of this act of narration, at the end of the novel; and this becomes a means of ensuring the structural unity of the narrative universe.

David's life story, as narrated in the relative world, is teleological since it follows a strict chronological order towards a unified closure. This linear development in the narrated domain is punctuated with the obvious and regular interruptions by the narrating domain. In other words, the relative world is explicitly and consistently interrupted by the explanations and comments of the narrating self from the textual actual world. These interruptions enhance the structural unity of the narrative universe as they offer further information related to the events being described in that moment. Since the narrating David has the knowledge of what happened, what is happening, and what will happen at the same time, his interruptions modify the story being told in

the relative world and this strengthens the overall effect of the structural unity. The very beginning of the novel is quite illustrative of the frequent interruption of the narration by the narrator's remarks and how this works for the structurally unified narrative universe:

Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show. To begin my life with the beginning of my life, I record that I was born (as I have been informed and believe) on a Friday, at twelve o'clock at night. It was remarked that the clock began to strike, and I began to cry, simultaneously.

In consideration of the day and hour of my birth, it was declared by the nurse, and by some sage women in the neighbourhood ... that I was destined to be unlucky in life; and secondly, that I was privileged to see ghosts and spirits; both these gifts inevitably attaching, as they believed, to all unlucky infants of either gender, born towards the small hours on a Friday night.

I need say nothing here, on the first head, because nothing can show better than my history whether that prediction was verified or falsified by the result. On the second branch of the question, I will only remark, that unless I ran through that part of my inheritance while I was still a baby, I have not come into it yet. (2004, p. 13)

The narrating David tells us of his own birth by touching upon its specific circumstances. In this account, external reminders of his presence as the adult narrator who has long gone through the experience are clearly visible. As if talking to the reader directly, the narrator gives information about what the reader will witness in the following pages: whether he will be "the hero of [his] own story" and whether his "history" will verify the predictions related to his birth. The story of David's birth in the relative world, then, is consciously interrupted by the narrator's explicit remarks coming from the textual actual world; and this interruptive process emerges as the unifying element of the narrative universe's structure.

In the narrative universe of *David Copperfield*, there is a clear-cut hierarchal narratological distinction between the textual actual world and its relative world, except for the ending of the novel where these two worlds unite. Yet, the presence and perspective of the experienced narrator is always felt in the relative world as shown in the above quotation. This is made possible by means of the retrospective distance the narrator employs to make connections between his act of narration and his narrative, between his narrating self and narrated self. David's opinions of his friend Steerforth

when Steerforth is introduced to the Peggotty family is a good example to demonstrate the crucial role of retrospective distance in the interruptions of the relative world by the textual actual world. Having in mind Steerforth's seduction of Emily, Mr. Peggotty's daughter and David's childhood friend, David the narrator sighs:

I thought even then, and I have no doubt now, that the consciousness of success in his determination to please, inspired him with a new delicacy of perception, and made it, subtle as it was, more easy to him. If anyone had told me, then, that all this was a brilliant game, played for the excitement of the moment, for the employment of high spirits, in the thoughtless love of superiority, in a mere wasteful careless course of winning what was worthless to him, and next minute thrown away—I say, if anyone had told me such a lie that night, I wonder in what manner of receiving it my indignation would have found a vent! (2004, p. 318)

It is clearly seen that David the character who was experiencing the scene with the Peggotty household and Steerforth was unaware at the time of his friend's ill intentions towards Emily. However, David the narrator has the retrospective wisdom of what will happen related to Steerforth and the Peggotty family and he also possesses now, as a mature and experienced man, the analytic capacity to make deductions that he was not able to do then. In other words, the young and naive perspective of David the character is measured against the advanced perspective of David the narrator in the interruption scene. Consequently, the interruptive moment of the relative world by the textual actual world becomes a way of manifesting the changed and enriched perspective of David. Such a moral advancement on the part of the protagonist of the novel, then, comes to be another element to add up to the structural unity of the narrative universe.

The working mechanism of the two narrative worlds, the relation between the two selves (i.e. the narrating and the narrated) of the protagonist, and the intersections of these two sets of worlds and selves are the crucial factors that sustain the structural unity of the narrative universe of *David Copperfield*. On a more contextual analysis, it is possible to assert that these factors contribute to the thematic unity of the novel as well. The two-layered and interdependent narration, which is made possible through the existence of a protagonist with a split positioning as a narrator, sheds also light on the contextual unity and coherence of the narrative universe. Thus, the function of the protagonist in *David Copperfield*

is far greater than that of narrator; it works within the novel's frame of retrospection to shape the structure; it gives deeper significance to and closer integration of minor episodes with the novel's larger unity; thus it contributes largely to the novel's total effect and pervading tone.

(Needham, 1954, p. 81)

Indeed, the reader witnesses the events, first, through the eyes of the narrated David and in those moments the narrated David emerges as a focal character. Then, through the perspective of the narrating David these events are revisited. What is experienced by the younger narrated self is reviewed and interpreted by the adult narrating self. This bilateral process turns out to be a means of revealing David's character and of tracing his emotional growth. His maturing capacity of feeling, his developing sensitivity to emotional relationships, and his advanced observation skill are conveyed via the revision and interpretation by the adult protagonist. This makes David's story whole and integrated, and thus contributes to the thematic unity in the narrative universe.

David's revision of his own story by means of a more experienced viewpoint signifies the thematic unity which is mainly centered on the character progression and the emotional development of the protagonist. David as the adult narrator constantly comments on his feelings he had at the time of experience and he has at the time of narration; and this lays bare the importance and permanence of the experiences in his emotional growth while at the same time presenting more lively and moving accounts. Some of the most conspicuous examples take place in the interruption scenes concerning David's childhood days. The older narrating self interrupts in David's childhood story being told in the relative world from the textual actual world. As an example, David recounts one of his dialogues with his stepfather Mr. Murdstone and reflects his feelings of both then and now:

As I recall our being opposed thus, face to face, I seem again to hear my heart beat fast and high.

'David,' he said, making his lips thin, by pressing them together, 'if I have an obstinate horse or dog to deal with, what do you think I do?'

'I don't know.'

'I beat him.'

...

'You have a good deal of intelligence for a little fellow,' he said, with a grave smile that belonged to him, 'and you understood me very well, I see.'

...

‘We shall soon improve our youthful humours.’

God help me, I might have been improved for my whole life, I might have been made another creature perhaps, for life, by a kind word at that season. A word of encouragement and explanation, of pity for my childish ignorance, of welcome home, of reassurance to me that it was home, might have made me dutiful to him in my heart henceforth, instead of in my hypocritical outside, and might have made me respect instead of hate him. (2004, pp. 57-58)

Here, the narrating self offers a portrayal of Mr. Murdstone by enabling the reader to see him as David himself does and also to assess his characteristics together with David as mature understanding allows. Another interruptive moment related to David's childhood memories which reinforce the thematic unity occurs when David the narrator tells about his school days and his friendship with Steerforth:

I was moved by no interested or selfish motive, nor was I moved by fear of him. I admired and loved him, and his approval was return enough. It was so precious to me that I look back on these trifles, now, with an aching heart. (2004, p. 104)

Through this reflection, the reader gets to see a gradual change in David's character and emotional responses. His childish view of Steerforth as a dear friend is contrasted with the influence of his retrospective wisdom which affords him with the knowledge of Steerforth's malign actions. Similarly, his remembrance of the beginning of his harsh working life as a child at his stepfather's factory demonstrates his past feelings that still influence him at the time of narration:

I now approach a period of my life, which I can never lose the remembrance of, while I remember anything: and the recollection of which has often, without my invocation, come before me like a ghost, and haunted happier times. (2004, p. 161)

This interruption in the story acts as a foreshadowing of the drastic future events that await David as a child worker and a means to illustrate his emotional growth since then. In this way, it bridges up the textual actual world and the relative world thematically.

Some other interruption movements that demonstrate David's character development and emotional growth and that eventually sustain the thematic unity occur when David's memories of youth are narrated in the relative world. For example, when David the narrator tells about his youthful infatuation with Dora, his wife-to-be,

he expresses his genuine feelings of the narrated moment and how he considers them now at the moment of narration:

To be allowed to call her 'Dora', to write to her, to dote upon and worship her, to have reason to think that when she was with other people she was yet mindful of me, seemed to me the summit of human ambition - I am sure it was the summit of mine. There is no doubt whatever that I was a lackadaisical young spooney; but there was a purity of heart in all this, that prevents my having quite a contemptuous recollection of it, let me laugh as I may. (2004, pp. 401-402)

In this manner, the narrating David recapitulates his courtship with Dora and leads the reader in the track of his emotional progress. This helps the reader thematically connect the two narrative worlds of the novel. On another account of his youth experiences, David recollects the tempest that cost the lives of Steerforth, the tempter of Emily, and Ham, Emily's fiancé. This brings about his deep feelings pervading both his past and present, and his narration and narrative:

I now approach an event in my life, so indelible, so awful, so bound by an infinite variety of ties to all that has preceded it, in these pages, that, from the beginning of my narrative, I have seen it growing larger and larger as I advanced, like a great tower in a plain, and throwing its forecast shadow even on the incidents of my childish days. (2004, p. 790)

These thematic comments bring out the significance of the interruption moments, the moments where David the narrator interferes in the relative world and revises his story, as they reveal the advancement in David's character and emotional responses. Other than that, they contribute to the portrayal of the other characters by enabling the reader to see from David's eyes through his character development and maturation process. They are also meant to recapitulate the events, to lead the reader, to foreshadow the action, and consequently to bridge up the textual actual world and the relative world in the narrative universe.

### **3.3.2. The Narrator in *David Copperfield***

Possible Worlds Theory proves to be functional in exploring the narrative universe of *David Copperfield*. Dickens' novel is a typical example of teleological and experiential mimetic fiction in its formal and contextual features, and thus it lends itself well to an analysis through Possible Worlds Theory, which emphasizes the clear ontological demarcation of narrative worlds in a literary text. The retrospective



narration employed in the novel brings about two clearly defined sets of narrative worlds in ontological terms: (1) the autonomous, stable and privileged textual actual world, and (2) the affected and dependent relative world. The former houses the adult narrator David with the advantages of mature retrospective wisdom, character depth and emotional development; whereas the latter encompasses his experiences, observations and feelings as an innocent child and then a lighthearted young man. This process reveals the significance of the narrator as the structurally and contextually unifying element of the narrative universe of the novel. That is why, the category, position, and scope of the narrator in *David Copperfield* should be examined in more detail in relation to Possible Worlds Theory.

Following Genette's categorization of narrators in relation to the "person" category in narrative situation, David Copperfield is defined as a homodiegetic narrator as he is "present as a character in the story he tells" (1980, p. 245). He is not heterodiegetic; that is, he is not "absent from the story he tells" (Genette, 1980, p. 245); on the contrary, he is the central character whose story is being narrated by no one other than himself. Thus, in Genette's terms he is further defined as an autodiegetic narrator since he is "the hero of his [own] narrative" (1980, p. 245). Post-classical narratologists mostly agree with this narratorial classification, but they question the boundaries of the specific definitions of the narrator types. Ryan, for instance, claims that it is not "necessary to assign the same ontological status to the narrator throughout a text" (2016, p. 16). A narrator may start as a character of the story and work on a homodiegetic level, but then may develop and continue into the impersonal heterodiegetic level.

Similar to this, Case asserts that a homodiegetic narrator may desire the status of a heterodiegetic narrator during the course of a story (2005, p. 319). About Dickens' homodiegetic narrator in *David Copperfield* she says,

despite its technical limitation of perspective, the narrative voice actually has a great deal in common, rhetorically, with Dickens's heterodiegetic narrators. That is, ... [Dickens] uses David as a narrator to tell the same kind of story he has told elsewhere with heterodiegetic narrators, and one which makes similar claims to reference. While the narrative voice is identified with a particular character, it aspires to the

same scope and clarity of perception and judgment claimed by Dickens's other narrators. (2005, p. 319)

The technical limitation Case mentions is related to the one-character perspective of David the narrator. As opposed to a heterodiegetic narrator whose perspective is not restricted to any character in the story and who is supposed to provide an objective account of the story, David is limited to only his perspective and is thus necessarily subjective in his narration. However, thanks to his split positioning as the narrating self and the narrated self, the narrator in *David Copperfield* transgresses this categorical boundary. The character David's life story is narrated in the relative world by the narrator David belonging to the ontologically superior textual actual world. This "localized splitting apart of the character functions and the narrator functions of the homodiegetic 'I'" (Phelan 1996, p. 105) bestows the homodiegetic narrator David with heterodiegetic claims to the story. While David is identified as a homodiegetic narrator who focuses on his life through his own perspective in the relative world of the narrative universe, he is granted the wisdom, observation and judgment of an impersonal heterodiegetic narrator in the textual actual world. In this way, he becomes a hybrid narrator encompassing both homodiegetic and heterodiegetic characteristics.

The other typology of narrators in Genette's account is related to the "narrative levels" category forming the narrative situation in a text (1980, p. 227). According to Genette, "*any event a narrative recounts is at a diegetic level immediately higher than the level at which the narrating act producing this narrative is placed.*" (1980, p. 228, original italics). Any text that begins with a first-level narrative is indeed produced by an act of narration which is necessarily external, secondary to that level. "The narrating instance of a first [level] narrative is therefore extradiegetic by definition, as the narrating instance of a second [level] narrative is [intra]diegetic by definition" (Genette, 1980, p. 229). In this respect, extradiegetic narrators are positioned outside the story that is being narrated. They are impersonal and not individuated as a character of the story; that is why, they generally have an omniscient perspective and their discourse is the basis of the narration. Intradiegetic narrators, on the other hand, are located inside the story. They are individuated as characters who report their own experiences or the events they observe; therefore, their perspective is limited to themselves and their discourse is not the primary support of the narration. In terms of

this typology of narrators, the narrator in *David Copperfield* is described as an intradiegetic narrator as he tells his own life story and his perspective is limited to what he experiences or witnesses. David's life story remains within the boundaries of the intradiegetic level and is quoted by an adult David that is situated outside the story.

As stated above, post-classical narratologists question the boundaries of narratorial categorizations and propose more flexible explanations for the status of narrators in literary texts. The narrator may not stick to the same ontological standing all through the text or he/she may incorporate characteristics pertaining to more than one narrator type. In this respect, it can be asserted that Dickens' narrator in *David Copperfield* embodies the intradiegetic and extradiegetic elements in his split positioning. Intradiegetic elements exist within the relative world in which David is a character and his life is being narrated; extradiegetic elements, on the other hand, are reserved for the narrator David and located in the textual actual world, and play a significant role in the presentation of the relative world. Consequently, David can be defined as a first person intradiegetic narrator as he is an individuated character and participates in the inner space of the story being told. Yet, he has also extradiegetic elements as he is the one to narrate his life story from an outer space and retrospective distance. In other words, he is a narrator who exists in the story he tells, but whose discourse is not a part of the story; and this is made possible through the construction of two different narrative worlds, the textual actual world covering the narrator's extradiegetic elements and the relative world entailing the intradiegetic elements of the narrator in the narrative universe. At this point, Ryan's formulation of an inner circle and an outer circle for the narratives with this kind of hybrid narrators is quite useful. She asserts that narratives "encompass not only the story *per se*, but also the backstory, and sometimes the afterstory, ... and not only the scene of the story, but all the places that characters think or talk about;" therefore, they should be divided into "an inner circle occupied by the events that constitute the focus of the story and an outer circle that represents a larger spatial and temporal frame" (2016, p. 14). David's narrated self, then, is situated within the inner circle which encompasses the relative world of the novel's narrative universe; his narrating self, on the other hand, takes up

a position in the outer circle that entails the textual actual world in the narrative universe of the novel.

The hybrid narrator in terms of his narrative level (homodiegetic – heterodiegetic, intradiegetic – extradiegetic), position (inner circle – outer circle) and scope of perspective (one person perspective – omniscient perspective) in *David Copperfield* may be illustrated in Possible Worlds Theory discourse in a diagram such as the following:

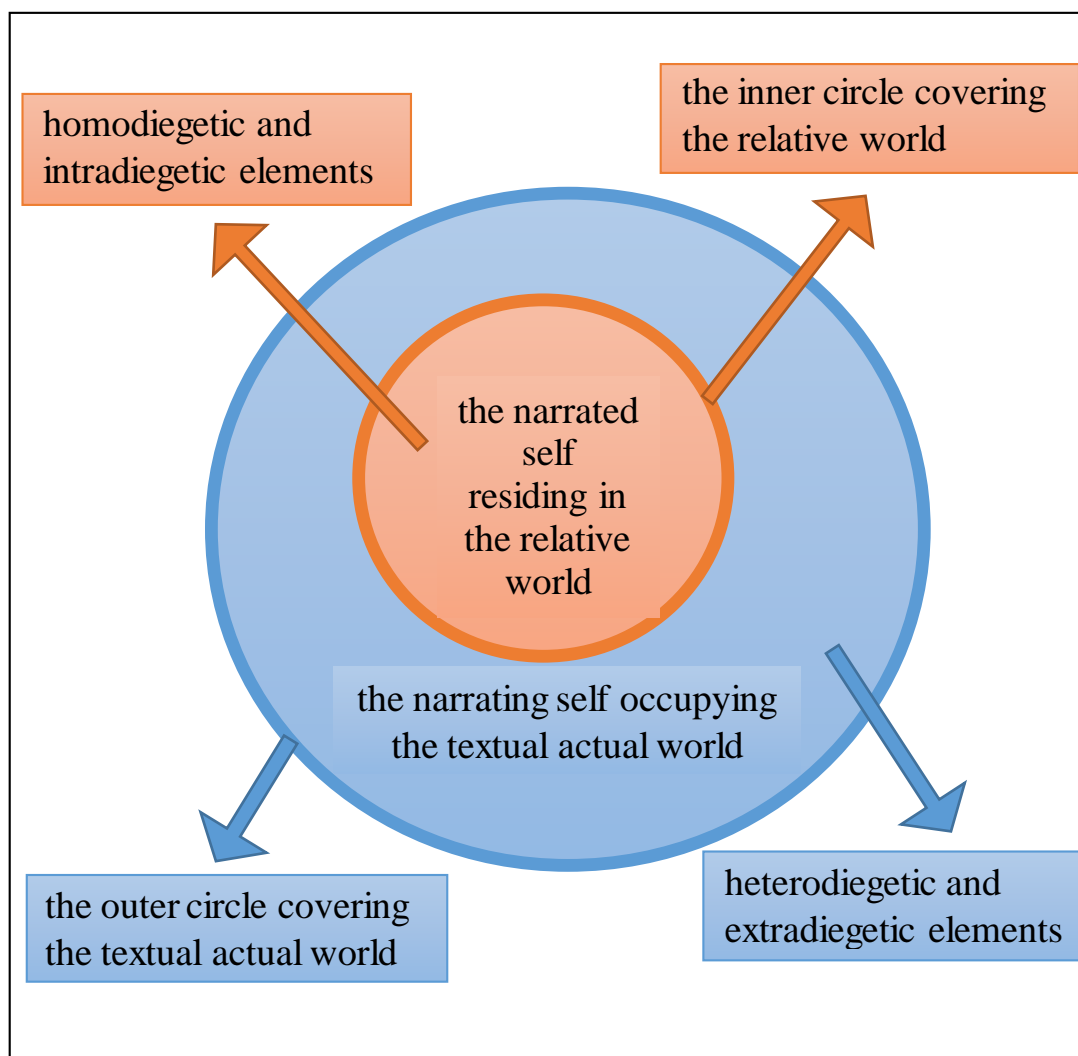


Figure 3.2 An illustration of the narrative level, position and scope of the narrator in *David Copperfield*

David Copperfield is a hybrid narrator transgressing the categorical boundaries of narrator typologies. He works on homodiegetic and intradiegetic levels as he is located inside the story as the main character in the inner circle; but he encompasses heterodiegetic and extradiegetic elements as well since he is also the one to narrate his story from an outer circle and retrospective distance. This hybridity of the narrator results from the split positioning of David, namely his narrating and narrated selves. The narrating self sits in the autonomous textual actual world and his discourse is “ontologically part of the extended [spatio-temporal] frame”; whereas the narrated self is located in the dependent relative world and what is narrated about him “belong[s] cognitively to the narrow [spatio-temporal] frame” (Ryan, 2016, p. 15). David, consequently, is positioned in the inner circle as the narrated self and his narrating self is located in the outer circle of the narrative. This split positioning results in hybridity in terms of category, position and scope of his narrator status, which, in turn, supports the stratification of the narrative universe into two ontologically distinguished domains, namely the textual actual world and its relative world. The narrator in *David Copperfield*, then, bridges up the worlds, selves and categorical distinctions structurally in the novel’s narrative universe.

The unifying function of the narrator is extended to the contextual features of the novel as well. The novel is structurally and thematically organized as it is narrated by the protagonist, David, firstly from an immediate inner circle entailing the events of the story and then revised from a distanced outer circle including the reception of those events. In this way, the narrative process starting with the events that take place and have an influence in David’s life and developing with the subsequent thoughts and feelings he has related to them highlights this central organization. As a child who has lost his mother and home and who is mistreated in the hands of his stepfather until he finds his great aunt in Dover and acquires compassion and wealth, he arouses the feeling of pity in the reader. The fact that David’s story is narrated by himself with authentic details gives the reader no other choice than being on his side. When he is young and infatuatedly connected to Dora, however, the reader is invited to adopt a critical attitude towards and even laugh at his foolish behavior together with his narrating self. David as the detached narrator prepares the ground for this:

I lived principally on Dora and coffee. In my love-lorn condition, my appetite languished; and I was glad of it, for I felt as though it would have been an act of perfidy towards Dora to have a natural relish for my dinner. (2004, p. 417)

This awareness testifies that the narrating David is indeed the center and the organizing force of the novel since what he feels and expresses in the interruption moments in the relative world always turn out to be right. This can also be clearly seen in his presentation of the character of Uriah Heep, who turns out to be the fraud of the novel. The reader gets to know this character not through what he himself does or says, but through David's portrayal of his physical appearance and the impression he makes on David. He states his dislike of Uriah Heep explicitly on their very first acquaintance:

it made me uncomfortable to observe that, every now and then, his sleepless eyes would come below the writing, like two red suns, and stealthily stare at me for I dare say a whole minute at a time, during which his pen went, or pretended to go, as cleverly as ever. I made several attempts to get out of their way ... but they always attracted me back again; and whenever I looked towards those two red suns, I was sure to find them, either just rising or just setting. (2004, p. 231)

David is repulsed by Heep's physical appearance and he influences the reader's attitude towards Heep in the same way through his carefully chosen statements. The reader will hardly find it difficult to realize that David's presentation has been most correct when Heep's malicious designs and plans of committing fraud against his boss Mr. Wickfield come out.

Apart from having the precedence of a central organizing force, the narrator of *David Copperfield* also has the advantage of authority and control all over the narrative universe as a result of his split positioning. All of David's observations and experiences are connected with one another and closely set together to form a whole which is "the integrated continuum of his past life as it has led by stages up to his present condition" (Miller, 1992, p. 20). David's two-layered existence authorizes and controls all of the events narrated by means of his powerful skills of sensitive association and fair-minded judgment and produces a unified frame which is indeed his history. In the beginning, David can only interpret some pieces of sensory experiences as he does not possess, as a child, any capacity to bring these together to form a coherent whole. He says: "I could observe, in little pieces, as it were; but as to making a net of a number of these pieces, and catching anybody in it, that was, as yet,

beyond me” (2004, p. 33). His immediate perception of events and situations is always in little pieces because it is limited to the childhood perspective of David belonging to the inner circle of the narrative. David can only comprehend the overall meaning of these little pieces when the links between distinct events are settled in his adulthood and retrospective wisdom, which is attributed to the outer circle of the narrative. As Miller suggests,

[i]n the end meaning is available to the protagonist, and he can boast that he has fabricated his own destiny by living through these experiences and holding them together with the magnetic field of his mind. Without his organizing presence the world might fall back into disconnecting fragments. (1992, p. 21)

Thus, disconnecting fragments of his earlier perceptions in the relative world turn into a unified whole supported by his advanced analytical skills in the textual actual world. He exercises absolute authority and control on the narrative universe in structural and contextual terms and constructs a meaningful whole by means of his split positioning as the narrator embodying narrating and narrated selves.

The gradual formation of David’s identity through observations and experiences is reported from the perspective of a mature narrator belonging to a later time in the story. This points to the existence of the ontologically distinct narrating and narrated selves of David, which allows for first a vision of the events experienced by the narrated self and then a revision of what has happened by the narrating self. This two-layered narrative process enhances David’s authority and control all over the narrative universe. He explicitly makes references to his narrative authority and control in many instances: he claims that “this narrative is [his] written memory” (2004, p. 823) and what he narrates is drawn upon from “the sea of [his] remembrance” (2004, p. 773). He talks about and comments on his narratorial interruptions in his own story. Examples are listed as, but not limited to, the following: “From this digression, let me proceed to Dover” (2004, p. 570), “I have omitted to mention it, by-the-bye” (2004, p. 617), “I must refer to one other topic before I close this chapter” (2004, p. 630). These are passages which direct the reader in evaluating the events and situations in the course of the story. As David guides the reader with these kinds of heterodiegetic and extradiegetic remarks, the reader has a valid reason to rely on David’s explanations. This, in turn, asserts the way in which David as the narrating self authorizes and

controls the narrative universe. With his contextual retrospective wisdom and structural narratorial superiority, he fabricates his own story into a unified, coherent and reliable whole which is taken for granted by the reader.

The structural and thematic unity in the narrative universe of *David Copperfield* is manifested through the relations between its narrative worlds and narrator selves. The facts that the textual actual world works in terms of interruptions in its dependent relative world and that the narrating self offers a revised account of the observations and experiences of the narrated self construct a solid and steady ground for the teleological progress and ending of the story. Until the very end, the reader is always aware of the cognitive distance between David's narrating and narrated selves and of the retrospective narration, by means of which David is looking back to narrate his story. His narrating self in the textual actual world is separated from his experiences kept in the relative world since he "holds them at arm's length, even when reliving ... the most intensely [recalled] of his memories" (Miller, 1992, p. 20). His past remains definitely within the boundaries of the past and he recollects it so as to present the journey that has led him to his present standing. This is clearly seen in his statements:

Once again, let me pause upon a memorable period of my life. Let me stand aside, to see the phantoms of those days go by me, accompanying the shadow of myself, in dim procession. (2004, p. 632)

I look back on the time I write of; I invoke the innocent figure that I dearly loved, to come out from the mists and shadows of the past, and turn its gentle head towards me once again; and I can still declare that this one little speech was constantly in my memory. (2004, pp. 651-652)

David is able to detach himself from his past experiences and to provide a distanced account of his life story. This is made explicit through his heterodiegetic and extradiegetic interruptions in the relative world as the above statements illustrate. Consequently, his reliable narration and valuable guidance through his life story is easily accepted by the reader.

The ending of the novel is the ultimate place where the reader experiences the narrative universe's structural and thematic unity and the narrator's unifying role as the center, authority and control of the narrative universe. As Hornback rightly claims,



*David Copperfield* is concerned with “ordering a disordered world” (1992, p. 86) and its protagonist “adjusts and organizes the whole of the novel in the last chapter as a novelist and a creative artist” (1992, p. 88). The disordered relative world is ordered in the textual actual world at the end of the novel, which attests to the correspondence and conformity of the narrative worlds and narrator selves. This can be demonstrated in Possible Worlds Theory discourse as in the diagram below:

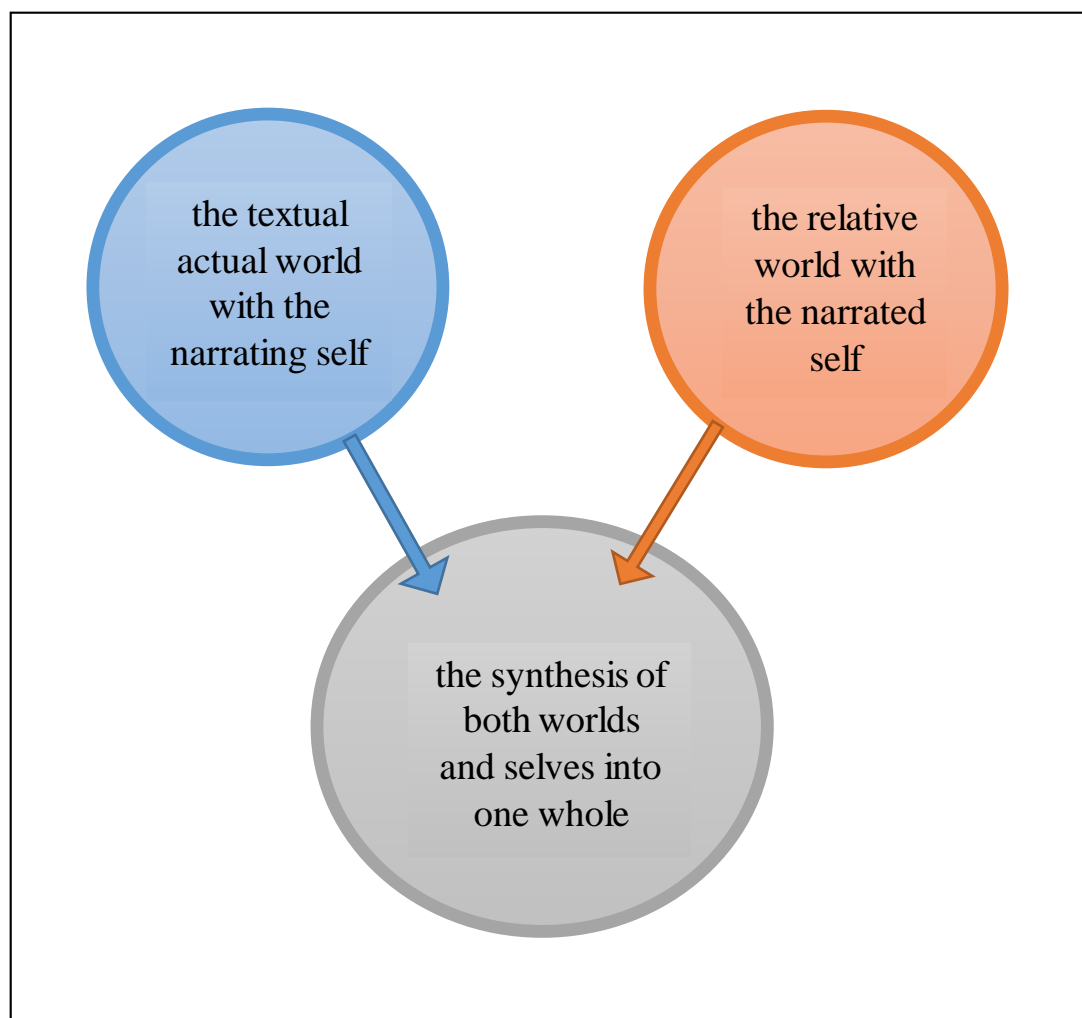


Figure 3.3 An illustration of the ending in the narrative universe of *David Copperfield*

The textual actual world and its relative world form a synthesis and merge into one world in the end as what has been narrated in the relative world matches with the textual actual world in which the act of narration takes place. As in the case of Ryan's notion of "productive conflict" in the working mechanism of modally oriented plot (1985, p. 733), David's narrating self has always been willing and in the end manages to resolve the main conflict of his life, constructing meaning and achieving order out of his earlier harsh experiences, by bridging up the gap between the textual actual world and the relative world. In this sense, David's conflict has been productive as it has activated the teleological progress of his life story. The gap between David's mature narrating self with the narratological privilege of retrospective wisdom and his naive narrated self whose experiences are being narrated retrospectively is also eradicated as the novel comes to its conclusion. His narrating and narrated selves merge into one whole and his split positioning as the narrator is unified as he has become one person now. Throughout his life story, David recalls and revises his past since "it works some influence upon the present" (2004, p. 356). In the present, he tries to recreate the past in a meaningful way so that he can achieve order out of disorder and fulfill the purpose of the artist. David accomplishes his aim and writes his novel in the end, which bestows the ending of the novel with a closure and gratification in structural and contextual terms.

### **3.3.3. The Mimetic Principle in *David Copperfield***

The mimetic principle is the final but the prevailing parameter that will be used in the analysis of *David Copperfield* in terms of Possible Worlds Theory. Dickens' novel is an indisputable example of mimetic fiction as it depends entirely on aesthetic realism, which has its roots in Enlightenment philosophy. The main premise of Enlightenment thought is that an objective account of truth and external reality can be accessed by the individual through sense perceptions. Therefore, the particular and the concrete come to hold significance, which signals a break with the preceding ideologies that put emphasis on the universal and the abstract. The individual and what he/she perceives in the external world is the primary key to reach the truth. In this respect, mimetic fiction provides an account of truth by means of realistic

representation. In *David Copperfield*, this realistic representation is carried out with immediate sense perceptions as it is a novel offering a realistic account of the life story of its protagonist based upon his perceptions and observations as an individual in a two-layered structure. The narrator David tells his life story in retrospection and everything he narrates is linked ultimately to his perspective and sense impressions. The events recounted are either seen, heard, overheard by himself or are transferred to him by other characters. In this respect, the senses and what is revealed to the individual mind through the senses are of great importance to the realistic representation of the story. The beginning of the second chapter of the novel, for instance, draws attention to the significance of the perceptual sensations in the understanding of external reality. David says:

The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back, into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighbourhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples. (2004, p. 24).

In this passage, the sense of sight enables David to locate present objects of external reality as distinct from his perceiving self and thus to comprehend their reality. Even the title of the novel, *The Personal History and Experience of David Copperfield the Younger*, is emblematic in portraying this: it is the history of a unified individual, David Copperfield, and it is presented by means of his observations and experiences. Likewise, the titles of the chapters of the novel are quite illustrative of the emphasis on the individual and sense perceptions in the presentation of the story. "I Observe" (Chapter 2), "I am a New Boy in More Senses than One" (Chapter 16), and "I Look about Me, and Make a Discovery" (Chapter 19) are among the remarkable chapter titles that underline the sovereignty of David as an individual who attests to reality in his story by means of his senses.

As an example of mimetic fiction embodying the tenets of the Enlightenment philosophy, *David Copperfield* is the realistic life story of its protagonist narrated in retrospection. David Copperfield is both the character whose story is being told in an inner circle and also the narrator who is performing the act of narration in an outer circle. This two-layered narrative follows a linear and chronological order: it starts

with David's birth and childhood, continues into his youth years, and ends with his mature age. Although the story is interrupted regularly by the narrator with comments reminding the reader of his presence, it is teleologically processed towards a gratified closure. Ryan's definition of narrative universe (1985, 1991) as an ontological domain in which narrative worlds are constellated proves to be functional in examining the narrative universe in this realist novel. The categorization of the textual actual world as the autonomous, stable and superior narrative world in any given narrative universe corresponds to the positioning of David's narrating self in the textual actual world in *David's Copperfield's* narrative universe. This is hinted by the narrator's own remarks about his status as the narratorial center and authority. Depending upon the textual actual world, a relative world is constructed by means of the act of narration and David's narrated self is positioned in this relative world. These two narrative worlds and narrator selves are easily detected as they are hierarchically stratified with clear cut boundaries in relation to each other in the narrative universe. The mimetic structure and realist context of the novel, that is the narration of the teleological progress of an individual's life, highlights this duality of the narrative universe.

Mimesis, or realism, of *David Copperfield* can also be related to its compatibility with the logical principle of the excluded middle. The principle of the excluded middle affirms that something must be A or not-A; it is binary valued and excludes any middle ground between truth and falsity. That is why, it excludes impossibilities, inconsistencies, and ambiguities from any ontological or epistemic domain. Ryan agrees with this originally Aristotelian principle and adopts it in her theorization of the narrative universe (2001). The narrative universe, being an ontological domain in which the narrative worlds are constellated, is held responsible for implementing the principle of the excluded middle. All the narrative worlds of a given narrative universe must omit any kind of impossible situations or events in their confined spatio-temporal frames. The narrative universe of *David Copperfield*, in this sense, respects this logical principle in both of its narrative worlds which are ontologically demarcated in a binary relation. There is not an issue of impossibility or ambiguity in the structural and contextual elements of the narrative universe. To put it in Saussurean terms, there is a one-to-one correspondence between the signified and

the signifier; and the signifier always reaches the signified smoothly. This results from the indisputable fact that Dickens' novel follows a mimetic structure and realist context in essence.

Mimesis, or realism, as a literary mode highlights language's ability to imitate or represent correctly the external world by means of words. It is

the attempt to guarantee that all representations are exact copies of the original; that words serve as simple, faithful, and transparent denominations of things; that meaning is something which exists separate of words and which is made manifest by words. (McGowan, 1987, p. 72)

In this respect, realism furnishes the narrative universe of *David Copperfield* with "true" accounts of "facts," which is the product of the excluded middle principle and of the correspondence between the external world and the linguistic world. Fancy, on the other hand, emphasizes the violation of the excluded middle principle and the contradiction between the external world and the linguistic world, namely the words. In the novel, David the narrator lays bare this discrepancy between fact and fancy as such:

When my thoughts go back, now, to that slow agony of my youth, I wonder how much of the histories I invented for such people hangs like a mist of fancy over well-remembered facts! When I tread the old ground, I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things! (2004, p. 180)

"A mist of fancy" is opposed to "well-remembered facts" here, and the narrator explicitly prefers the facts in his story. Fancy is acceptable for his childhood days which afforded him nothing but "strange experiences and sordid things" as he was understandably in need of an imaginative world to escape. However, for an adult narrator whose ultimate aim is to present his life story exactly as it is and in terms of facts, fancy is not reasonable as it may obscure the clarity, coherence and truthfulness of his narrative. Therefore, David's narrating self goes through his childhood memories via the filter of the mimetic principle and distinguishes fact from fancy. He was the romantic boy finding a safe haven through fancy in the relative world of the narrative universe. Yet, in the textual actual world, he is the mature reasoner adopting the mimetic principle in order to accomplish the meaning of his life story. David's

teleological progress, then, takes him from a childish world of fancy to a stable world firmly established on the mimetic principle.

“Minimal departure”, a term developed out of Ryan’s discussion of accessibility relations in narrative worlds (1991, 2005), can also be related to the mimetic principle at work in *David Copperfield*. According to Ryan, the reader of any given text is accommodated into the narrative universe evoked by that text during the reading experience. This accommodation process works differently in different literary genres as it depends upon the distance between the experiential actual world in which the text is created and the narrative universe which the text constructs. Mimetic fiction, for instance, does not require the reader to cover a long distance in order to accommodate into its narrative universe. As mimetic texts are meant to represent the external actual world as it is, the narrative worlds and the narrative universe evoked by them are quite accessible to the external actual world as their reference point. In Ryan’s terms, the reader is just minimally departed from his/her realm of actuality to accommodate into the ontological realm of the narrative universe constructed in a mimetic text he/she is reading. Thus, minimal departure works conformably with the mimetic principle and this can clearly be observed in *David Copperfield*. The narrative universe constructed in this mimetic text is compatible with the experiential actual world in which it was produced. Accommodation into this universe or transportation between its narrative worlds does not necessitate a long distance to cover or a different set of physical and logical rules to adopt on the part of the reader. Since *David Copperfield* is a realist novel founded firmly on the mimetic principle, its reader is minimally departed from his/her world of experiential reality to accommodate themselves in the novel’s narrative universe.<sup>8</sup> The novel is set in spatial and temporal levels at the same time period and at the same place in which it was written, that is 19<sup>th</sup>-century England. The social and cultural conventions specific to the Victorian era

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<sup>8</sup> Dickens has been criticized for the caricatures in his realist novels whose personal traits are oversimplified or exaggerated to such a degree that the sense of uncanny or grotesque is created on the reader. He defends his characterization with the claim that the seemingly exaggerated nature of such characters does not conflict with their being realistic types. In the preface to *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840), he claims to have surrounded his heroine Little Nell with “grotesque and wild but not impossible companions”. Similarly, in the preface to *Oliver Twist* (1837), he asserts that it is useless to discuss whether the character of Nancy is “natural or unnatural, probable or improbable, right or wrong. It is TRUE” to life.

are also observable in the contextual elements of the novel. Bathed in this spatio-temporal and social setting, it aims to represent a true account of the life story of its protagonist, David Copperfield, through realistic descriptions and details. The existents, namely the characters, in the narrative universe of the novel are all ordinary people who belong to middle or lower classes and who bear specific names like David Copperfield, Clara Peggotty, Agnes Wickfield or Tommy Traddles. It abounds in individual cases and particular circumstances, all of which are ultimately attached to the perspective and comprehension of the protagonist. Ordinary themes revealing the everyday reality and common aspects of the period dominate the background of its narrative universe. Consequently, it can be held that the original reader of *David Copperfield* was transported to a familiar domain during the reading experience as the novel's narrative universe, together with its separate narrative worlds, is constructed through the mimetic principle and realist assumptions.

To conclude, Possible Worlds Theory as applied in literary studies testifies to offer a substantive framework for the analysis of mimetic fiction. Dickens' realist novel *David Copperfield*, presenting the life story of its protagonist in a teleological order, illustrates this claim. The theory has been most useful in identifying a narrative universe encompassing two different narrative worlds for the novel. The textual actual world is distinguished as the superior and the autonomous narrative world of the narrative universe as it is the domain of the act of narration. The relative world, on the other hand, is rendered as dependent on the former since it is the domain of what is being narrated. This two-layered structure of the narrative universe is intricately linked with the split positioning of the narrator. In this respect, the theory has also been functional in assigning the two differing selves of the narrator to the two distinct narrative worlds in the narrative universe. The textual actual world houses the narrating self that carries out the act of narration with the retrospective wisdom and narratorial authority. The relative world, then, is the residing place of the narrated self whose life story is being narrated but who is unconscious of this narrative act. This two-layered structure in terms of worlds and selves works in conformity with the mimetic principle, the last but the prevailing effect of the theory. Realistic content and mimetic narration in the novel is reflected on the binarily structured narrative universe

and the split positioning of the narrator. Consequently, the framework afforded by Possible Worlds Theory has been proven to be quite effective to examine a realist novel as an example of mimetic fiction.



## CHAPTER 4

### METAFICTION & POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY: *TRISTRAM SHANDY*

The machinery of my work is of a species by itself; two contrary motions are introduced in it, and reconciled ... My work is digressive, and it is progressive too, --- and at the same time.  
(*Tristram Shandy*, 2007, p. 56)

The aim of this chapter is to test and revise Possible Worlds Theory and how it defines the ontological domain of a literary text in the light of an anti-mimetic work of fiction, Laurence Sterne's metafictional novel *Tristram Shandy*. To that end, the meaning and denotations of the term anti-mimesis and how it differs from the term mimesis will firstly be explored. Touching upon unnatural narratology and how it emphasizes the value of unnatural or anti-mimetic texts for contemporary narrative theory, this chapter traces the origins of anti-mimesis and presents a historical track of its development in literary criticism. Then, anti-mimetic fiction as a term will be examined with specific reference to its relation with metafiction. The critiques of Waugh and Hutcheon on the definition and working mechanism of metafiction will be presented through a discussion on the significance of self-reflexivity and self-consciousness for metafictional texts. Finally, Possible Worlds Theory will be employed to analyze *Tristram Shandy* under three subtitles, which are indeed the three main parameters of this study investigating the validity of the theory in an example of anti-mimetic fiction, and a revision of the theory will be proposed so that it can accommodate the anti-mimetic practices of the novel.

#### **4.1. Anti-Mimesis**

One of the latest developments in narrative studies is the emergence of unnatural narratology, the main scope of which is the study of narrative texts that are not mimetic or narrative texts that transcend mimesis. Unnatural narratology is considered, by its theorists, to be “an exciting new research program in narrative theory” (Alber & Heinze, 2011, p. 1), “the most exciting new paradigm in narrative theory and the most important new approach since the advent of cognitive narratology” (Alber et al., 2013, p. 1), and “an emergent strand of work in narrative theory” (Herman, 2013, p. ix). Even Fludernik, who is the staunch defender of a “natural narratology” in the study of narratives and defines narrativity in relation to the mimetic evocation of the experiential world, admits that “the proposal of an ‘unnatural’ narratology is both timely and significant” (2012, p. 364). In a similar vein, Klauk and Köppe, in their critique of the framework for an unnatural narratology offered by unnatural narratologists acknowledge that it “can be fruitful and lead to interesting results” in narrative analysis (2013, p. 78).

Speaking of an unnatural narratology necessitates first and foremost a thorough understanding of what is an “unnatural narrative”. Although the term “unnatural” is commonly used by unnatural narratologists, its definitions are varied. According to Alber and Heinze, this diversity of definitions is attributed to the hybridity of unnatural narratology, which is “not a homogenous school of thought”, but “a multifarious, hybrid, and heteroglossic movement that allows for various different perspectives on and definitions of the unnatural” (2011, pp. 8-9). In other words, unnatural narratology is a heterogeneous discipline defying any single-layered definitions or perspectives; and that is why, unnatural narratologists intentionally use the word “definitions” instead of “a definition” to advocate the multiplicity of definitions of the term “unnatural”. In this respect, Alber and Heinze present three main definitions of unnatural narrative as follows: (1) narratives with a defamiliarizing effect due to their experimentation, innovation, extremeness, nonconformity, and transgressions; (2) anti-mimetic texts that transcend the traditions of mimetic narratives; and (3) narratives entailing situations and actions which are accepted as impossible by the physical and logical laws governing the experiential world (2011, pp. 2-5). What these

three definitions commonly foreground is that unnatural narratives move beyond and go against realist literary conventions and mimetic modes of representation by means of their experimental and transgressive practices. Namely, unnatural narratives, and unnatural narratology alike, question and challenge mimesis and mimetic representation in literature.

Brian Richardson, one of the first and leading narratologists to conduct an analytical exploration of unnatural narratives, presents an influential motivation for the need to revise the contemporary approaches to narrative studies in order to make room for the unnatural fictional texts that transcend the extent and boundaries of traditional theories. Richardson's work (2011, 2012, 2015) presents narratological analyses of spatio-temporal structures, frameworks, and characterization in unnatural narratives and provides an abundance of literary examples covering many centuries to demonstrate his arguments. The main premises of Richardson's conception of unnatural narratology are: (1) that current narrative theory, founded upon mimetic principles of realist fiction, has not been able to accommodate narratives that question and problematize those principles; (2) that a new approach to narrative studies is thus required; and (3) that this new approach must be valid for both mimetic, or realist, and anti-mimetic, or anti-realist texts.

Richardson deals with the concept of mimesis and how it is problematized in unnatural narratives in extensive detail. Indeed, he bases his understanding of an unnatural narrative on the transgressive practices set against mimesis. According to Richardson, an unnatural narrative is

one that conspicuously violates conventions of standard narrative forms, in particular the conventions of nonfictional narratives, oral or written, and fictional modes like realism that model themselves on nonfictional narratives. Unnatural narratives furthermore follow fluid, changing conventions and create new narratological patterns in each work. In a phrase, unnatural narratives produce a defamiliarization of the basic elements of narrative. (Richardson, 2011, p. 34)

In his definition of the term, Richardson highlights the anti-mimetic and anti-realist nature of unnatural narratives and touches upon their high potential of creating new narratological formulations. Unnatural narratives are the texts that “violate mimetic conventions by providing wildly improbable or strikingly impossible events” and that

“are not simply non-realistic but anti-realistic” (Richardson, 2012, p. 95). For Richardson, the notion of anti-mimesis functions as the criterion for ascribing unnaturalness to a narrative text. In order for a literary work to be unnatural, it must include a number of anti-mimetic and anti-realist structures and practices, and existents and events. Therefore, in Richardson’s conceptual framework, an unnatural narrative is inextricably linked with what is against the realist and the mimetic and the term “unnatural” is employed as “a synonym for ‘anti-mimetic’” (2012, p. 21).

Richardson furthers his arguments on unnatural narratives with his categorical demarcation between the terms “mimetic”, “non-mimetic”, and “anti-mimetic”. He adopts a comparative approach and defines these terms in relation to some literary genres and works. According to Richardson, mimetic texts, such as nineteenth-century realist fiction, bear a close resemblance to nonfictional modes of representation since they offer coherently and consistently constructed narrative worlds and aim to represent ordinary characters and events of the actual world in fiction: Tolstoy’s realist novel *Anna Karenina* is thus mimetic (2015, p. 3). Under the title of the non-mimetic, non-realist texts like fantasy, fables, fairy tales, and animal stories are included. A fairy tale, for instance, is non-mimetic since it does not intend to go against the mimetic model but just to add supernatural elements to its otherwise mimetic representation (Richardson, 2015, p. 4). In contrast to both mimetic and non-mimetic narratives, anti-mimetic narratives are unnatural as they, on purpose, reflect their deviation from the mimetic model. An anti-mimetic text challenges the mimetic model and deliberately displays “its own constructedness, the artificiality of many of its techniques, and its inherent fictionality” (Richardson, 2011, p. 31). Consequently, in Richardson’s account, mimetic and non-mimetic narratives “disguise their artificiality” to achieve an illusion of reality (2015, p. 4); however, anti-mimetic texts break this illusionary concept of reality and reveal their own artificiality and fictionality through self-reflexive practices. Fictional representation, then, takes either a mimetic form that endeavors to present characters, situations, actions, and sceneries that are akin to those in everyday life of the actual world; or a non-mimetic form that foregrounds implausible or logically impossible events and occasions which are refuted by the

experientiality of the physical world; or an anti-mimetic form that decisively seeks to problematize, defy, satirize, or play with the conventions of mimetic representation.

As stated above, Richardson believes that contemporary narrative theory favors the mimetic and the realist at the expense of the anti-mimetic and the anti-realist, which explains his extensive research and analysis of unnatural narratives to fill this gap in theory and application. He provides numerous examples of unnatural narratives from the ancient times through the nineteenth century to the postmodern era to explain and justify the basic assumptions of unnatural narratology in terms of narration, characterization, setting, scenes, and spatio-temporal order. Although anti-mimetic type of literature seems to have been mainly produced since the 1960s under the title of postmodern fiction, it is possible to detect unnatural narrative techniques in the comedies of Aristophanes (Greek Old Comedy); in Menippean satire; in the drama of Lucian and Sanskrit playwrights; in Asian comic Kabuki plays; in the works of distinguished Renaissance writers like François Rabelais, Miguel de Cervantes and William Shakespeare; in later fictions of Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, and in Shandean novels; and in some Romantic texts belonging to Lord Byron and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Richardson, 2015, pp. 91-120)<sup>9</sup>. In the twentieth century, unnatural narrative elements are also discerned in some examples of the French nouveau roman; in literary works categorized as surrealist fiction, metafiction, and antinovel; in many works of the historical avant-garde; in works bathed in magical realism; in cyberpunk; in hyperfiction; in Brecht's epic theater; in Beckett's theater of the absurd; in metadrama; and in Cixous' écriture féminine (Richardson, 2015, pp. 121-139)<sup>10</sup>. Richardson's wide-ranging literary examples and analyses of anti-mimetic practices employed in these unnatural texts indicate the timeless nature of anti-mimetic literature. Since unnatural narratives and practices have always existed, they cannot be pigeonholed into any literary genre or time period. Unnatural elements are not

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<sup>9</sup> The fifth chapter of Richardson's revolutionary monograph *Unnatural Narrative: Theory, History, and Practice* is reserved for presenting a historical track of unnatural narratives from the ancient times to the Romantic era by means of thorough narratological analyses and theoretical details.

<sup>10</sup> The sixth chapter of Richardson's *Unnatural Narrative: Theory, History, and Practice* resumes the historical course of unnatural narratives and concentrates on contemporary literary genres and modes of representation including anti-mimetic practices.

necessarily and essentially ascribed to any generic or temporal categories; rather, they may exist in literary works belonging to different genres and time periods in differing degrees. Consequently, literary works that encompass the unnatural elements and practices achieve, more or less, to break the mimetic illusion, and thus earn the label anti-mimetic.

#### **4.2. Metafiction as Anti-Mimetic Fiction**

Anti-mimesis in literature has always been in existence for two and a half millennia. The self-reflexive nature of literary texts is not a brand new, contemporary or postmodern matter. When the classical writers of Greek antiquity, the writers of Renaissance and Romanticism, and even some writers of the Enlightenment era diversely and in differing degrees directed attention to the narrating process rather than the narrative itself, they not only positioned the reader as an active contributor to this process but also acknowledged the artificial and self-reflexive nature of the literary product. Yet, twentieth century linguists, literary theorists and critics were the first ones to formulate theoretical frameworks about anti-mimetic practices in literature. They were skeptical about the long-held mimetic correspondence between reality and its artistic representation, between life and art and developed perceptions about language and literature so that it has been possible to claim that art reflexes itself through creative strategies and engages the reader as active participants. That being said, it is important to note that there are substantial differences of degree and explicitness in this self-reflexive process: literary texts may emphasize their self-reflexivity overtly or covertly and in differing degrees, or they may not reveal their creation processes at all as all of the literary periods and generic categories do not have the same interest in self-reflexivity in literature. However, with the contemporary changes in literary theories and criticism, especially with the advent of postmodern literature, there has been an enthusiasm for overtly self-reflexive and experimental fiction, which has resulted in numerous literary critical works related to this type of literature. In this respect, Patricia Waugh's *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984) and Linda Hutcheon's *Narcissistic Narrative: The*

*Metafictional Paradox* (1984) may be located among the significant critical works in this intellectual orientation.

The term “metafiction” is generally accredited to the American critic and self-conscious novelist William Gass, who defines the term and puts it in a dialogue within the contemporary literary critical discussions in *Fiction and the Figures of Life* (1970). Gass employs the term “metafiction” in order to refer to “fiction’s self-conscious use of philosophical ideas, in a spirit of play and in recognition that the novelist’s task is not to render the world but to make one from language” (Edwards, 1985, p. 43). Thus, Gass associates metafiction with the self-reflexive and self-conscious nature of fiction, which highlights its anti-mimetic essence. Metafiction does not offer a mimetic representation of the real world; on the contrary, it builds a new world constructed through language including reflections upon its creation process. Patricia Waugh’s contribution to these discussions related to metafiction is adept and eloquent as she provides a clear definition and examines metafiction through its relationships with such core concepts like play, parody, estrangement, language games and the ontological status of literary texts. According to Waugh, metafiction refers to “fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (1984, p. 2). In this respect, metafictional texts not only provide an assessment of their anti-mimetic and self-conscious methods of construction but also problematize the mimetic assumption that art imitates life. With metafiction, it is now possible to talk about the fictionality of the experiential world outside the fictional world. Waugh elaborates on this definition by pointing out similarities between metafictional texts:

a celebration of the power of the creative imagination together with an uncertainty about the validity of its representations; an extreme self-consciousness about language, literary form and the act of writing fictions; a pervasive insecurity about the relationship of fiction to reality; a parodic, playful, excessive or deceptively naive style of writing. (1984, p. 2)

Waugh considers these issues that are commonly discerned in the works of the contemporary writers as instrumental factors in the rise of metafiction and locates this metafictional orientation within a wider framework of a general self-consciousness

about representation processes, which challenges mimetic representation and traditional realism.

Metafictional, or, in general anti-mimetic, practices in literature have become highly noticeable in the postmodern era. However, Waugh stresses, as unnatural narratologists also claim, that they have always been in the literary arena in differing degrees: “although the term ‘metafiction’ might be new, the practice is as old (if not older) than the novel itself” (1984, p. 5). That is why, she distinguishes metafiction not as a sub-genre of the novel but as an inherent tendency in all novels and this is associated with the dialogic<sup>11</sup> potential of the novel genre in her account. According to Waugh,

The novel assimilates a variety of discourses (representations of speech, forms of narrative) – discourses that *always* to some extent question and relativize each other’s authority. Realism, often regarded as the classic fictional mode, paradoxically functions by suppressing this dialogue. The conflict of languages and voices is apparently resolved in realistic fiction through their subordination to the dominant ‘voice’ of the omniscient, godlike author. ... Metafiction *displays* and *rejoices* in the impossibility of such a resolution and thus clearly reveals the basic identity of the novel as genre. (1984, p. 6, original italics)

The metafictional novel, then, becomes a playground for distinct competing discourses and thus adopts a dialogic stance. The conflict of discourses, which ends up in resolution in the mimetic representation of the realist novel, never reaches such a closure in metafictional texts. The reader is denied access to an organizing principle or a coherent center and is left without any other textual orientation. Consequently, Waugh’s emphasis on the dialogic nature of the novel genre and on the self-conscious and self-reflexive narrative process is contrasted with the traditional mimetic mode of representation. In this way, the ontological status of a literary text is questioned through metafictional practices and Waugh sees this non-teleological process as the desirable end of the novel genre.

Like Waugh’s work on metafiction, Linda Hutcheon’s study is analytical, multifaceted and thought-provoking as it covers effectively a large body of literary

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<sup>11</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin defines dialogism in the novel genre as a “semantic direction into the word which is diametrically opposed to its original direction [so that] the word becomes the arena of conflict between two voices” (1973, p. 106).



critical and fictional works. Saussurean linguistics and Iserian hermeneutics are particularly employed to put emphasis on language, representation, and reader activity in her study. Similar to Waugh, Hutcheon provides a definition of the term metafiction and touches upon the long history of literary self-reflexivity; its existence in novels in differing degrees; and its function as strong motivation for innovation in literary theory and criticism. The way Hutcheon defines metafiction is close to Waugh's description: Metafiction is "fiction about fiction – that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity" for Hutcheon and "narcissistic<sup>12</sup>" is her chosen figurative adjective to refer to this textual self-awareness (1984, p. 1). In this sense, metafiction is narcissistic narrative that self-consciously directs attention to its own creation process through anti-mimetic practices.

What basically differentiates the two critics in their approaches to metafiction is related to their understanding of mimesis and mimetic representation in art. While Waugh suggests that the mimetic correspondence between life and art is challenged in metafiction, Hutcheon redefines this correlation by means of the terms she calls "mimesis of product" and "mimesis of process". According to Hutcheon, mimesis of product refers to the traditional realist novel, which requires the reader "to identify the products being imitated – characters, actions, settings – and recognize their similarity to those in empirical reality, in order to validate their literary worth" (1984, p. 38). Mimesis of process, on the other hand, is equated with self-knowing metafiction which "no longer seeks just to provide an order and meaning to be recognized by the reader. It now demands that he be conscious of the work, the actual construction, that he too is undertaking, for it is the reader who ... gives [the work of art] life" (Hutcheon, 1984, p. 39). In this respect, Hutcheon, like Waugh, admits that metafiction attempts to break the mimetic convention of verisimilitude and problematize the link between life and art. Yet, she further claims that the problematized link between life and art works on the process level rather than on the product level in terms of mimesis by means of metafiction.

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<sup>12</sup> The adjective "narcissistic" here does not entail a derogatory meaning. It is rather employed as a descriptive and suggestive adjective with an explicit reference to the allegorical reading of the Narcissus myth.

Hutcheon's differentiation between a mimesis of product and a mimesis of process is also instrumental in explaining the paradox mentioned in her book's subtitle. Hutcheon argues:

Within the critical context of ... process mimesis, ... a separation [between life and art] would prove impossible. Reading and writing belong to the processes of "life" as much as they do to those of "art". It is this realization that constitutes ... the paradox of metafiction for the reader. On the one hand, he is forced to acknowledge the artifice, the "art", of what he is reading; on the other, explicit demands are made upon him, as a co-creator, for intellectual and affective responses comparable in scope and intensity to those of his life experience. ... In this light metafiction is less a departure from the mimetic novelistic tradition than a reworking of it. (1984, p. 5)

The paradox referred to here is, indeed, a double paradox: The readers reside in an artificial, fictional world, but they are expected to participate intellectually in its co-creation ("paradox of the reader") and the text is self-conscious and self-reflexive, but it is also targeted outward towards the reader ("paradox of the text") (Hutcheon, 1984, p. 7). The result is a complex but desired language play between the self-knowing text and the activity of reading or co-creating it.

The argument raised by Hutcheon directs the attention in literary texts from the narrated product to the narrating process of textual construction, to the text-reader relationship, to the reader's role in the construction of the text, and to the diverse possibilities of the interpretation and re-interpretation of the text. Her analyses of the different effects of metafiction on literary language are insightful and they are reinforced with solid examples from the works of authors belonging to not only the literary genres and periods before the postmodern turn but also the postmodern era and its related generic categories. In this respect, whether it is *Don Quijote* (1605-1615), *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) or *Madame Bovary* (1856), or any text of contemporary metafiction, there is always a multi-layered relation between the actual world and the literary work. To understand and acknowledge this complex relation necessitates an interactive approach informed by not only language as the medium of communication, and writer as the communicator, but also reader as the active receiver. Consequently, reading metafictional, in other terms unnatural, anti-mimetic or narcissistic texts is a

complicated attempt as they are self-reflexive in terms of their own creation (construction) and reception (reconstruction) processes explicitly, as in the case of strikingly self-conscious literature, or implicitly, via covert disruptions or discontinuities in the text, and in substantially differing degrees.

#### **4.3. Revisiting Possible Worlds Theory in the light of *Tristram Shandy*, a Metafictional Novel**

*Tristram Shandy*, in full title *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, is an extraordinary novel by Laurence Sterne published in nine volumes; the first two appearing in 1759 and the other seven following over the next seven years. It is extraordinary in the sense that it is “a diverting, willful, rule-breaking work that bears few obvious similarities to other fiction of its own period or to anything else before postmodern inventions”, but it also “reveals much about what had happened to the novel in less than fifty years of its early evolution” (Spacks, 2006, p. 254)<sup>13</sup>. Although it was produced in the eighteenth century in which the Enlightenment tenets endorsed realist norms for fiction, *Tristram Shandy* does not follow the conventional rules of the realist novel genre. Indeed, it problematizes and even defies these literary norms and conventions through a reworking of preceding forms and techniques. Like many of its contemporaries, it sets out to present the life story of its protagonist, Tristram Shandy; however, this endeavor does not result in a similar teleological and mimetic narration. Indeed, it challenges mimetic representation by means of its deliberate lack of order and closure, digressive narration style, extensive use of time shifts, and self-reflexive artificiality. Even the title that focuses on the “opinions” of the main character separates this novel from its contemporaries with their emphasis on the “experiences” of the protagonists. These divergent narrative practices are anti-mimetic, which makes this novel a very good example of metafiction although the term “metafiction” itself did not exist at the time. This unconventional, anti-mimetic novel is retrospectively narrated by its protagonist, Tristram, and this retrospective

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<sup>13</sup> For the same reason that *Tristram Shandy* lays bare the development process of the novel genre and consciously makes use of the narrative forms and techniques that the novel evolved, the Russian critic Victor Shklovsky enounces that Sterne’s novel is “the most typical novel in world literature” (1990, p. 170).

narration frames the construction of two sets of narrative worlds as in the case of a realist novel like Dickens' *David Copperfield*. Possible Worlds Theory, which lends itself perfectly to the analysis of mimetic fiction in terms of the narrative's ontological domain, also offers a valid framework for the analysis of anti-mimetic fiction but falls short to accommodate some basic concepts related to metafiction, or anti-mimesis in general. Accordingly, the following parts of this chapter will present how *Tristram Shandy* as an example of anti-mimetic fiction, or metafiction, can be examined in Possible Worlds Theory discourse and to what extent Possible Worlds Theory functions in such an "unnatural" novel by means of the three critical parameters this study identifies as the narrative universe, the narrator, and the anti-mimetic practices in the novel.

#### **4.3.1. The Narrative Universe of *Tristram Shandy***

Possible Worlds Theory, which is originally a philosophical theory, enables literary theoreticians and critics to see the semantic domain of a literary work as a universe consisting of sets of actuality and its dependent possibilities. In this account, the modally indexed narrative universe houses multiple narrative worlds whose relationships with and movements towards or from each other become the driving force of the plot. While describing the semantic domain of a narrative as a universe in this way, literary critics making use of Possible Worlds Theory do not make any distinctions about the generic characteristics of the narratives. Yet, as Herman suggests, "not every narrative faithfully exemplifies this structure"; indeed, the pledge of anti-mimetic genres, such as metafictional novel, is their "refusal to adhere to ontological boundaries and hierarchies of precisely this sort" (2009, p. 120). What Possible Worlds Theory literary critics theorize on narrative worlds and narrative universes is limited to mimesis in fiction and fails to address the rich structural and contextual elements of anti-mimesis. Ryan's segmentation of a narrative universe into a textual actual world, which is absolute and autonomous, and a set of relative worlds, which are contingent and dependent on the former (1985, 1991), is emblematic in this sense. Such kind of a narrative universe structure is quite applicable to mimetic fiction as demonstrated in the previous chapter with the example of the realist novel *David*

*Copperfield*; however, in the case of anti-mimetic fiction, like *Tristram Shandy*, that structure, although it is valid, needs to be rethought in order to accommodate anti-mimetic practices. The clearly defined narrative worlds, the mimetic representation, and the realist progression of Dickens' novel are nowhere to be found in Sterne's metafictional novel, where any demarcation of worlds or selves, any mimetic understanding of life, or any kind of ontological progression is challenged through self-reflexive and anti-mimetic practices. Thus, the theory that functions perfectly in the realist novel needs to be restructured so that it can also offer rich analyses for anti-mimetic fiction so that its ontological subversiveness can be revealed, that is, "how such texts deviate from the default template for worldmaking" can also be explained in a possible worlds theory discourse (Herman, 2009, p. 121).

*Tristram Shandy* is an example of anti-mimetic fiction founded on the retelling of the past by the narrator and protagonist Tristram. It may also be called a metafictional novel as it presents the story in a self-reflexive manner, consciously laying bare its own construction process. As unnatural narratologists claim, unnatural or anti-mimetic literary practices, like self-reflexivity, are not seen only in the postmodern era; they can be discerned across all literary periods and genres in differing degrees. That is why, metafiction may be a functional term to define this 18<sup>th</sup>-century novel, which abounds in self-reflexive elements. In the novel, Tristram, as an adult narrator, looks back at his past life and tells his story, and also stories of others, at a retrospective distance in a non-linear fashion. In this respect, Tristram is a homodiegetic/autodiegetic narrator depending on his memories, perceptions, feelings and thoughts, and also what he experiences and witnesses. Interestingly, he can also give an account of what he himself does not experience or witness. In his narration, the underlying chronology is obscured by the rearrangement of various pieces of his story and the basic plotline is subordinated by weaving together a number of different stories and such disparate materials as essays, sermons, and legal documents. In terms of Possible Worlds Theory, this complicated retrospective narration makes way for the construction of a narrative universe involving two sets of narrative worlds just as in the case of *David Copperfield*: the one housing the narrating Tristram and the ones inhabited by the narrated Tristram and also the characters of the stories he narrates.

These two sets of narrative worlds can be ascribed to the two selves of the protagonist: the narrating self is positioned in the textual actual world of the narrative universe as understood from the exterior remarks of the narrator; and the narrated self is situated in a relative alternative possible world, the existence of which is based on the protagonist's act of narration.

According to Possible Worlds Theory literary critics, such a narrative universe creates a modal stratification and results in a structural hierarchy prioritizing the actual world over any possible relative world. In a work of mimetic fiction, like *David Copperfield*, this suggestion is proven to be true. However, the theory does not function as effectively for a work of anti-mimetic fiction like *Tristram Shandy*. Although it is possible to detect a textual actual world inhabited by a narrating self via the narrator's own remarks and some relative worlds dependent on this act of narration, it is not apt to regard the textual actual world of this novel as ontologically superior or prioritized over the relevant ones. That is mainly because, first, the textual actual world in *Tristram Shandy* does not work as the center of the novel's narrative universe; and, second, it does not hold the relative worlds together due to the ontological subversiveness afforded by its metafictionality. Similar to the relative world of Dickens' novel, those of this metafictional work are constructed through what the protagonist narrates; yet, as they are not oriented explicitly and teleologically by the textual actual world, they do not get an inferior or underprivileged status. Therefore, it becomes explicit that when applied to an anti-mimetic text, Possible Worlds Theory requires revision so as to accommodate the ontological deviations of metafictionality. Only then can a metafictional novel like *Tristram Shandy* be analyzed efficiently by means of Possible Worlds Theory. The following diagram is an attempt to demonstrate the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy* containing its narrative worlds and how they work in relation to one another and to the plot's movement:

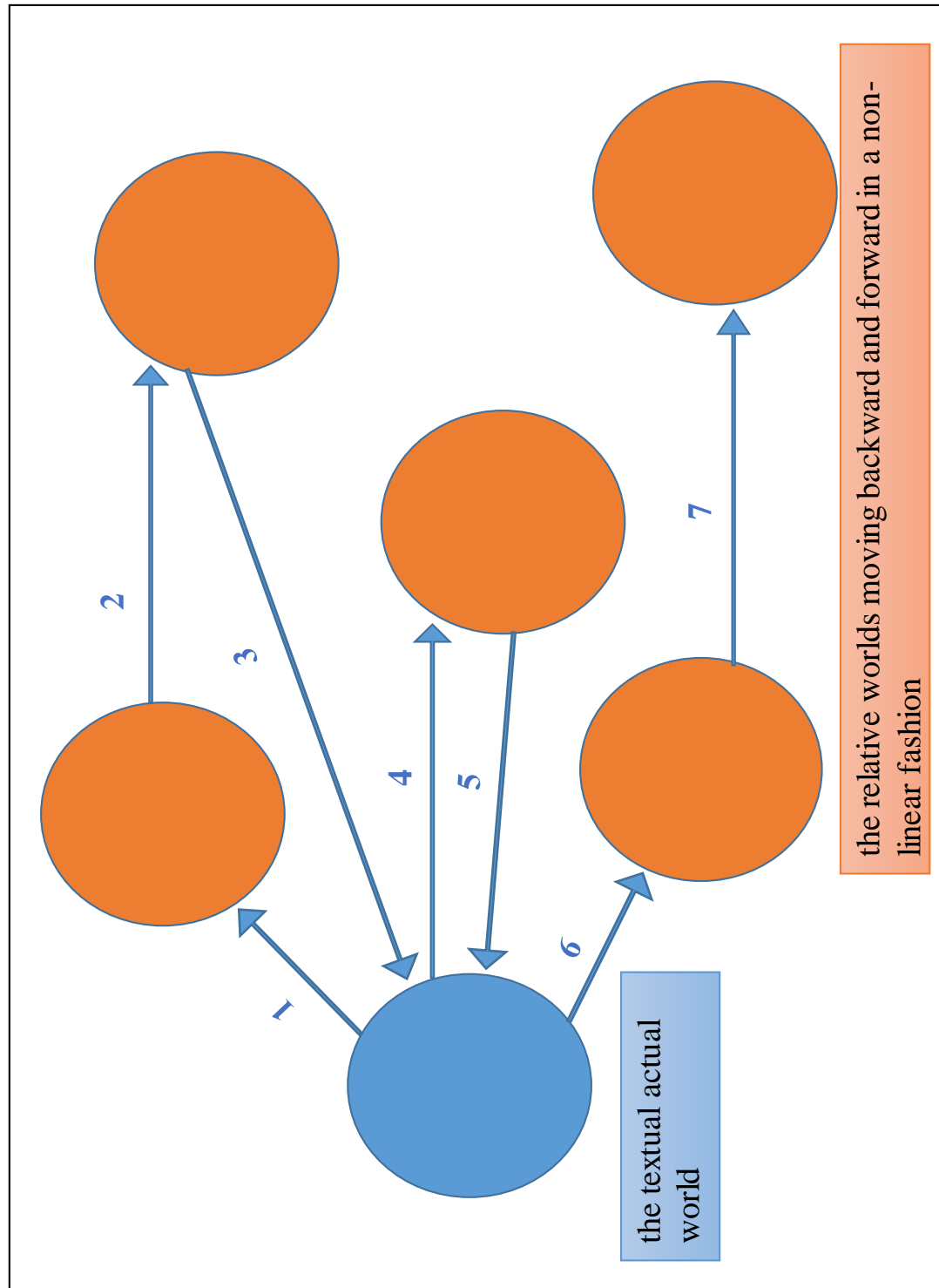


Figure 4.1 An illustration of the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy*

The narrating Tristram is an adult man who is on a quest to tell his life story together with his opinions and reflections on various topics and also with stories related to other characters. He integrates many written and visual materials like different documents and drawings into his narration, which moves in a non-linear and disorderly manner. The semantic domain in which this act of narration occurs is distinguished as the textual actual world as it is the place where the narrator himself explicitly refers to his narrating process and retrospective wisdom. Unlike the textual actual world of *David Copperfield*, the textual actual world of *Tristram Shandy* does not dominate the narrative universe nor does it function as its affirmed anchoring point. It is not centralized, nor autonomous, since its attempt to control the narrative universe is counteracted by the movements of the other narrative worlds of the novel. The relative worlds of *Tristram Shandy* are constructed on this complicated act of narration. These relative worlds, like the ones in Dickens' novel, may be described as knowledge worlds, or K-worlds in Ryan's categorization (1985), since what is narrated in these worlds is assumed to be true accounts of life stories. The working mechanism between the textual actual world and relative worlds of *Tristram Shandy* is quite different from the one found in *David Copperfield*. In Dickens' novel, it is possible to clearly detect a textual actual world and a relative world, which is punctuated and informed regularly by the former. In Sterne's novel, on the other hand, the textual actual world produces more than one relative world, all of which move backward and forward in timeline and towards or away from one another or the textual actual world. This kind of relation between the narrative worlds of the novel challenges the hierarchical structure put forward by Possible Worlds Theory in which the textual actual world is bestowed with autonomy and is considered superior over the relatively constructed ones. The textual actual world of *Tristram Shandy* endeavors to define its relative worlds but ends in a failure to do so since the relative worlds also attempt to define the textual actual world by moving regardless of its orientation and control and changing the course of the plotline.

The segmentation of the narrative universe into two sets of narrative worlds that work in a complicated and interactive system impede the unity and coherence of the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy*. This stratification, which provides the



overall structural unity of the narrative universe in *David Copperfield*, becomes the main strategy by means of which the narrative universe is fragmented in Sterne's metafictional novel. The narrating self of Tristram starts his story from his conception, continues with his birth, advances into his christening and accidental circumcision, which, on surface seems to be a chronological narration. However, he consciously breaks this narrative line into pieces by interpolating some stories related to other characters in a disorderly and non-chronological fashion and various written and visual materials about thematic features of the novel. All of these narrative fragments construct different relative worlds, and that is why, it is possible to talk about more than one relative world in this novel, all of which act and counteract against one another and the textual actual world. The textual actual world in which the narrating Tristram is situated cannot exercise authority over the relative worlds because of this ontologically subversive and digressive narration style, and this becomes a means of challenging the structural unity of the narrative universe in the novel.<sup>14</sup>

Tristram's narrative, as presented in the relative worlds, is definitely not teleological since it defies a strict chronological order and a unified closure. This non-linear plotline in the narrated domain is also fragmented with the obvious and explicit interruptions of the narrating domain. The interruptions of the textual actual world in the relative worlds, which strengthen the overall effect of the structural unity in *David Copperfield*, works quite the opposite way for Sterne's metafictional work. Although both of the narrators have the knowledge of what happened, what is happening, and what will happen at the same time, they make use of this retrospective wisdom for different purposes. David offers further information related to the events being described in a particular moment with explanations and comments coming from the textual actual world and in the end all pieces of information fall into place and form a coherent unity. However, Tristram hints at events to be narrated, procrastinates narrating them, diverts attention to other events, and only then does he narrate or sometimes does not narrate at all the promised piece of the story. Consequently, the

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<sup>14</sup> Narrative digression, as described by Atkin (2011), signals a process of moving away from a linear narrative and following a path of associations, and it reflects how the author or narrator thinks and speaks. In this respect, the inability of Tristram's narrating self to stick to the point becomes a means of portraying the action and counteraction among the narrative worlds in Sterne's novel.

digressions and interruptions in the relative worlds by the textual actual world enhance the structural disorder of the novel. This can be exemplified in Book 1 where the course of the story in the relative worlds is frequently interrupted and diverted by the textual actual world. The narrating self of Tristram talks about the midwife who is commissioned to assist at Mrs. Shandy's labor. Then, he suddenly intrudes his narration and starts a new topic by mentioning Yorick, the village parson and a close friend of the Shandy family.

Of the truth of which [Yorick] was a painful example. ----- But to know by what means this came to pass, --- and to make that knowledge of use to you, I insist upon it that you read the two following chapters, which contain such a sketch of his life and conversation, as will carry its moral along with it. --- When this is done, if nothing stops us in our way, we will go on with the midwife. (2007, p. 17)

As he promises, Tristram first reserves the following two chapters for Yorick's story and then restarts the story of the midwife.

It is so long since the reader of this rhapsodical work has been parted from the midwife, that it is high time to mention her again to him, merely to put him in mind that there is such a body still in the world, and whom, upon the best judgment I can form upon my own plan at present, --- I am going to introduce to him for good and all: But as fresh matter may be started, and much unexpected business fall out betwixt the reader and myself, which may require immediate dispatch; ----'twas right to take care that the poor woman should not be lost in the meantime; --- because when she is wanted we can no way do without her. (2007, p. 26)

Yet, he does not accomplish this mission because he begins to talk about an entirely new topic: his mother's marriage settlement. Indeed, he does not even mention the midwife for five chapters afterwards. In this respect, the textual actual world cannot dominate and control the relative world; on the contrary, the relative world counteracts and takes up the narrative initiative and directs the plot line through digressive stories. Tristram as the narrator consciously admits and lays bare that such a narrative does not follow a chronological order of events and deviates the narration from a linear frame. Consequently, the interruptions in the narrated domain by the narrating domain are rooted in not only the non-chronological course of events but also the digressive quality of narration; and this brings about the structural disorder of *Tristram Shandy*.

The complicated working mechanism of the textual actual world and the relative worlds, and the intersections and counteractions of these two sets of narrative worlds are the critical elements that impede the structural unity of the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy*. On a more contextual analysis, it is apt to claim that these elements also inhibit the thematic unity of the novel. Throughout the novel, the narrating self of Tristram does not mean to stick to a teleological or sequential order and challenges the conventional mimetic mode of representation by making use of anti-mimetic digressions. He continually interrupts the narration, consciously procrastinates the account of the promised stories, and ultimately constructs not a unified but a fragmented narrative. Indeed, he begins his narration with the account of his own conception as he wants to cover everything starting from origins. He declares:

right glad I am, that I have begun the history of myself in the way I have done; and that I am able to go on, tracing every thing in it, as Horace says, *ab Ovo*.

Horace, I know, does not recommend this fashion altogether: But that gentleman is speaking only of an epic poem or a tragedy; --- (I forget which,) --- besides, if it was not so, I should beg Mr. Horace's pardon; --- for in writing what I have set about, I shall confine myself neither to his rules, nor to any man's rules that ever lived. (2007, p. 4, original italics)

This is Tristram's statement that he is to trace every detail in his narrating process back to its very origin and narrate his story *ab ovo*<sup>15</sup>, that is, from the beginning. He disagrees with Horace and chooses *ab ovo* beginning over *in medias res* beginning in his narrative, and asserts that he is not bound by any established generic or categorical rules. However, he is unable to do as he wishes and leaves his narrative in fragments as he tries to cover everything in their entirety. This quoted remark of the narrator, for instance, interrupts the conception story and the meaning is suspended as a result. The reader is obliged to find their way among the intrusions of the narrating self coming from the textual actual world towards any kind of progress and movement in the plot line in the relevant worlds. This continual self-reflexive practice of narration, thus, makes it impossible to reach a thematic unity in the novel.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ab ovo* is the Latin phrase for "from the beginning, the origin, the egg". The literary use of the phrase comes from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, in which he defines his ideal epic as one which does not commence from the origin, the absolute beginning of events, the earliest chronological point, but which takes the audience into the middle of things (*in medias res*).

Among the composite movement of narrative worlds in the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy*, a thematic unity or a teleological progression is nowhere to be found due to the self-reflexive and digressive narration style; yet it is possible to discern two narrative lines as illustrated in fragments in different relative worlds. The first one is the story of the narrated self, or Tristram as character, which consists of Tristram's conception, birth, christening, and accidental circumcision. This narrative line covers also Tristram's breeching, education, and tours of France, which are marginally and less extensively dealt with. Tristram's story moves in a non-linear fashion, as a series of not necessarily connected fragments belonging to different relative worlds: His conception is rendered as a disaster, his birth brings about a disfiguration in his nose, his naming process works quite the opposite way, and his circumcision results from an accident. All of these function to offend Mr. Shandy's hopes and expectations for his son. The second narrative line includes the story of Tristram's Uncle Toby, most of which is reserved for the final third of the novel, though referred to many times in bits and pieces from the very beginning. Uncle Toby's story alludes to his war wound and subsequent recovery, his obsession with battle scenes and hobby-horsical activities, his unfortunate love affair with Widow Wadman. These thematic fragments in Uncle Toby's story do not form a linear coherent whole, either. On the contrary, they are registered in different relative worlds which stray backward and forward, towards and away from one another in the novel's narrative universe.

This self-reflexive and digressive narration style, which is sustained by means of interruptions of the narrating domain in the narrated domain, reinforces not only a structural disorder but also a thematic chaos in *Tristram Shandy*. These interruptive movements lay bare the fragmentation in the form and context of the novel. As an example, Tristram freezes his Uncle Toby in the middle of a chapter (Chapter 21 of Book 1) and makes him wait there like that for nine chapters:

I think, replied my uncle Toby, taking his pipe from his mouth, and striking the head of it two or three times upon the nail of his left thumb, as he began his sentence, ---- I think, says he: ---- But to enter rightly into my uncle Toby's sentiments upon this matter, you must be made to enter first a little into his character, the out-lines of which I shall just

give you, and then the dialogue between him and my father will go on as well again. (2007, pp. 48-49)

Tristram as the narrator disrupts both the structural and contextual continuum of the narrative here and a new relative world is constructed out of the already existing one. In another example (Chapter 5 of Book 5), Tristram wants to make Mrs. Shandy stand at the doorway for five minutes in order to continue his narration with another fragment but it takes him eight chapters to resume from where he has left:

My mother was going very gingerly in the dark along the passage which led to the parlour, as my uncle Toby pronounced the word "wife". --- 'Tis a shrill penetrating sound of itself, and Obadiah had helped it by leaving the door a little ajar, so that my mother heard enough of it to imagine herself the subject of the conversation; so laying the edge of her finger across her two lips --- holding in her breath, and bending her head a little downwards, with a twist of her neck ... she listened with all her powers. ...

In this attitude I am determined to let her stand for five minutes: till I bring up the affairs of the kitchen ... to the same period. (2007, pp. 287-288).

Here again, Tristram's narration does not reach a teleological end as it starts a new relative world before continuing with the current one by means of a long disruption. Elsewhere, Tristram the narrator tries to continue his narration related to Uncle Toby's hobby-horse but fails to accomplish this mission and reach a conclusion as a result of digressions and non-linearity. He self-reflexively says (Chapter 33 of Book 6):

when a man is telling a story in the strange way I do mine, he is obliged continually to be going backwards and forwards to keep all tight together in reader's fancy --- which, for my own part, if I did not take heed to do more than at first, there is so much unfixed and equivocal matter starting up, with so many breaks and gaps in it, --- and so little service do the stars afford, which, nevertheless, I hang up in some of the darkest passages, knowing that the world is apt to lose its way, with all the lights the sun itself at noon-day can give it --- and now, you see, I am lost myself! ---- (2007, p. 373).

The narrator, here, touches upon the hardship of the manner in which he is narrating, and admits that he is lost in his narrative and cannot orient the structural and thematic fragments any more.

All of these narrative fragments constituted by the interruptive moments among the narrative worlds of the novel impede the sequential order in structural and contextual terms in *Tristram Shandy*. In a work of mimetic fiction like *David*

*Copperfield*, events and experiences as narrated in the relative worlds are ordered in such a way to ensure teleological progression and closure, coherence in meaning, and unity in structure. However, in *Tristram Shandy*, an example of anti-mimetic fiction, the story “is never finished; we learn a great deal about his father, his uncle, his mother, and Trim”; yet, “these histories are mere pendants to the projected narrative, outgrowths of his attempt to record everything *ab ovo*” (Holtz, 1970, p. 98). In other words, the focus is not on what is being narrated but on how it is being narrated, and this signals the self-reflexive metafictional nature of the novel in which the very idea of a smooth development and unified totality is problematized by means of the counteractions between all of the narrative worlds of the novel’s narrative universe.

#### **4.3.2. The Narrator in *Tristram Shandy***

Possible Worlds Theory provides a basic outline for the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy* in which a textual actual world inhabited by the narrating self and some relative worlds housing the narrated self and other characters are discerned. The theory originally distinguishes the textual actual world as the organizing principle of the narrative universe; bestows it with autonomy, authority and control over the other narrative worlds; and positions the relative worlds as dependent on it. This is accurately valid for the narrative universe of Dickens’ *David Copperfield*, a mimetic and realist work of fiction. However, it falls short to examine the dynamic nature of *Tristram Shandy*’s narrative universe due to the anti-mimetic and metafictional features of the novel. The textual actual world is not autonomous, dominant or privileged as it is perpetually interacted and counteracted with the relative worlds. It attempts but fails to orient the relative worlds because of the non-linear movement and the self-reflexive characteristics of the narrative. The narrating self of the protagonist, Tristram, resides in the textual actual world with the retrospective wisdom of what will happen, whereas his narrated self is entailed in many relative worlds in which his experiences, observations, thoughts and feelings are presented in a non-teleological manner. The narrative gains momentum with the interruptive and counteractive movements of these narrative worlds. This dynamic process reveals the significance of the narrator in relation to the structural and contextual elements of the narrative

universe of the novel. That is why the narrative level, position, and scope of perspective of the narrator in *Tristram Shandy* should be examined in more detail in order to render Possible Worlds Theory more inclusive so that it can also function in the analysis of anti-mimetic narratives.

Retrospective narration enables the construction of two sets of narrative worlds and a split positioning for the narrator in Dickens' *David Copperfield*. Likewise, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* lends itself to an analysis of its narrative universe and narrator selves by means of retrospection. Like David, Tristram is a homodiegetic narrator, in terms of Genette's "person" category in narrative situation, as he is himself a character, either the main character or a minor character like an observer or a witness in the stories he narrates. He can also be identified as an autodiegetic narrator with regard to sections of the novel where he narrates fragments from his own life story. Ryan's formulation that a narrator does not necessarily stick to the same ontological status throughout a narrative text works well for the narrator of Sterne's novel as it does for Dickens' narrator. Like David, Tristram adopts heterodiegetic elements in the textual actual world, which is the domain of the narrating process and the narrating self. The technical limitation of homodiegetic narration, that is one-character perspective of Tristram's narrated self, is overcome with the introduction of the protagonist's narrating self, who is similar to a heterodiegetic narrator and takes up an impersonal stance. As Tristram's narrating self looks at his past and narrates what has already happened, he has retrospective wisdom and is not limited to the one-character perspective of his narrated self in the relative worlds. Although he frequently interrupts the stories in the relative worlds, he always makes his narrative stance visible with external and self-reflexive remarks and does not participate in the events being narrated. In this respect, Tristram's split positioning that grants him both narrator- and character-functions enables him to encompass homodiegetic and heterodiegetic elements in hybridity.

The hybridity of the narrator of *Tristram Shandy* can also be explained through Genette's notion of the "narrative levels." Tristram is partly an intradiegetic narrator as his narrated self is located inside the story and individuated as a character in the relative worlds which present Tristram's life story. However, he mostly aspires to be

an extradiegetic narrator as his narrating self is located outside the story being narrated in the textual actual world. As far as his extradiegetic characteristics allow, he is impersonal, and his perspective is not restricted to that of a single character. Either he himself experiences what is being narrated, or learns the events and conversations which he was individually not a part of and couldn't have witnessed from the ones who were involved in them, or refers to some documents like letters and diaries granting him the related information. As Gourdon rightly claims Tristram "is omnipresent, everything goes through him" (2002, p. 28), and that is why, the discourse of his narrating self is the basis of the narration. Consequently, one-character perspective of Tristram's intradiegetic narration is enlarged with extradiegetic elements and omniscient perspective bestowed on Tristram's narrating self. Although Tristram's narrated self and life story remain within the boundaries of the intradiegetic level, his narrating self transcends these boundaries and adopts an extradiegetic stance due to the retrospective and self-reflexive narration. As the text consciously lays bare its own creation process and the emphasis is not on what is narrated but how it is narrated, Tristram's narrating self entailing an extradiegetic identity is foregrounded.

Ryan's design consisting of an inner circle and an outer circle for the narrative texts (2016), which makes room for the features of hybrid narrators functions for *Tristram Shandy* as it does for *David Copperfield*. However, it should be revisited to accommodate all of the dynamic characteristics of Sterne's narrator Tristram. According to Ryan, narrative texts, apart from the story by itself, may include the events related to anterior or posterior parts of the story and also the spatio-temporal domain of the story itself together with all the domains that characters think or talk about (2016, p. 14) This formulation brings about a division of narratives into an inner circle, the major domain of the events, and an outer circle, a larger spatio-temporal domain encompassing the former. In Dickens' novel, David's narrated self is comfortably located in an inner circle, which is, in turn, encapsulated by an outer circle accommodating his narrating self. It is possible to suggest a similar scheme for Tristram's both selves in Sterne's novel. Tristram's narrated self, with homodiegetic and intradiegetic elements and limitation of a one-character perspective, is situated within an inner circle in the narrative. This inner circle is entailed in an outer circle in



which his narrating self resides with the advantages of heterodiegetic and extradiegetic narrative elements. This study suggests that another circle should be added to this scheme so that it may demonstrate the multi-faceted narrator features in *Tristram Shandy* better. The hybrid narrator that encompasses both homodiegetic–heterodiegetic and intradiegetic–extradiegetic narrative elements and shifts from a one-character perspective to an omniscient perspective may be shown in relation to the narrative circles by means of a revision of Possible Worlds Theory discourse, which is illustrated in the diagram below:

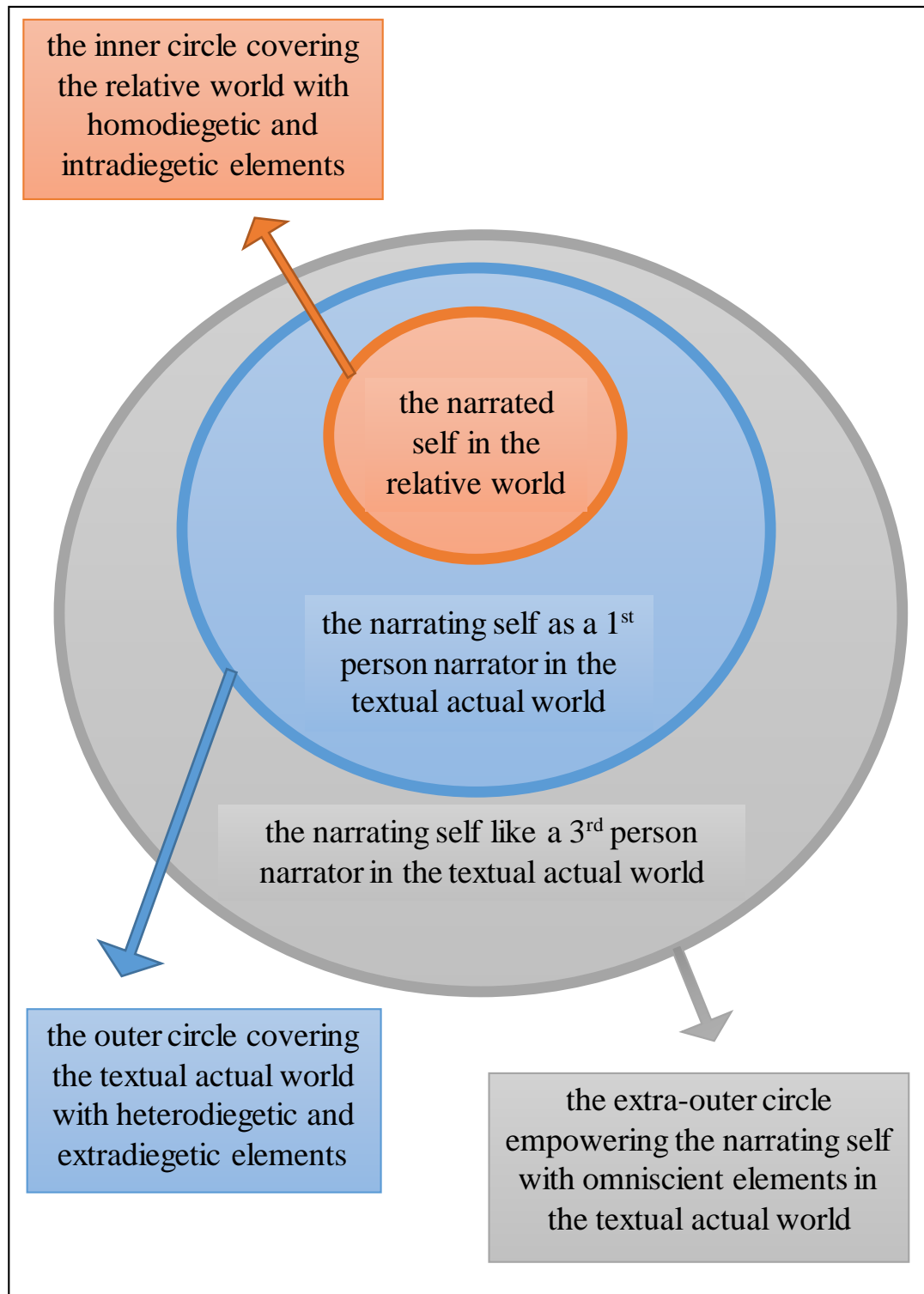


Figure 4.2 An illustration of the narrative level, position and scope of the narrator in *Tristram Shandy*

Tristram Shandy is a multi-faceted and complex narrator that hybridizes the narrator categories, positions and scopes in his personality. Very much like David in Dickens' novel, Tristram shows homodiegetic and intradiegetic elements as he is situated inside the story as a main character in the inner circle; but he aspires to possess heterodiegetic and extradiegetic elements as well since he himself, as a narrator, tells his story, of a character, from an outer circle and retrospective distance. This hybridity of narrators, of David and Tristram, is rooted in their split positioning as narrating and narrated selves. The narrating selves reside in the textual actual worlds of these two novels' narrative universes and their discourse belong to the ontological domain of the outer circle. On the other hand, the narrated selves sit in the relative worlds and what is narrated about them constitute the ontological domain of the inner circle. At this point, it is apt to differentiate between the two narrators since Tristram's narrating self necessitates a further exploration in terms of narrative stance.

In David's case, the textual actual world is detectable thanks to the first-person narrative discourse, which fairly resembles third-person narrative discourse thanks to David's all-knowing characteristic. David, as a clear manifestation of a main character in a realist novel, either experiences, witnesses, overhears, or he is told about the events being narrated, and that is where his omniscient knowledge comes from. In this respect, the outer circle refers to the textual actual world and the omniscient perspective of the narrating self in *David Copperfield*. In Tristram's case, however, the narrative stance gains a two-layered dimension in the textual actual world. Tristram adopts the attitude of a first person narrator and makes use of retrospective wisdom in the textual actual world especially when he is narrating his own life story. See, for instance, the very beginning of the novel (Chapter 1 of Book 1):

I wish either my father or my mother, or indeed both of them, as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what they were about when they begot me; had they duly considered how much depended upon what they were then doing; --- that not only the production of a rational Being was concerned in it, but that possibly the happy formation and temperature of his body, perhaps his genius and the very cast of his mind; --- and, for aught they knew to the contrary, even the fortunes of his whole house might take their turn from the humours and dispositions which were then uppermost; ---- Had they duly weighed and considered all this, and proceeded accordingly, ---- I am verily

persuaded I should have made a quite different figure in the world, from that, in which the reader is likely to see me. (2007, p. 1)

Here, Tristram talks about his conception and hints at how it will supposedly affect his life. The pronoun “I” indicates that this is a first-person narrative and the reader is informed at the beginning that what is to come is the life story of the narrator which is assumed to be unfortunate. In doing so, the narrating self employs his retrospective wisdom and maps the textual actual world of the novel.

At other times when Tristram is narrating stories and adventures of other characters or presenting materials like documents or letters, he performs very much like a third-person narrator as he does not explicitly tell how he has reached that knowledge. The account of the dialogue between Mr. Shandy and Mrs. Shandy about Tristram’s clothing is illustrative of this (Chapter 18 of Book 6):

We should begin, said my father, turning himself half round in bed, and shifting his pillow a little towards my mother’s, as he opened the debate --- We should begin to think, Mrs. Shandy, of putting this boy into breeches.

We should so, --- said my mother. --- We defer it, my dear, quoth my father, shamefully. ----

I think we do, Mr. Shandy, --- said my mother.

--- Not but the child looks extremely well, said my father, in his vests and tunics. ----

---- He does look very well in them, --- replied my mother. ----

--- And for that reason it would be almost a sin, added my father, to take him out of ‘em. ---

--- It would so, --- said my mother: --- But indeed he is growing a very tall lad, --- rejoined my father.

--- He is very tall for his age, indeed, said my mother. --- (2007, pp. 352-353)

Tristram is not a participant in this conversation nor is he there to witness or overhear it. Yet, he narrates it with such particular detail that he acts like an omniscient narrator. A battle scene from Uncle Toby’s life can also exemplify this third-person and all-knowing type of narration (Chapter 3 of Book 9):

My uncle Toby turned his head more than once behind him, to see how he was supported by the corporal; and the corporal as oft as he did it, gave a slight flourish with his stick --- but not vapouringly; and with the sweetest accent of most respectful encouragement, bid his honour “never fear.”

Now my uncle Toby did fear; and grievously too; he knew not (as my father had reproached him) so much as the right end of a Woman from

the wrong, and therefore was never altogether at his ease near any one of them --- unless in sorrow or distress; then infinite was his pity; nor would the most courteous knight of romance have gone further, at least upon one leg, to have wiped away a tear from a woman's eye; and yet excepting once that he was beguiled into it by Mrs. Wadman, he had never looked steadfastly into one; and would often tell my father in the simplicity of his heart, that it was almost (if not about ) as bad as talking bawdy. (2007, p. 490)

Again, although Tristram is not present in this scene, he gives a clear picture of the whereabouts of Uncle Toby and the corporal. He further delves into Uncle Toby's mind and reveals his thoughts and feelings following his stream of consciousness in the manner of a third-person omniscient narrator.

Tristram narrates such kinds of moments as if he is an omniscient, god-like narrator seeing everything, even the things he could not possibly have witnessed, in all the narrative worlds of the novel. In this sense, the outer circle, in *Tristram Shandy*, is enriched with the addition of what may be called an "extra-outer" circle. Together, they construct the textual actual world in which the act of narration occurs by means of the discourse of the narrating self. This two-layered and complicated narration process in the textual actual world empowers the narrating self with omniscient knowledge of what is happening all around the narrative universe. Consequently, the split positioning of Tristram in terms of narrator characteristics becomes even more split and this illuminates his categorically transgressive and essentially hybrid stance as a narrator. In this way, the structural disorder and the thematic complexity of the narrative universe is also reflected in the multi-layered nature of the narrator in terms of its narrative level, position and scope.

The structurally and thematically fragmented narrative and the multifaceted and complicated narrator in *Tristram Shandy* make it impossible to assign an organizing principle to any aspect of the novel. The narrator in *David Copperfield* is capable of this mimetic mission and functions as the unifying element for the narrative worlds and narrator selves in the novel. As for *Tristram Shandy*, the narrator accomplishes to bring the narrative worlds and narrative selves in connection but he fails to form a coherence and order among them. He functions just as a bridge correlating the textual actual world and relative worlds in the narrative universe due to his self-conscious attempt of narrating his life. In a similar vein, the narrating self and

the narrated self of Tristram do not match with each other at any point in the novel because they are drifted along the non-teleological and counteractive movement of the narrative worlds and cannot find a common ground on which to meet. The ending of the novel is a good example demonstrating this lack of mimetic order and coherence in terms of narrative worlds and narrator selves, which can be illustrated in Possible Worlds Theory discourse as in the diagram below:

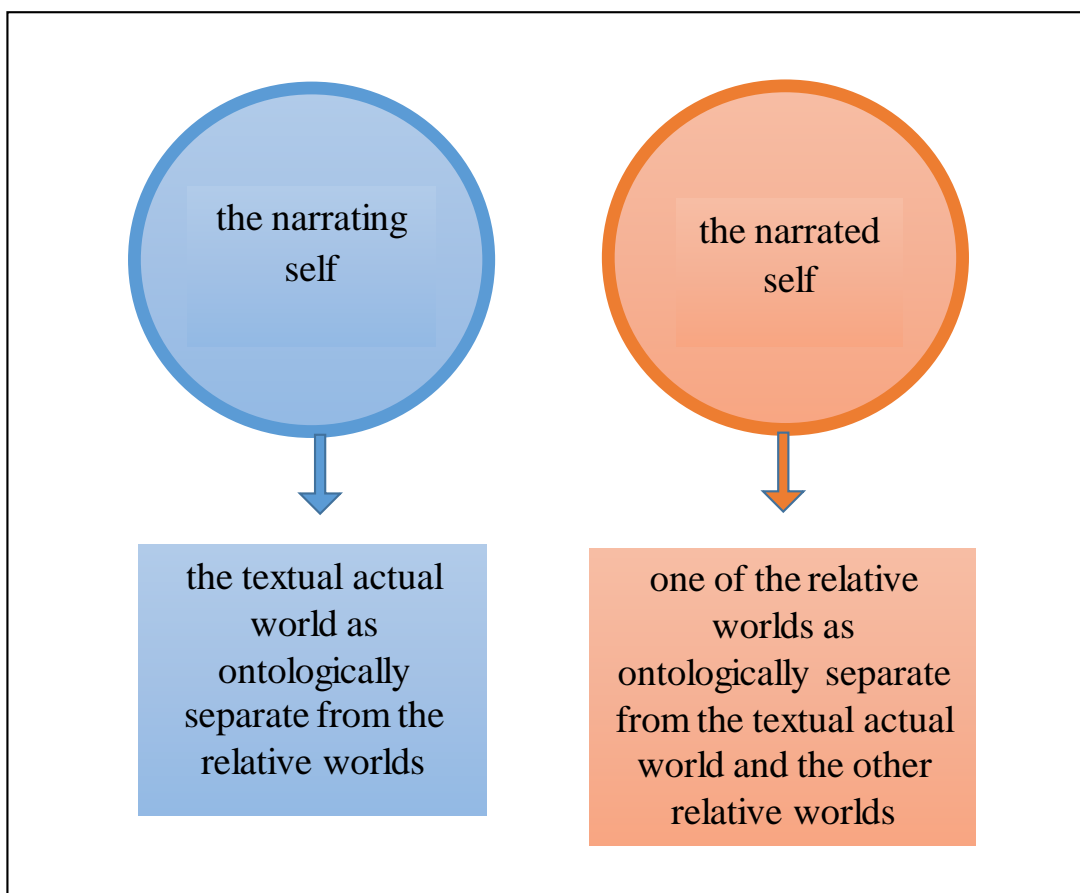


Figure 4.3 An illustration of the ending in the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy*

The final scene of the novel presents a family gathering of the Shandy household attending to a story about a bull that is to impregnate a cow. They discuss about a trivial issue, the potential sterility of the animals and probable failure of impregnation as if it were a highly important subject matter. Like many of the stories of the novel, this story is not located in a sequential or causal order, either; it rambles, does not serve an ultimate end, and offers no resolution or closure. The narration simply comes to an end with this trifling story; the narrator does not attempt to wrap up his narration or is not willing to resolve any conflict produced during the act of narration. In this respect, Ryan's account of productive conflict in narratives (1985), which is quite applicable for *David Copperfield*, works on the opposite direction in *Tristram Shandy*. As David is willing to resolve the conflicts of his life and construct meaning out of what he has narrated, the gap between his narrator selves and also between the narrative worlds is effaced at the end of the novel. Yet, Tristram only provides a disordered and fragmented narrative and has no will to resolve any conflict, arrive at a meaning, or reach a closure. Due to this lack of productive conflict, the narrative worlds of the novel and the narrator selves of the narrator remain separate and do not form a coherent whole in the end. The result is that "Tristram becomes an unreliable narrator, not in the sense that we cannot believe all he says, but in the sense that we lose faith that he will ever carry anything through" (Park, 1974, p. 269). The traditional ending of a realist novel, like *David Copperfield*, lets the reader acknowledge the structural and thematic unity of narrative universe and the unifying role of the narrator as a reliable center of authority and control in this framework. However, *Tristram Shandy*, as a metafictional and unnatural narrative, denies the reader such a reliable narration, a teleological order and a satisfying closure due to anti-mimetic practices that function to jumble the narrative worlds and the narrator selves of the novel's narrative universe. Consequently, if *David Copperfield* orders a disordered world, *Tristram Shandy* disorders further an already disordered world.

#### 4.3.3. Anti-Mimetic Practices in *Tristram Shandy*

Anti-mimesis is what makes *Tristram Shandy* an extraordinarily unique novel in structural and contextual terms. Challenging mimesis and the mimetic principle in representation, anti-mimesis provides literary narratives with self-reflexive and self-conscious elements. In this respect, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* occupies an important place among many other literary works employing anti-mimetic practices. The novel lays bare its construction process and defies a linear and teleological line as "presumed events of the narrative of Tristram's autobiography and the Shandy family history, are not only told out of order, but are frequently cut off and fragmented" (Williams, 1990, p. 24). In this manner, it "certainly does not satisfy the usual expectations as to how a novel should be organized" since "it is not the usual sort of novel" and presents extreme novelistic experimentation (Jefferson, 1951, p. 233). Problematizing the dominant generic features of mimetic fiction of the time in which it was written, it emerges as a "kaleidoscopic novel: rich and multicolored, with many complicated and beautiful patterns" by means of anti-mimetic practices that contextualize "fictional representation of reality" and foreground "limitations of language" (Whittaker, 1988, p. 1). This metafictional process is supported by the narrative universe and the narrator's split positioning in the novel. *Tristram Shandy*'s narrative universe is divided into a textual actual world in which the narrating self presents not just his story but the process of presenting his story as well, and a set of relative worlds that are reserved for the narrated self and also for the other characters and that offer non-linear and fragmented pieces of narrative. In this sense, *Tristram Shandy* is vastly experimental and innovative in terms of its narration.

One of the prominent anti-mimetic practices of *Tristram Shandy* is its construction as a metafictional text by an unconventional narrator. In mimetic fiction, as in Dickens' *David Copperfield*, the narrator is the organizing principle and meaning creator of the novel and the reader is expected to take everything the narrator tells for granted. In Sterne's anti-mimetic novel, however, "it is Tristram Shandy, the self-conscious narrator of his own life story, who tears the book apart or, if one prefers, holds it together" (Booth, 1952, p. 163). That is, the narrator follows a non-linear and fragmented path in his narration in the textual actual world; but, at the same time, he



is the one to make connections between all narrative worlds of the novel. The mentioned connections are not necessarily causal or sequential; they are mostly haphazard and stay on a surface level since the novel does not intend to pursue a teleological line or arrive at a satisfying closure. In a conventional realist novel that follows the life story of the protagonist, for instance, a chronological line is presented and the hero's birth is rendered in the beginning of the novel, just in the way Dickens' novel does. However, the reader has to wait for the birth of the protagonist until Book 3 in *Tristram Shandy* since the narrator procrastinates the narration of the birth scene with structural and thematic digressions. A self-conscious digression inserted into the birth scene is emblematic of this (Chapter 20 of Book 3):

... the idea of the smoak-jack soon turned all [my father's] ideas upside down --- so that he fell asleep almost before he knew what he was about.

As for my uncle Toby, his smoak-jack had not made a dozen revolutions, before he fell asleep also. --- Peace be with them both! --- Dr. Slop is engaged with the midwife, and my mother above stairs. --- Trim is busy in turning an old pair of jack-boots into a couple of mortars to be employed in the siege of Messina next summer ... All my heroes are off my hands; --- 'tis the first time I have had a moment to spare -- - and I'll make use of it, and write my preface.

#### THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

No, I'll not say a word about it ---- here it is; --- in publishing it --- I have appealed to the world --- and to the world I leave it; --- it must speak for itself.

All I know of the matter is --- when I sat down, my intent was to write a good book; and as far as the tenuity of my understanding would hold out ... to put into it all the wit and the judgment ... which the great Author and Bestower of them had thought fit originally to give me. (2007, pp. 152-153)

The labor of Mrs. Shandy and the birth of Tristram as a character is narrated in a relative world when the narrating self from the textual actual here intrudes in the narration. This digression works on both structural and thematic terms as it cuts off the course of the storyline and opens up a formally different unit, namely the preface of the novel. Hereby, Tristram as a narrator does not prioritize the story *per se* and does not aim to present it as a sequential, coherent and complete unity; in contrast, he highlights the formal qualities, which further complicates the narration of this story.

The narration style of Tristram overflows with digressions which function as a tool to define the narrative worlds of the novel's narrative universe. A textual actual world and a set of relative worlds are distinguished due to the interruptive and digressive moments. The narrating self of Tristram consciously and continually interrupts the relative worlds and makes his ontological stance belonging to the textual actual world detectable by means of retrospective wisdom and self-reflexive narration. However, it is not possible to construct a hierarchical stratification between them. The textual actual world is not autonomous; it acts on and at the same time is counteracted by the relative worlds. Therefore, it is not capable of controlling, dominating, or orienting the relative worlds towards a teleological end, unlike the textual actual world of *David Copperfield*. The narrator, in this respect, just functions as a bridge connecting the textual actual world and the relative worlds, also the relative worlds among themselves, as they move haphazardly with his digressions. This interactive and dynamic relation in the narrative universe is best expressed with the remarks of the narrator regarding his narrative style: "my work is digressive, and it is progressive too, --- and at the same time" (2007, p. 56). He further elaborates on the digressions of his narrative (Chapter 22 of Book 1):

---- This is vile work. --- For which reason, from the beginning of this, you see, I have constructed the main work and the adventitious parts of it with such intersections, and have so complicated and involved the digressive and progressive movements, one wheel within another, that the whole machine, in general, has been kept a-going ; --- and, what's more, it shall be kept a-going these forty years, if it pleases the fountain of health to bless me so long with life and good spirits. (2007, p. 56)

Tristram explicitly claims that his narrative progresses by means of digressions. By connecting the narrative worlds of the novel, the digressions become the working mechanism of the narrative universe. They are functional in experimenting with an otherwise mimetic order of a life story. In the same chapter, he points out the utmost significance of digressions:

Digressions, incontestably, are the sun shine; ---- they are the life, the soul of reading! --- take them out of this book, for instance, --- you might as well take the book along with them; --- one cold eternal winter would reign in every page of it; restore them to the writer; --- he steps forth like a bridegroom, --- bids All hail; brings in variety, and forbids the appetite to fail. (2007, p. 56)

While talking about the irreplaceable status of the digressions, Tristram contrasts the teleological linearity of mimetic texts with digressive fragmentation of anti-mimetic texts. He concludes that self-reflexive digressions emphasize the text itself rather than the writer who is supposed to be the organizing principle and the meaning creator in a conventional narrative. Indeed, this is quite metafictional as the narrator declares his opinions related to digressions in a digressive moment, in an intersection between the textual actual world and one of the relative worlds in which temperamental characteristics of Tristram's uncle Toby Shandy are rendered. After this digressive moment ends and the textual actual world retreats, the relative world comes to the fore again and the narrative resumes on where it is interrupted. That is to say, Tristram's narrative self-reflexively progresses through the conscious digressions of the narrator.

Another important anti-mimetic practice in *Tristram Shandy* is the self-reflexive device of direct address to the audience. Tristram's ontological status as the narrating self belonging to the textual actual world grants him with the opportunity of going beyond the narrated stories of the relative worlds and of explicitly and directly calling out to his audience. This is also the case for Dickens' realist novel *David Copperfield*. However, there is a stark contrast between the motivation behind the two novels' direct addresses. David addresses his audience in such a way that the audience is positioned simply as a passive receiver and has no effect in the progress of the narrative. Tristram, on the other hand, interacts with his audience as an active participant in his narrative process. See, for example, his dialogue with a narratee whom he calls "Madam" (Chapter 20 of Book 1):

----- How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? I told you in it, That my mother was not a papist. ----- Papist! You told me no such thing, Sir. --- Madam, I beg leave to repeat it over again, that I told you as plain, at least, as words, by direct inference, could tell you such a thing. ---Then, Sir, I must have missed a page. --- No, Madam, --- you have not missed a word. ----- Then I was asleep, Sir. --- My pride, Madam, cannot allow you that refuge. ---- Then, I declare, I know nothing at all about the matter. --- That, Madam, is the very fault I lay to your charge; and as a punishment for it, I do insist upon it, that you immediately turn back, that is, as soon as you get to the next full stop, and read the whole chapter over again. (2007, p. 44)

Tristram's narrating self asks "Madam" to read the previous chapter again as she has problems in understanding what he is narrating at the very moment of narration. He

waits for the lady to return for the narrative duration and space of a paragraph and then continues his narrative upon her arrival. This interaction between Tristram the narrator and his addressee takes place in the textual actual world as it is related not to the story itself but to its narration process. In this regard, Tristram, as the extradiegetic narrator of the textual actual world, puts the lady into the position of the narratee. Since she is not a character of Tristram's story, she is above the intradiegetic narrative level and becomes an extradiegetic narratee who resides at the same narrative level and the same narrative world with Tristram's narrating self. Another difference between David's and Tristram's addresses to the audience results from their naming. David calls out to his supposed addressee as the reader; he does not use any further descriptive adjectives or titles. For Tristram, on the other hand, there are multiple narratees at distinct points: a Sir, a Madam, a Lord, a woman called Jenny, a Reader, a Friend, a Companion, or a Critick. Thus, the narratee, for Tristram, is not static or clearly defined; on the contrary, they are multiple and unforeseeable. Tristram shares his life story and opinions with a supposed addressee as David also does; yet, he extends its role further by revealing how he performs the narration act and how the narratee should perform during the act of narration in return. He points out the unconventional and self-reflexive features of his narrative in this dynamic process (Chapter 6 of Book 1):

In the beginning of the last chapter, I informed you exactly when I was born; but I did not inform you how, No, that particular was reserved entirely for a chapter by itself; --- besides, Sir, as you and I are in a manner perfect strangers to each other, it would not have been proper to have let you into too many circumstances relating to myself all at once. --- You must have a little patience. I have undertaken, you see, to write not only my life, but my opinions also; hoping and expecting that your knowledge of my character, and of what kind of a mortal I am, by the one, would give you a better relish for the other: As you proceed further with me, the slight acquaintance which is now beginning betwixt us, will grow into familiarity; and that, unless one of us is in fault, will terminate in friendship. (2007, pp. 6-7)

The narratee, in this specific example a Sir, is asked to be patient with Tristram's unconventional narrative as this is basically his way of writing. Also Tristram is, at that moment, not willing to narrate everything at once. The narratee is promised to be able to learn more as he and Tristram get to know each other better. In this way, the

narratee as a category has an effect on the plotline and the narrator's digressive progression, and performs an active role in the narrative process.

Challenging the mimetic tenets of Enlightenment philosophy in terms of representation is another anti-mimetic practice employed in *Tristram Shandy*. The mimetic principle that art represents life and the Enlightenment proposition that there is a direct correspondence between reality and words is problematized in structural, contextual and linguistic levels in the novel. If Dickens' realist novel *David Copperfield* is to be regarded as an example which carries out this principle in every possible aspect, Sterne's metafictional novel can be seen as a text designed to resist, defy, and even play with mimesis. In structural terms, David's narrative follows a linear line and the narrative worlds of this novel are hierarchically defined; on a contextual basis, the story is narrated chronologically and realistically, and moves towards a meaningful closure; and, in terms of linguistics, the text does not invite us to question the correspondence between the signifier and the signified. These strategies altogether help create the mimetic illusion of reality in *David Copperfield*. In *Tristram Shandy*, however, these strategies are subverted for the sake of anti-mimesis. As Tristram the narrator himself says (Chapter 8 of Book 9): "life follows [his] pen" (2007, p. 496) and what is created out of his writing is an artefact. Tristram's narrative does not pursue a structural linear line; all of the narrative worlds of the novel, be it the textual actual world or any one of the relative worlds, move in a non-teleological order. It is not possible to talk about any kind of autonomy, authority, centrality, or control for the relations among the narrative worlds. That is why the narrative universe is not hierarchically stratified. Similarly, it is not apt to form a coherent sequence or a thematic unity in Tristram's narrative. Events and opinions are arranged without a causal relation or a satisfying end and presented unrealistically as fragmented narrative pieces moving through the conscious digressions of the narrator.

The unproblematic correspondence between a signifier and its signified is also contested in *Tristram Shandy*. Word, as a linguistic unit, is not able to refer to or represent an external reality, and that is why the signifier never reaches the signified to construct a coherent meaning. As William Gass suggests, the words scribed in a work of metafiction are "only imaginatively possible ones" and they "need not to be

at all like any real one” (1970, p. 9). In this respect, metafiction liberates art from the mimetic obligation of representing life. The idea of “hobby-horse” which takes up much space in the novel is illustrative of this. Walter Shandy’s interest in his son’s education by means of philosophical discussions and specifically designed encyclopedia turns out to be a hobby-horsical activity as it does not result in the intended product. Toby Shandy’s obsession with a map demonstrating battle scenes and military science results in another hobby-horse which remains just a long, fruitless endeavor. Tristram’s continual narratorial remarks related to his style in the textual actual world may also be seen as a hobby-horsical movement since they do not make a coherent whole and suggest a clear implication. Due to this, the textual actual world is distinguished, but it remains just as a narrative world with no deeper ontological status or unified meaning. In this way, the narrative universe of *Tristram Shandy* defies any central or organizing principles and disposes of any hierarchical structures; what remains is a ceaseless procrastination of meaning. Consequently, *Tristram Shandy* breaks the mimetic illusion of reality by means of structural, contextual and linguistic anti-mimetic practices.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that Possible Worlds Theory as applied in literary studies offers a useful, though not adequate, framework for the analysis of anti-mimetic fiction. Sterne’s metafictional novel *Tristram Shandy*, presenting the life story and reflections of its protagonist, Tristram, on a variety of topics, by himself and in a non-linear order, has been a good example to prove this argument. The theory has been most functional in detecting a narrative universe entailing two sets of narrative worlds and a split positioning of the narrator in the novel. A textual actual world, which is distinguished by means of narratorial remarks of the narrating self, and some relative worlds, the narrative domain reserved for the narrated self and also other characters, constitute the novel’s narrative universe. Yet, it has not been possible to find any ontological difference between these narrative worlds and at this point the theory falls short. The textual actual world is not autonomous in itself and not superior to the remaining narrative worlds of the novel since it is not capable of controlling, orienting, or functioning as the center of the narrative universe. In a similar vein, the relative worlds are not dependent on the textual actual world since they counteract with it and

change the course of the narration. In other words, the domain of the narration including the narrating self and the domain of what is being narrated entailing the narrated self is set apart; but they are not hierarchically stratified on an ontological level. Although the narrating self does have the advantage of retrospective wisdom and of hybridity in narrator characteristics, he is not able to dominate the narrative universe due to the self-reflexive and anti-mimetic elements of the novel. All of the narrative worlds of the novel continually interact and counteract with each other, and that is why it is not possible to experience a teleological movement or a coherent meaning in the novel's narrative universe. This ontological structure in terms of worlds and selves works against the mimetic principle and reveals an anti-mimetic process in terms of narration. Consequently, the framework as put forward by Possible Worlds Theory for the analysis of fictional texts has been testified to be effective in exploring the narrative universe of an example of anti-mimetic fiction; but it needs to be revised to accommodate the dynamic ontological relations afforded by anti-mimetic practices.

## CHAPTER 5

### HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION & POSSIBLE WORLDS THEORY: *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN*

Time (having no further use for me) is running out. ... I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to end up meaning-yes, meaning-something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity.  
(*Midnight's Children*, 2008, pp. 3-4)

This chapter also aims to test and revise Possible Worlds Theory in terms of the ontological demarcation it offers for the narrative domain of the literary texts in anti-mimetic fiction; yet, it will employ as an example a postmodern novel, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which is also classified as historiographic metafiction. For this aim, the concept of anti-mimesis will be briefly looked at again and the relation between what is anti-mimetic and what is postmodern will be explored. This will be followed by a survey of the term anti-mimetic fiction, paying particular attention to the generic features of (postmodern) historiographic metafiction, and the views of postmodern critics, especially of Hutcheon and White, on traditional historiography and its revision in the postmodern era will be provided. Self-reflexivity and historical awareness of historiographic metafiction will be examined in relation to the blurred ontological boundaries between reality and its representation. Lastly, Possible Worlds Theory will be employed for the analysis of *Midnight's Children* in the light of the three main parameters of this study questioning the validity of the theory in an example of historiographic metafiction, and some revisions to the theory will be proposed so that it can embrace the anti-mimetic practices related to the metafictional, historical, and political concerns of the novel.



### **5.1. Anti-Mimesis and Postmodernism**

Anti-mimesis has been in the literary critical arena for as long as mimesis itself, although it has not been named so. It is possible to detect anti-mimetic features in many literary genres and modes of representation from the ancient times to the contemporary era. Unnatural narratologists label anti-mimetic literary texts as unnatural since they defamiliarize the conventional elements of narratives, go against the mimetic principle in representation, defy the philosophical principles of modernity concerning the accessibility of truth through senses, and challenge the literary assumptions of realism that posit literary texts as unmediated media regarding their relationship to reality. Anti-mimetic texts break the mimetic illusion of reality by laying bare their status as a construct or artefact. They are self-reflexive varyingly and in differing degrees in that they direct the attention not to the story itself but to how it is constructed and processed. In this way, they not only display and usually celebrate the artificial and fictional nature of the text but also position the reader as an active participant in this process. Although anti-mimesis has been in practice for such a long time, it was in the twentieth century when linguists and literary critics began to theorize anti-mimetic practices in literature. In this framework, mimetic correspondence between life and art is questioned and challenged with the assumption that the strict boundary between reality and its representation, or between fact and fiction is lost. It is now possible to claim that art does not reflect reality but comes to be self-reflexive through anti-mimetic practices and that reader is not a mere receiver but a contributor to this interactive process. These anti-mimetic formulations, though in effect since the ancient times, have flourished in the postmodern era with an explicit interest in self-reflexivity and formal experimentation. There is an apparent affinity between the philosophical underpinnings of anti-mimesis and postmodernism since both develop a critical attitude towards mimetic representation in literature by breaking the illusionary concept of reality and revealing the artificiality of literary texts. As unnatural narratologists assert “most postmodern stories and novels are clear-cut, perhaps quintessential, examples of unnatural narrative” (Richardson 2015:9). In this respect, postmodern narratives are accepted as essentially unnatural or anti-mimetic texts that transcend the mimetic principle in representation and break the illusion of reality. Yet,

is not apt to claim that “anti-mimetic” directly correspond to “postmodern” as the term is employed to refer to all kinds of literary texts from differing periods and genres which lay bare their artificiality and fictionality. Postmodern works of fiction, then, are anti-mimetic as long as they problematize their own ontological status. Richardson further defines postmodern narratives as those

that collapse many of the standard concepts of identity – self/other, different historical periods, fiction/reality, author/narrator, high culture/pop culture, model/simulation, aesthetic and commercial discourse, incompatible genres, and so on”. (2015, p. 129)

That is why postmodern fiction embraces ontological instability and hybridity, as well as self-reflexivity and anti-mimetic practices, in its construction.

## **5.2. Historiographic Metafiction as Anti-Mimetic Fiction**

Writing of history is rendered as a problematic act in postmodern theory as it inherently claims to offer a true and accurate account of the past events. Postmodernism challenges any account holding a monopoly on truth and problematizes representations of past in the form of mimetic narratives. Historiographic metafiction, a subgenre of postmodern fiction originally formulated by Linda Hutcheon, intends to reveal this representational problem by questioning the line between history and fiction with utmost focus on self-reflexivity. The term is used to describe “those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 5). According to Hutcheon, historiographic metafictional novels display a “theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (*historiographic metafiction*) [which] is made the grounds for [a] rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past” (1988, p. 5, original italics). Historiographic metafiction, thus, is constructed as a specific form of metafiction which contributes further to the anti-mimetic understanding of literature: historiographic metafictional texts not only examine the self-reflexive workings of literary narrative and reveal its ontological and artificial status as fiction, but they also work on the parallels between writing of history (historiography) and writing of literature. This is built on the claim that both history and literature are artificial constructs that do not reflect the reality or the past but they rather reinvent and reshape

them as a necessary result of subjective and ideologically-informed perspectives. In this way, history, because of its mimetic claim, has become a controversial theme in historiographic metafiction, which displays apparent anti-mimetic features in relation to representation. This controversial issue brings about abundant literary critical works related to postmodern critique of history-writing. In this respect, Linda Hutcheon's and Hayden White's works may be placed among the substantial critical pieces in this contemporary intellectual orientation. Therefore, the term historiographic metafiction will be expounded with the debates of Hutcheon and White by pointing out its specific anti-mimetic characteristics in this section.

Postmodern historiographic metafiction challenges the mimetic assumption that it is possible to have realistic reference to a past event through the textual practice of history-writing. As what happened in the past can only be reached via constructed texts, writing of history is primarily a textual practice. At this point, Hutcheon makes it clear that what postmodern literature aims is not to repudiate this textual representation but to stress the problematic nature of this representation (2002, p. 47). In other words, history is problematized not for its own sake, but for its textuality in history-writing process in postmodern theory (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 16). Prior to this postmodern understanding, there was a traditionally accepted distinction between history and literature. According to White, this differentiation is based on the mimetic definitions of history "as the study of the real" and literature "as the representation of the imaginary" (1978, p. 124). He further explains:

In the early nineteenth century ... it became conventional, at least among historians, to identify truth with fact and to regard fiction as the opposite of truth, hence as a hindrance to the understanding of reality rather than as a way of apprehending it. History came to be set over against fiction, and especially the novel, as the representation of the "actual" to the representation of the "possible" or only "imaginable". (White 1978a, p. 123).

Hutcheon takes up this separation of the historical and the literary as what is being contested in postmodern theory and art:

recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ. They have both been seen to drive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at

all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. But these are also the implied teachings of historiographic metafiction. (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 105)

From a postmodern perspective, the disciplines of history and literature meet on a similar ground in that neither should subscribe to a mimetic notion of objective truth; on the contrary, what should be underlined is that they are constructed as linguistic artefacts depending on verisimilitude. They are also alike in their treatment of past texts and in their complicated textual nature. History-writing is not independent of textuality, just like literary writing, as a historical event can only be related by means of narration (Oppermann, 1998, p. 44). In other words, both a literary work and an account of a historical event come into existence by means of texts through intertextual relations.

Postmodern historiographic metafiction, then, does not question history itself; but the reliability of history, which can be reached and known only through textual documents, is contested. As Hutcheon asserts “history is not the transparent record of any sure ‘truth’” (1989, p. 10); since “the past arrives in the form of texts and textualized remainders – memories, reports, published writings, archives, monuments, and so forth” (as cited in Hutcheon, 1989, p. 11). Such documents cannot be accepted as unquestionably reliable sources for history-writing as they are textual artefacts produced through the ideological processes that shape the historical events and work as a control mechanism. According to Hutcheon, history is designed, arranged and controlled by a dominant ideological discourse (1989, p. 60). That is why, historiography, even if (or, perhaps, more so) officially recorded, is unreliable. Taking the unreliability of history as its basis, historiographic metafiction “reveals the past as always ideologically and discursively constructed” (Woods, 1999, p. 56). From a postmodern perspective, history is rendered as a textual construct, which is loaded with ideological overtones. In this way, postmodernism becomes “a way of releasing history from the influence of the dominant totalitarian and patriarchal ideologies” and it “celebrates a multiplicity of histories” (Kırca, 2009, pp. 11-12). The postmodern approach to history, therefore, opens up new possibilities to generate a multiplicity of

voices and narrations as opposed to a totalitarian account of meanings and perspectives.

Apart from the ideological insinuations, Hutcheon mentions the subjective filters of the historian as contributing to the unreliability of history. The claim to represent a true account of past events is problematic as any historian is inevitably subjective in choosing what to include in his/her historical narrative. The method of selection is crucial for the historian in that he/she has to present a comprehensive account of past events. White formulates the term “emplotment” for the method that a historian chooses in order to produce a clear and complete historical narrative. He explains this process as follows:

[H]istories gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of mere chronicles; and stories in turn are made out of chronicles by an operation which I have elsewhere called “emplotment”. And by emplotment I mean simply the encodation of the facts contained in the chronicle as components of specific kinds of plot structures. (White, 1978b, p. 83)

Therefore, it is vital for the historian to appeal to narrative techniques in order to construct a piece of historical work. White elaborates his claim on the subjective process in the creation of the historical narratives with the following remark on an easy shift of perspective from the “tragic” to the “comic”:

The events are made into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like – in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play. For example, no historical event is intrinsically tragic; it can only be conceived as such from a particular point of view or from within the context of structured set of events of which it is an element enjoying a privileged place. For in history what is tragic from one perspective is comic from another. (White, 1978b, p. 84)

Historical accounts are produced by the historian, who foregrounds some events or perspectives while subduing some others through narrative means which are not unlike those employed in literary texts. The change in perspective, for instance, defines the tragic-comic distinction. The historian adopts this process for turning the chronicles into historical narratives in which “historical events are described through a subjective eye and interpreted through historians’ own perspectives, and that historical

information is in no way pure and innocent” (Kirca, 2009, p. 11). That is why, the selection and order of past events in historical narratives is inevitably subjective.

According to Hutcheon, who shares White’s opinions related to the term emplotment, for the process of turning the historical events into coherent stories, history-writing and literature commonly stick to emplotment: “[h]istoriography and fiction are seen as sharing the same act of refiguration, of reshaping of our experience of time through plot configurations; they are complementary activities” (1988, p. 100). Historical and literary narratives, on a contextual basis, may refer to distinct issues; however, they both employ the same narrative techniques, which make the two “substantially the same” (White, 1978a, p. 121). Prior to the postmodern understanding of the interdependent relation between history and literature, historians were considered to be presenting the real whereas the novelists the imaginary. Yet, postmodern critics, like Hutcheon and White, problematize this clear demarcation as the fictional material of the novelists is founded upon “human experience which is no less ‘real’ than that referred to by the historian” (White, 1978a, p. 122). In this respect, White fights against any attempt to find an objective method for history and suggests that the “literary basis” of historiography is much more valuable (1978b, p. 99). As Oppermann also claims “representations of the past always remain discursive and subjective” (1999, p. 14). A decent historical account is created only when it is acknowledged that the past events are subjectively presented as a narrative. Hutcheon elaborates on this issue of narrativization of history with her differentiation between past “events” and “facts”: “facts” are the past “events” that are selected to be narrated (Hutcheon, 2002, p. 72). Under the light of these definitions and arguments concentrating on the narrative form of history, it is apt to conclude that historiography, as understood in a postmodern sense, is a subjective and anti-mimetic process carried out by the historian in the form of a narrative so that it functions as a means to convey historical information. This, in turn, becomes a valuable material for postmodern literature.

The mimetic mode of representing of the past and search for a source of meaning is considered as a problematic act in postmodern literature because of the subjective perspective of the narrator during the act of narrating a particular event.

Postmodernism explores the notions of history and textual meaning in a quite anti-mimetic way. According to Hutcheon,

The process of making stories out of chronicles, of constructing plots out of sequences, is what postmodern fiction underlines. This does not in any way deny the existence of the past real, but it focuses attention on the act of imposing order on that past, of encoding strategies of meaning-making through representation. (2002, p. 63)

What is questioned in postmodernism is not whether or not a past event actually took place but the subjective and discursive processes that produce stories as a consequence of plotting/ordering those events. An anti-mimetic approach renders it manifest that an order is imposed and a meaning is achieved by means of a representational act. Similarly, Oppermann emphasizes that the meaning of the past events is acquired “only through their representations”; however, as this representation is carried out in the form of a narrative, it is always problematic because of “its discursive nature” (1999, p. 19). The novels that are founded and centered upon real historical events are still fictional because of the “selection and narrative positioning” (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 97). That is to say, although the material a novelist makes use of may be a real/historical event, the writing process through which that event is made into a story is fictional. At this point, it is apt to demarcate the fictional categories of historical novels and historiographic metafiction. In historical novels, the historical events or characters are presented in a fictional form so that the readers can have a vision of past in the present. However, in postmodern historiographic metafiction, “the focus is no longer on the past itself, but on the incongruity between present and past, between the language we presently use for speaking about the past and the past itself” (Ankersmit 1989, p. 153). Thus, the basic motive in historiographic metafiction is to lay bare the constructed nature of a supposed reality by making use of anti-mimetic representational practices. Although both fictional categories intersect in an interest in history as subject matter and employment of literary techniques, their motivation differs to a great extent. Whereas the historical novel aims to represent the past, historiographic metafiction intends to reveal the subjective and discursive practices in this representational process.

The concern of history in postmodern historiographic metafiction is to contest the mimetic representation of the past events and to reinterpret the existing historical accounts. As Hutcheon clearly states:

The postmodern ... effects two simultaneous moves. It reinstalls historical contexts as significant and even determining, but in so doing, it problematizes the entire notion of historical knowledge. This is [one] of the paradoxes that characterize all postmodern discourses today.”  
(1988, p. 89)

Historiographic metafiction, a sub-category of postmodern literature, presents an ambivalent understanding of history. The mimetic assumption that history is an objective discourse based on the authenticity of the past events is attacked, but historical contexts are chosen as the grounds for this discursive practice. As Hutcheon makes it clear, this is not to repudiate the historical truth but “to re-write” it (1988, p. 110). For this aim, the traditional mimetic conventions of history-writing are subverted by means of metafictional elements. The boundaries between life and literature, fact and fiction are blurred by a heterogeneous mingling of historical events and characters with imaginary ones. Although historians (i.e. the historians who do not subscribe to postmodernism) and the writers of (realist) historical novels aim at coherence and closure in their writing, writers of postmodern historiographic metafiction do not attempt to achieve coherence or closure. Quite the contrary, fragmentation, in structural and contextual terms, is highly celebrated in this kind of metafictional texts. Fragmentation, in this sense, means that any historical fact is authentically unavailable in a comprehensible narrative form; it is only through language and discursive practices that historical “events” become historical “facts” which are fictionally arranged in order to form a story. As Ankersmit states “[w]ithin the postmodernist view of history, the goal is no longer integration, synthesis, and totality, but it is those historical scraps which are the center of attention” (1989, p. 149).

In a similar vein, textual linearity is interrupted and distorted by means of narratorial interventions in historiographic metafiction. Temporal interruptions in narrative are employed as an intentional act to challenge the teleological line of mimetic texts and to make the reader conscious of the temporal unconformity with the historical context in which the story is set. The readers of historiographic metafiction are continually prompted to experience the fictionality of the novel with the self-



reflexive and self-conscious interruptions within the narrative regardless of the realist historical background. Due to these narratorial reminders, “knowing the past in the present” is problematized (Hutcheon, 2002, p. 67). Hutcheon refers to this paradoxical relationship between past and present as follows:

In ... postmodern fiction, there is an intense self-consciousness (both theoretical and textual) about the act of narrating in the present the events of the past, about the conjunction of present action and the past absent object of that agency. (2002, p. 68)

Thus, in historiographic metafiction self-consciousness is not just related with the self-reflexive status of the text as an artefact, but it also hints at the awareness about narrating past events in a present time and by means of a present act of narration. This ambivalent relationship serves to reveal the difference between the individual or official historical knowledge and the postmodern anti-mimetic representation of that historical knowledge. Consequently, the narration is recurrently fragmented with self-reflexive and self-conscious interferences of either the characters or the narrator in order to encourage the reader to reflect on the nature of historical knowledge and the anti-mimetic characteristic of its textual representation in examples of historiographic metafiction. By this means, the reader is always reminded of the fictionality of the text regardless of its realistic and historical context and also invited to interact with the text by taking an active role in the reception process. This is, indeed, the ultimate aim, if one can ascribe such a definition, of postmodern literature.

### **5.3. Revisiting Possible Worlds Theory in the light of *Midnight's Children*, a Historiographic Metafictional Novel**

*Midnight's Children* is a critically acclaimed historiographic metafictional novel by Salman Rushdie published in 1981. It sets out to present the life story of its protagonist, Saleem Sinai, against a background of historical contexts of the end of British colonial rule in India, its independence and partition. In this narration, actual historical events are preserved with the fictional accounts of the narrator, who is at the same time the protagonist, which signals anti-mimetic and self-reflexive elements at work. Although the narrator intends to present his life story following a linear line as in the case of the narrator in *David Copperfield*, his endeavor does not give rise to the same teleological and mimetic narration. In contrast, like the narrative of *Tristram*

*Shandy*, it contests mimetic representation by means of a fragmented plotline, digressive narration, temporal dislocation and self-reflexive artificiality. These anti-mimetic narrative practices are merged with a distortion of the ontological distinctions between fact and fiction, between the historical and the fictional, which in turn serves to describe the novel as an example of historiographic metafiction. This anti-mimetic and self-conscious novel employs retrospective narration conducted by its protagonist, Saleem, and two sets of narrative worlds are constructed by means of this retrospection in narration. Possible Worlds Theory provides an epitomic application for mimetic fiction as shown in Chapter 3 with Dickens' realist novel; yet it also offers a valid framework for the analysis of anti-mimetic fiction as illustrated in Chapter 4 with Sterne's metafictional novel. However, as the theory needs a revision to be fully applicable to *Tristram Shandy*, it should also be enlarged and enriched in order to accommodate some basic elements related to representational anti-mimesis in *Midnight's Children*. In this respect, the remaining parts of this chapter will illustrate how Rushdie's novel as an example of historiographic metafiction, a specific form of metafiction laden with explicit postmodern concerns, can be analyzed in Possible Worlds Theory discourse and to what extent the theory can be implemented in this anti-mimetic literary work with detailed references to the three critical parameters – the narrative universe, the narrator, and the anti-mimetic practices – specified in this study.

### **5.3.1. The Narrative Universe of *Midnight's Children***

As indicated earlier, Possible Worlds Theory, though a philosophical theory in essence, provides literary studies with analytical tools to evaluate the semantic domain of a literary narrative as a universe necessarily entailing a set of actuality and a set of relative possibilities. The modally indexed narrative universe, in this interpretation, consists of numerous narrative worlds, which are somehow related and move towards or away from each other and this process becomes the driving force of the plot. A textual actual world, which is autonomous and complete in itself, and a set of relative worlds, which are dependent on or emanated from the former, are clearly distinguished and segmented in the structural and contextual elements of this narrative universe

(Ryan, 1985; 1991). In describing the semantic domain of a narrative as a universe as such, literary discussions informed by Possible Worlds Theory do not take into account any generic distinctions in fiction and suggest general arguments related to fictional narratives. However, as already stated in the previous parts of the study, literary narratives may or may not exemplify this structure in accordance with their generic characteristics. While mimesis in fiction allows for such a clearly defined narrative structure, anti-mimetic texts question any kind of ontological boundaries and hierarchical constructions (Herman, 2009).

In this respect, what Possible Worlds Theory literary critics propose about narrative worlds and narrative universes can be attributed to mimetic fiction but falls short to accommodate all of the structural and contextual practices of anti-mimesis. An example of realist novel, *David Copperfield*, has been functional to demonstrate the smooth application of this theory in mimetic fiction. *Tristram Shandy*, as a highly and purely metafictional novel, on the other hand, has revealed the need for a revision in the theory so as to fully encapsulate the dynamic features of anti-mimetic fiction. At this point, *Midnight's Children*, as a historiographic metafictional novel loaded with postmodern concerns, bears similarities with *Tristram Shandy*, since it also requires a reformulation in the theory. The strict demarcation of narrative worlds, the mimetic representation, and the linear progression of Dickens' novel cannot find a place in Sterne's metafictional novel, and, similarly, they do not work in Rushdie's historiographic metafictional novel, either, in which any ontological distinction of narrative worlds, any representational mimetic act, or any kind of uninterrupted progression is contested by means of anti-mimetic and self-reflexive practices. Being a postmodern historiographic metafiction, *Midnight's Children* adds a further level to the anti-mimetic representation and ontological instability with its emphasis on historical awareness. That is why, the mimetic narrative universe structure proposed by Possible Worlds Theory literary critics and revised for the analysis of a metafictional novel needs to be reformulated in a different manner so as to accommodate all anti-mimetic practices – practices related to both the text's self-reflexive nature as well as postmodern historical concerns.

*Midnight's Children* is a work of anti-mimetic fiction based on the narration of past events by the narrator and protagonist Saleem in a self-reflexive manner. It is specifically defined as postmodern historiographic metafiction as it presents both the life story of Saleem and the history of his nation, India, by means of a rethinking and reworking of past events. As unnatural narratologists clearly state, unnatural or anti-mimetic practices in literature, like self-reflexivity and questioning of the distinction between reality and representation, abound in postmodern literary texts. Historiographic metafiction as a subgenre of postmodern fiction is an anti-mimetic mode of representation and *Midnight's Children* is one of its most celebrated examples. In the novel, Saleem, at the age of thirty-one, looks back at his past and also India's past and tells stories at a retrospective distance in a non-linear manner. In this respect, Saleem is a homodiegetic/autodiegetic narrator making up stories based on his memories, observations, experiences, thoughts and feelings: he refers to what he, as a character, witnesses and even what he cannot have possibly witnessed in this process. In his narration, an underlying chronology of events is detectable, but it is distorted frequently by the narratorial interruptions and the rearrangement of the numerous historical accounts. In terms of Possible Worlds Theory, this complex retrospective narration paves the way for the construction of a narrative universe entailing two sets narrative worlds: a textual actual world accommodating Saleem the narrator and his narratee Padma, and a set of relative worlds inhabited by Saleem the character and also the other characters of the stories he narrates. These two sets of narrative worlds can be attributed to the split positioning of the narrator: Saleem's narrating self is situated in the textual actual world of the narrative universe as understood from the explicit external remarks of the narrator and also of the narratee; and his narrated self, along with the other characters, resides in the relative worlds whose existence is dependent on the protagonist's act of narration.

Possible Worlds Theory literary critics consider that the stratification between the narrative worlds constitutes a structural hierarchy in which the textual actual world is ontologically prioritized over and plays the role of a center for all of the relative worlds. Dickens' realist novel *David Copperfield* proves this suggestion to be true. Sterne's metafictional novel *Tristram Shandy*, on the other hand, reveals the need for

a revision so that the theory can work as effectively for anti-mimetic fiction and make room for its ontological instability and lack of an organizing principle. In Rushdie's historiographic metafictional novel *Midnight's Children*, a hybridity of these two narrative universe structures can be observed. The textual actual world is granted with autonomy and ontological superiority; yet this is only achieved with the contributions of the narratee without whom the narrator would be lost in digressions. The relative worlds tend to move chronologically towards a closure; but the narrator's interruptions break the linear line and fragment the narrative by opening up room for more stories and more relative worlds. Consequently, the textual actual world in *Midnight's Children* can become the center of the novel's narrative universe, hold the relative worlds together, and orient the relative worlds towards a teleological end by means of the narratee's functional existence despite the ontological volatility caused by anti-mimetic practices. In this sense, Possible Worlds Theory as implemented in *Midnight's Children*, an example of historiographic metafiction, necessitates a revision that can offer a hybrid narrative structure so as to accommodate the ontological instability and the enforced linear effect.

The narrative universe of *Midnight's Children* revealing the positioning and the movement of its narrative worlds in relation to each other can be illustrated via the following diagram:

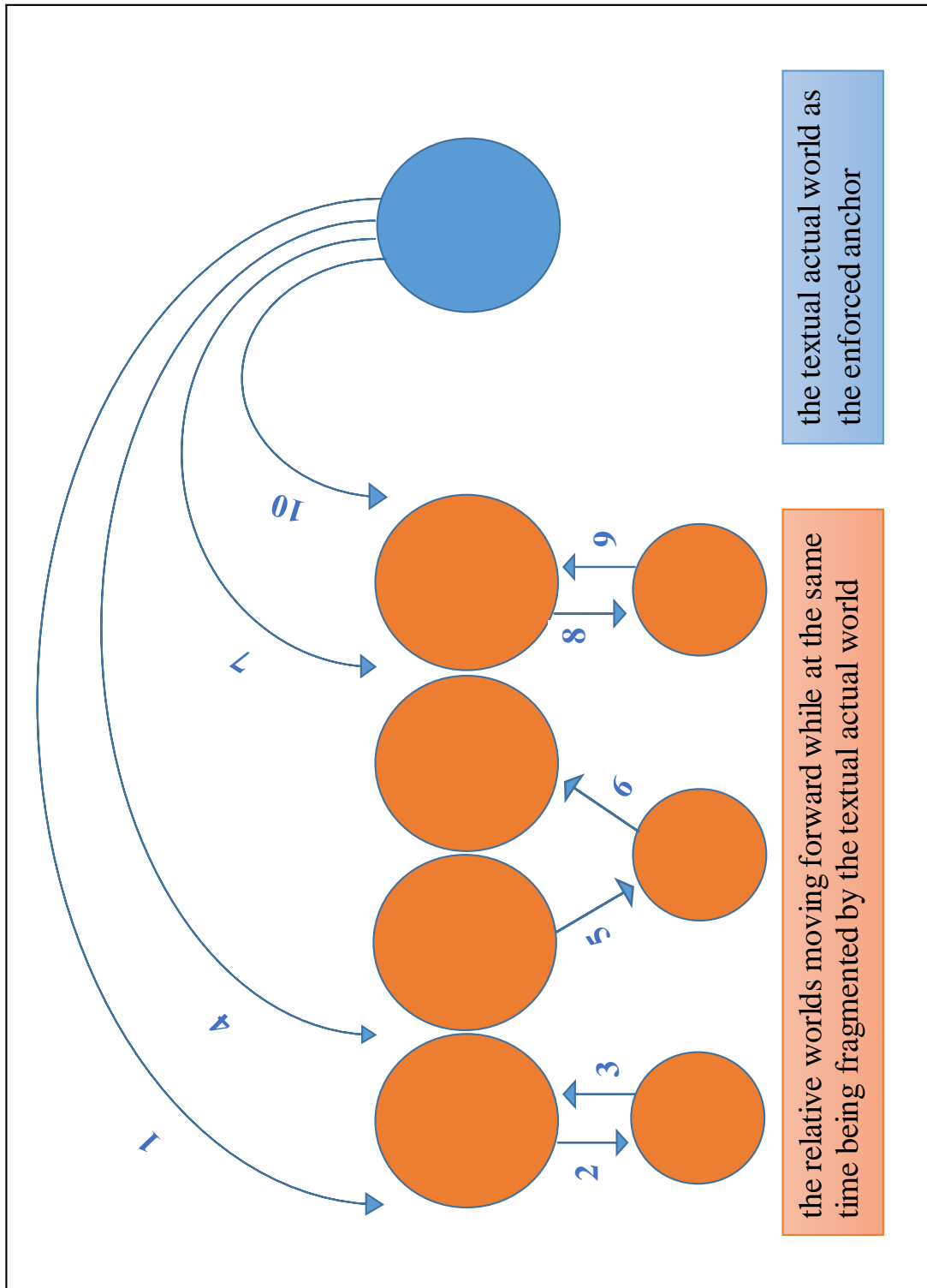


Figure 5.1 An illustration of the narrative universe of *Midnight's Children*

Saleem, coming close to his thirty-first birthday, is on a mission to tell his life story together with the historical events shaping the fate of India during his lifespan in the textual actual world of the novel's narrative universe. He integrates diverse stories about himself, his relatives and friends, and also historical accounts related to real figures of the corresponding period into his narration which is fragmented with digressions, like the narration style of *Tristram Shandy*, but which has an underlying chronology as well. The semantic domain where this act of narration is conducted by the narrating self is specified as the textual actual world by means of the narrator's exterior remarks related to his narrating process and retrospective wisdom. Like the textual actual world of *David Copperfield*, the textual actual world of *Midnight's Children* is central to the narrative universe, functions as the autonomous anchoring point, and controls and dominates the relative worlds. However, this is an unintentional effect on the part of Saleem since he is, by himself, incapable of constructing a sequential narrative order or a unified coherent meaning in his narrative. It is Padma, his faithful listener and lover, who encourages, urges and even forces Saleem to get through his narrative and reach a teleological end. The relative worlds of *Midnight's Children* are constructed as a result of the enforced act of narration. These relative worlds, like the ones in Dickens' and Sterne's novels, are knowledge worlds, or K-worlds in Ryan's categorization (1985), as what is narrated in these worlds is in accordance with what the characters know or believe to be the case in the textual actual world. In this respect, Saleem's narrated self is a character in the relative worlds devoid of any extradiegetic notion of truth; yet his narrating self is ascribed to the textual actual world which concretizes what is presented as true and real in the story.

Rushdie's historiographic metafiction is "playfully antimimetic yet also has a strong if devious mimetic [plotline] as it traces the history of the Indian subcontinent [and the personal history of its protagonist as well] for some seventy years" (Richardson, 2015, p. 9). The deviant mimetic plotline in a work of anti-mimetic fiction can be explained better with reference to the similarities between the narrative universes of the novels that are under scrutiny in this thesis. The working mechanism between the textual actual world and relative worlds of *Midnight's Children* is similar to the way in which they operate in *David Copperfield* in that an autonomous and

central textual actual world is ontologically prioritized over its dependent relative worlds in both novels' narrative universes. *Tristram Shandy* and *Midnight's Children* also bear similar characteristics in the working process of their narrative worlds. In both of the metafictional novels, the textual actual world constructs more than one relative worlds, which self-reflexively move towards the end by means of fragments and digressions. The highly complicated relation between the narrative worlds of *Midnight's Children* defies the basic narrative universe structure as formulated by Possible Worlds Theory literary critics and applied in Dickens' mimetic fiction. It also transcends the revised theoretical formulation proposed in the preceding chapter for the narrative universe of Sterne's anti-mimetic fiction. Therefore, a further revision that will also embrace a hybrid narrative universe such as Rushdie's historiographic metafiction is proposed as can be seen in the diagram above which allows not only a linear, albeit enforced, progression of events but a self-reflexive and digressive narration at the same time.

The hybridity in the narrative universe of *Midnight's Children* is illustrative of the narrative fragmentation in structural and contextual terms in the novel. The stratification of the narrative universe into an ontologically superior textual actual world and a set of dependent relative worlds that work in a self-reflexive and deviant mimetic system makes it difficult to experience a unified and coherent narrative. This narrative segmentation, indeed, is the very reason behind the structural and contextual fragmentation of the novel. The narrating self of Saleem starts his narrative with the stories related to his grandparents, continues with the stories about his parents, and then moves into his own life story, which signals a seemingly chronological narration. Yet, he intentionally fragments this narrative line into pieces by narratorial digressions and directs the attention to the self-reflexive process. The narrative fragments resulting from narratorial digressions construct the relative worlds of the narrative universe, which, interestingly, progresses towards a meaningful closure despite the digressions. The textual actual world in which the narrating Saleem and his narratee Padma are positioned can only dominate and control the relative worlds because of this enforced teleological narrative line. This is expressed by Saleem himself as a conscious narrator in the beginning of the novel:



Now, ... time (having no further use for me) is running out. I will soon be thirty-one years old. Perhaps. If my crumbling, over-used body permits. But I have no hope of saving my life, nor can I count on having even a thousand nights and a night. I must work fast, faster than Scheherazade, if I am to end up meaning-yes, meaning-something. I admit it: above all things, I fear absurdity.

And there are so many stories to tell, -too many, such an excess of intertwined lives events miracles places rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane! I have been a swallower of lives; and to know me, just the one of me, you'll have to swallow the lot as well. ... I must commence the business of remaking my life from the point at which it really began, some thirty-two years before anything as obvious, as present, as my clock-ridden, crime-stained birth. (2008, pp. 3-4)

Saleem is nearing his thirty-first birthday on which, he believes, he will die and turn into pieces. That is why, he hurries into a mission of narrating his life story in order to give meaning to his existence and reach a unified closure. As there are numerous characters and stories that have shaped Saleem's present life, he chooses to start his narrative thirty-two years before his birth (in a Shandyesque manner), from the point in which his grandparents met. Therefore, the narratorial remarks belonging to the narrating self in the textual actual world inform the reader from the beginning that what is to come is a teleological story with a clear beginning and ending and will be regulated by narratorial authority.

This first impression about the narrative related to its linearity is soon distorted with the narrator's frequent use of anti-mimetic and self-reflexive practices. The textual actual world self-consciously interrupts the narrative repeatedly and in this way constructs many relative worlds that are directed ultimately towards a deviant mimetic end. To illustrate this point, see, for example, the digression in the chapter titled "Mercurochrome" which interrupts the story of Saleem's grandparents' marriage:

I have been interrupted by Padma, who brought me my dinner and then withheld it, blackmailing me: 'So if you're going to spend all your time wrecking your eyes with that scribbling, at least you must read it to me.' I have been singing for my supper -but perhaps our Padma will be useful, because it's impossible to stop her being a critic. She is particularly angry with my remarks about her name. 'What do you know, city boy?' she cried -hand slicing the air. 'In my village there is no shame in being named for the Dung Goddess. Write at once that you are wrong, completely.' In accordance with my lotus's wishes, I insert, forthwith, a brief paeon to Dung. (2008, p. 35)

As he has promised, Saleem inserts a narrative fragment related to dung, referring to Padma's name, after this point to please her. He comes to believe she will be functional as a narratee and pays attention to her wish to correct his remarks about her name. He returns to and continues with his grandparents' story later. In this respect, the textual actual world interrupts a relative world, the one presenting the marriage of Doctor Aziz and Naseem, which is, in turn, interrupted by another relative world related to dung. Although a digression within a digression is implanted in the narrative, the textual actual world manages to keep on a deviant mimetic line and move forward.

As an example of postmodern fiction, *Midnight's Children* does not offer a mimetic narrative that reflects its protagonist's life story but an anti-mimetic narrative which self-reflexively recreates it. The deviant linearity results from this anti-mimetic stance enhanced by the narratorial remarks external to the story. Despite the various digressions of his narrating self into the domain of his narrated self, Saleem eventually turns back to his teleological aim of a meaningful end to his story. In "Hit-the-spittoon" chapter, he explains his motivation for such a linearity, though deviant, in his narrative:

I spend my time at the great work of preserving. Memory ... is being saved from the corruption of the clocks.

But here is Padma at my elbow, bullying me back into the world of linear narrative, the universe of what-happened-next: 'At this rate,' Padma complains, 'you'll be two hundred years old before you manage to tell about your birth.' ...

Enough confessions. Bowing to the ineluctable Padma-pressures of what-happened-nextism, and remembering the finite quantity of time at my disposal, I leap forwards from Mercurochrome and land in 1942.

(I'm keen to get my parents together, too.) (2008, pp. 44-45)

Saleem considers that the writing of his story is a means to preserve his memory which, otherwise, tends to be corrupted with the passing of time. This is reminiscent of Hutcheon's remark about the paradoxical attitude of historiographic metafiction to history. As suggested by Hutcheon (1988), in postmodern historiographic metafiction, history is reclaimed and rewritten; but it is treated as fiction since both history and fiction are constructed as linguistic artefacts and they do not lay claim to an objective account of reality or past. Any attempt of history-writing or story-writing is necessarily subjective and ideologically informed and this is what historiographic metafiction embraces. In this respect, Saleem's endeavor to write his story and to preserve his

memory is a political act as his story comes to be an alternative for the conventional historiography of the Indian subcontinent. However, Saleem delays this process of writing with extradiegetic narratorial digressions. The textual actual world in which the act of narration is carried out by the narrating self always shows its presence in the relative worlds that host the narrated stories by means of these digressions. Compared to the one in *Tristram Shandy*, the textual actual world becomes more pronounced and anchored here in this novel due mainly to historical awareness and political reclaiming processes. Apart from that, Padma is the one that keeps Saleem right on his mission with a critical mind, disapproving his digressions and urges him to stick to a linear narrative. Saleem obeys her and takes his narrative forward after this interruptive moment. Consequently, the hybrid structure of the narrative universe, which allows for a mingling of anti-mimetic digressions with an enforced mimetic narrative order, serves to constitute a valid framework of analysis as informed by Possible Worlds Theory for Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*.

### **5.3.2. The Narrator in *Midnight's Children***

The framework for the narrative universe structure as proposed by Possible Worlds Theory is basically applicable to *Midnight's Children* in which a textual actual world occupied by Saleem the narrator and some relative worlds hosting Saleem the character are detected. The theory essentially registers the textual actual world as the unifying element of the narrative universe and grants it with autonomy, dominance, and ontological superiority over the other narrative worlds. The relative worlds are just emanations of this organizing source and ontologically unprivileged. This framework is valid for the narrative universe of Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, but falls short to explore the deviant mimetic nature of the narrative due to the anti-mimetic and self-reflexive practices. Although the textual actual world is autonomous and dominant, it can only control and orient the relative worlds in which stories related to the narrated self are presented through the functionality of the narratee. Saleem's narrating self, with retrospective wisdom, tends to form a non-linear movement in his story by means of self-reflexive digressions; however, he ends up reaching a teleological end due to his narratee's motivation for a mimetic line. This dynamic process results in the hybrid

structure of the novel's narrative universe, and at the same time, signals a similarly hybrid nature for the narrator's split positioning. In this respect, the narrative level, position and scope of the narrator in *Midnight's Children* will provide a means to develop Possible Worlds Theory further for the analysis of anti-mimetic narratives.

Like *David Copperfield* and *Tristram Shandy*, *Midnight's Children* also offers a semantic domain that can be analyzed in terms of narrative worlds and narrator selves constructed by means of retrospective narration. Similar to David and Tristram, Saleem is also a homodiegetic narrator as a participant of the story he tells. His narrated self is a character, a minor character until his birth since stories related to his grandparents and parents are more foregrounded then, and the main character after his birth as his own experiences come to the fore in the stories he narrates from this point onwards. He can also be further defined as an autodiegetic narrator since he himself tells his life story: each and every narrative fragment, whether belonging to the time period of his ancestors long before his birth or coming from the time period of his anticipated death, has a significant influence on who he is. Again, like Dickens' and Sterne's protagonists, Saleem does not keep the same ontological status throughout the narrative. Apart from homodiegetic elements, he acquires heterodiegetic elements in the textual actual world as a consequence of his privileges as a narrator. His one-character perspective yields to the impersonal perspective of heterodiegetic narration in the digressions informed by the retrospective wisdom of the narrating self. As Saleem's narrating self knows what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen at the same time in the textual actual world, he is not restricted in terms of perspective. His heterodiegetic stance is always felt due to the frequent external and self-reflexive narratorial remarks, even if he does not, as a character, participate in all of events narrated in the novel. In this way, homodiegetic and heterodiegetic elements work in hybridity as a result of Saleem's split positioning as a narrator.

Saleem's narrator status defined by the narrative levels reveals his hybrid nature as a narrator as well. As he resides inside the story while performing the act of narration, Saleem encompasses intradiegetic elements in his narration. Yet, he also lays claim to extradiegetic elements with the advantage of a split positioning that provides a retrospectively wise narrating self and ontologically superior textual actual

world. His extradiegetic features enable him to adopt an impersonal stance as a narrating self and his perspective, then, is not limited to any character; it is omniscient. Apart from his own experiences and the events he himself witnesses, he incorporates events that he himself could not have experienced or witnessed into his narrative as well. This results from his extradiegetic claims to the story and the discourse of his narrating self becomes the basis of the narration. In this way, intradiegetic narration of the novel is transgressed and enriched with extradiegetic elements and omniscient perspective of Saleem's narrating self in the textual actual world and the hybrid narrator Saleem, like David and Tristram before, entails intradiegetic and extradiegetic elements in his narration.

The narrative texts do not necessarily entail just the story itself, but may include larger spatio-temporal and sequential frameworks. This is explained through the construction of an inner circle and an outer circle ascribed to different ontological domains of the narrative texts in Ryan's account (2016). This argument bathed in Possible Worlds Theory literary criticism constitutes a solid ground on which the hybrid characteristics of *Midnight's Children's* narrator Saleem may be illustrated as it does for the narrators of Dickens' and Sterne's novels. The original formulation answers to the ontologically hybrid narrator's status in *David Copperfield*; whereas it necessitates, this thesis suggests, an additional circle to cover fully the narratorial omniscience of the hybrid narrator in *Tristram Shandy*. Rushdie's historiographic metafiction portrays a similar structure as Sterne's metafictional novel in this sense. The inner circle covers the narrated stories and the narrated self of Saleem; it is distinguished through homodiegetic and intradiegetic elements and a one-character perspective limitation. The outer circle refers to a larger ontological domain and contains the inner circle; it is enriched with the privileges of heterodiegetic and extradiegetic narrative elements and the self-conscious narrating self. This thesis offers a third circle to encapsulate the outer circle in the narrative of *Midnight's Children* so that the omniscient perspective of the hybrid narrator can be fully acknowledged in terms of Possible Worlds Theory. The narrative circles that reveal the scope of Saleem's narratorial knowledge and perspective in the textual actual world and the relative worlds of the novel may be illustrated in the diagram below:

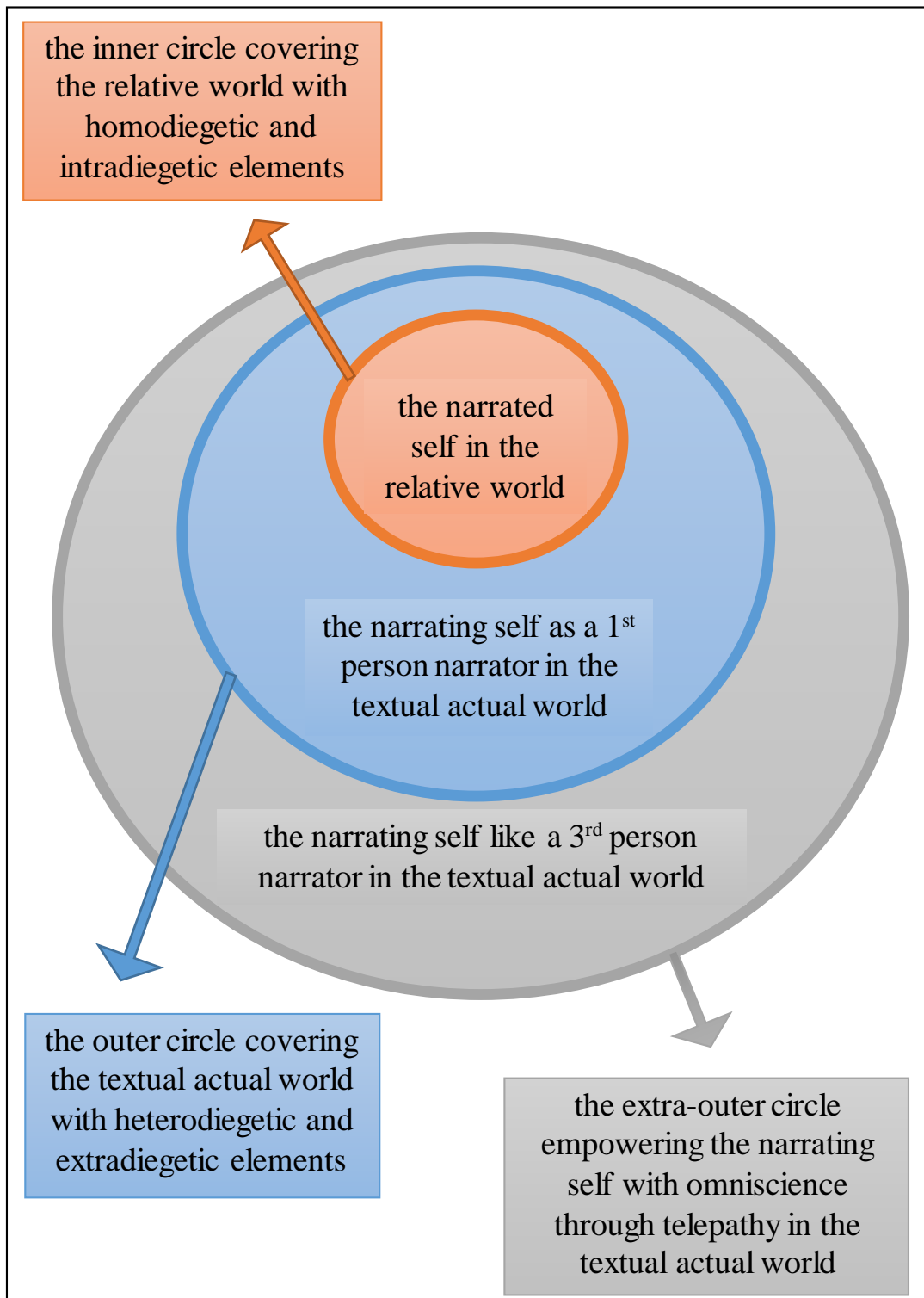


Figure 5.2 An illustration of the narrative level, position and scope of the narrator in *Midnight's Children*

The revised framework of narrative circles suggests that Saleem Sinai hybridizes the narratorial categories, positions and scopes in his personality. Similar to David in *David Copperfield* and Tristram in *Tristram Shandy*, he incorporates homodiegetic and heterodiegetic roles as well as intradiegetic and extradiegetic elements into his narration. In this way, he gets to be a functionally hybrid narrator thanks to his split positioning entailing narrating and narrated selves. The narrated self is included in the relative worlds; the stories narrated in relation to him become the focus of the novel and establish the ontological domain of the inner circle. The narrating self, on the other hand, resides in the textual actual world; the stories are narrated through his discourse as a first person narrator who belongs to the ontological domain of the outer circle. At this point, the omniscient narrative perspective bestowed upon the narrating self of Saleem gives rise to an extra-outer circle which, as in Tristram's case, encompasses narrative privileges of a third person narrator. Saleem's omniscience results from his granted telepathic power by means of which he can enter into others' minds and transcends the human limitations of acquiring knowledge. As Alber also states "Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* endows a character-narrator ... with (quasi-magic) mind-reading abilities that had traditionally been reserved to the omniscient narrator of realist fiction" (2016, p. 222). Saleem, the first person narrator in Rushdie's novel, acts like a third person omniscient narrator thanks to his telepathic power and this hybridity highlights a postmodern practice of unnaturalness or anti-mimesis in narration. The proposed extra-outer circle, then, functions as a means to accommodate the anti-mimetic hybridized qualities of the narrator in *Midnight's Children*.

The omniscience acquired through telepathy brings forth extradiegetic claim to truth for the narrator of Rushdie's novel. Saleem is a first person narrator, but his consciousness is transcended with an anti-mimetic mode of telepathy. Therefore, he can know more than a first person anthropomorphic narrator. Saleem comes to be aware of his telepathic power and the multiplicity of voices in his head, the political significance of which will be discussed in detail under the following subtitle, when he remains silent for a day as a punishment by his mother at the age of nine: "I heard, at first, a headful of gabbling tongues, like an untuned radio; and with lips sealed by

maternal command, I was unable to ask for comfort” (2008, p. 225). He is startled by this revelation in the beginning, but quite soon he celebrates his non-anthropomorphic telepathic power in the chapter titled “Accident in a washing chest”:

I had discovered that the voices could be controlled -I was a radio receiver, and could turn the volume down or up; I could select individual voices; I could even, by an effort of will; switch off my newly-discovered inner ear. It was astonishing how soon fear left me; by morning, I was thinking, ‘Man, this is better than All-India Radio, man; better than Radio Ceylon!’ (2008, p. 226)

The nine-year-old Saleem discovers his ability of reading others’ minds and makes use of this newly acquainted skill for voyeurism and cheating in the beginning. He intentionally listens to the hidden inner voices, the unspeakable thoughts, and the private dreams of people around him. As a result of a bicycle accident, he also comes to realize that he can telepathically hear the voices of midnight’s children, children who were born at midnight of 15 August 1947, the exact date of India’s independence from British colonial rule, like Saleem himself. Not only can Saleem read their thoughts but he can also turn his mind into a forum by means of which all of the midnight’s children are able to communicate. In this way, Saleem’s mental capacity transcends one-character limitation and becomes a narrative space ensuring omniscient narration through telepathy.

However, the fact that Saleem, as a character, is granted telepathic and omniscient knowledge does not necessarily mean what he tells as a narrator is always credible and reliable. Indeed, since he is a multi-faceted narrator in an example of postmodern historiographic metafiction, there are many textual indicators signaling his unreliability. Saleem’s narrating self provides the reader with the life stories of his grandparents (Dr. Aadam Aziz and Naseem Aziz) and of his parents (Ahmed Sinai and Amina Sinai), and his own birth in extensive detail. As Gurnah points out Saleem “is born in the ninth chapter, 116 pages after his narrative began, so he had been absent from everything he earlier described in such dramatic detail” (2007, p. 95). These stories corresponding to the time period before and during his birth are too exhaustive to be credible and reliable since they transcend the anthropomorphic limitation of knowledge or any possibility that he could have known about the mentioned period in such a great detail by talking to others. The periods in which Saleem the character was



old enough to be conscious of what was happening around him are also problematic in terms of credibility and reliability as Saleem the narrator himself declares that he deliberately makes mistakes and tells lies in his narration. See, for instance, the beginning of the last chapter titled "Abracadabra":

To tell the truth, I lied about Shiva's death. ... whatever anyone may think, lying doesn't come easily to Saleem, and I'm hanging my head in shame as I confess... Why, then, this single barefaced lie? ... Padma, try and understand: I'm still terrified of him. There is unfinished business between us, and I spend my days quivering at the thought that the war hero might somehow have discovered the secret of his birth- was he ever shown a file bearing three tell-tale initials? -and that, roused to wrath by the irrecoverable loss of his past, he might come looking for me to exact a stifling revenge... is that how it will end, with the life being crushed out of me by a pair of superhuman, merciless knees?

That's why I fibbed, anyway; ... I fell victim to the temptation of every autobiographer, to the illusion that since the past exists only in one's memories and the words which strive vainly to encapsulate them, it is possible to create past events simply by saying they occurred. ... in short, the memory of one of my earliest crimes created the (fictitious) circumstances of my last. (2008, p. 619)

Saleem's narrating self confesses to his narratee Padma that he has lied about the death of Shiva, his archrival, towards the end of the novel. Saleem's parents are indeed the biological parents of Shiva; the two babies were born in the same nursing home at the same time and switched on purpose to be given to the wrong families. This led Saleem to grow up in a wealthy family; whereas Shiva has to live under hard conditions. That is why, Saleem is afraid of the possibility of Shiva's learning of the truth and tries to create the illusion that he is dead, no longer a threat to Saleem. He thinks the past or history can only be reached through memories which are encapsulated with words. Since memories are verbal constructs, it is possible to recreate the past by saying something did happen or some other thing did not. This process is carried out through the subjective filter of the narrator and thus the credibility and reliability of Saleem's narrating self is always in question. This is quite indicative of the novel's postmodern critique of the mimetic definition of history as an objective and true account of past events. Saleem recreates and reshapes the past events and offers an alternative history which is "not a failed realist or supernatural one but an unnatural narrative that at times contradicts the historical sequence it observes elsewhere in the text" (Richardson,

2015, p. 11). Consequently, Saleem's recreation of history is not a mimetic failure to represent the past; it is not a non-mimetic representational failure either. It is an anti-mimetic mode of representation which recreates the past through the narrator's subjective filter and aims to shape the present accordingly. In this way, the extra-outer circle encompassing the telepathic knowledge of Saleem functions to question his reliability of omniscient narrator and to illustrate the anti-mimetic representation of the narrated stories.

The anti-mimetic, or deviant mimetic, order of *Midnight's Children* results in both the structural and thematic fragmentation in the narrative and the complicated and multi-faceted nature of the narrator. Furthermore, this non-linear order makes it difficult to determine an organizing principle for the hybrid narrative universe and the hybridized narrator functions in the novel. David, the narrator of a realist novel, succeeds in this mimetic mission and becomes the unifying element for the narrative universe and narrative levels in *David Copperfield*. In contrast, Tristram, the narrator of a metafictional novel, is not capable of offering such a mimetic order and coherence in the narrative universe and narrative levels in *Tristram Shandy*. That is why the textual actual world and the relative worlds remain structurally and contextually separate at the end of the novel. At this point, *Midnight's Children's* narrator Saleem is similar to David, rather than Tristram, in functioning as the organizing principle of the novel's narrative universe and narrative levels. Yet, there is a stark difference between the attitudes of both narrators towards this mimetic principle in representation. David willingly attempts and manages to dominate all the ontological domains and selves by means of a teleological order and closure in order to give meaning to his existence. Saleem, on the other hand, is forced by his urgent desire to immortalize his memory and thus to construct his own story as opposed to the official history of India by means of another narratorial agent, his narratee; and only in this way is he able to organize and unify the narrative universe and the narrative levels. The narratee Padma constantly urges Saleem, who otherwise fragments his narration with structural and contextual digressions, to keep on a linear line and reach a meaningful end for his life story. In a similar vein, the narrating self and the narrated self of David match with each other and merge into a complete synthesis at the end of

the novel. Saleem's narrator selves also find a common ground on which to meet as the story reaches its end. Yet, as opposed to David's wholeness and unity, Saleem's fragmented personality is foregrounded in this meeting of selves. In this respect, it is apt to claim that the enforced and deviant mimetic order in *Midnight's Children* results in such a fragmented, albeit on the same ground, narrative and narrator at the end of the novel, which can be illustrated in Possible Worlds Theory discourse via the diagram below:

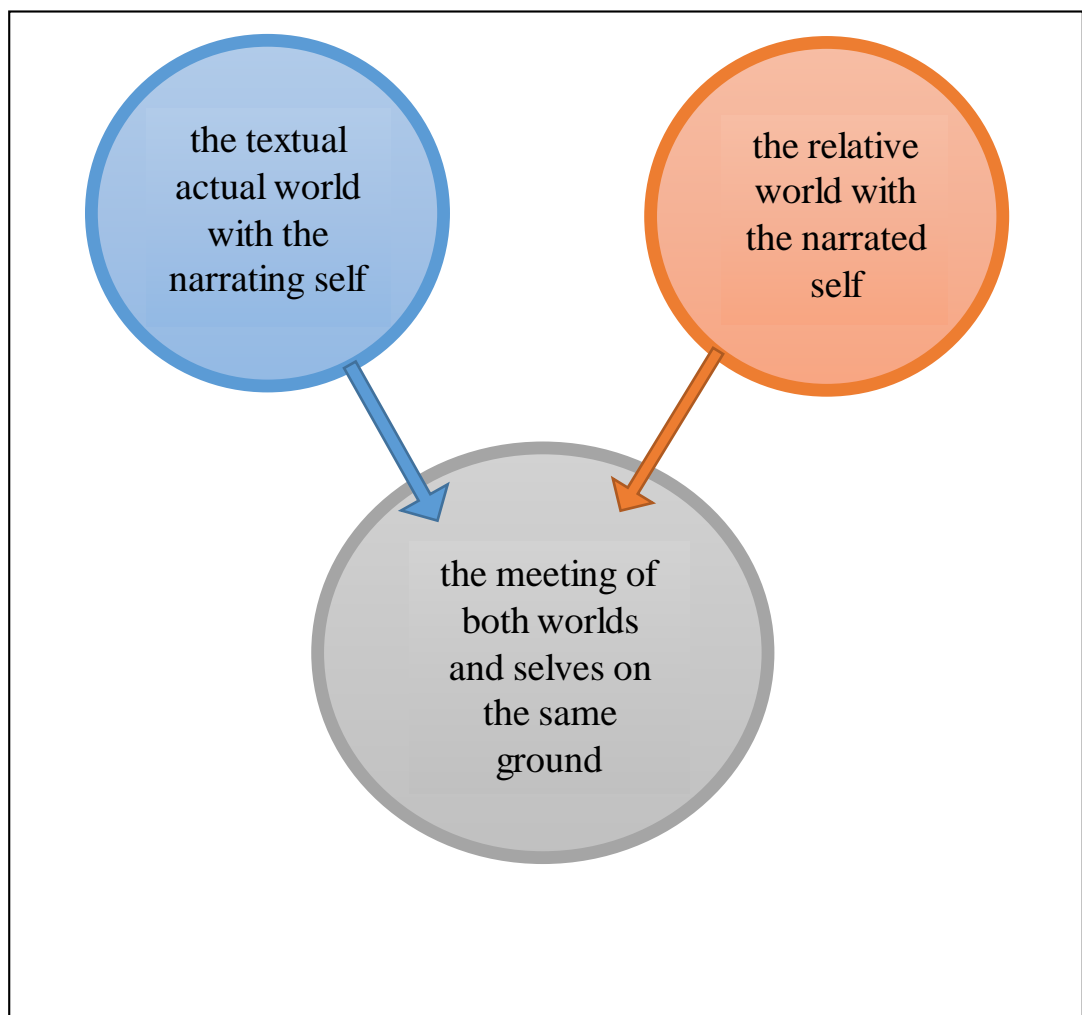


Figure 5.3 An illustration of the ending in the narrative universe of *Midnight's Children*

Saleem's narrated self hosted in the relative worlds reaches the ultimate ontological domain, the textual actual world of the narrative universe and becomes one with his narrating self at the end of the novel. Saleem has followed a deviant mimetic order in telling his story which consists of narrative fragments presented through narratorial interruptions and digressions. He has now come to the point where he, as the narrated self, ends up at the chutney factory in which his narrating self performs the act of narration. However, this meeting of narrative worlds and selves does not bring about a unity or wholeness for Saleem as it does for David. The narrative worlds and narrator selves are bridged to form a synthesis and to construct a meaningful closure in the end of *David Copperfield*. Saleem's narrator selves and the narrative worlds housing these selves meet on the same ontological ground and what he predicted in the very beginning of his narrative, that he will die on his thirty-first birthday, comes true at the end. Yet, this does not result in a narrative satisfaction and Saleem's personality remains fragmented, "reducing [him] to specks of voiceless dust" (2008, p. 647). Ryan's concept of productive conflict, which she defines as the working mechanism of her modally-oriented plot structure (1985), can provide further insights into this process. Saleem is not particularly willing to resolve the main conflict of his entire existence, "to end up meaning" (2008, p. 3) by narrating his life story; he is made to complete his narration under the influence of his narratee. That is why, although the gap between the narrative worlds and narrator selves is effaced at the end, any kind of meaning, closure, or satisfaction is unavailable to him; in other words, his conflict remains partly productive. Consequently, the anti-mimetic or deviant mimetic narration, which abounds in fragments and digressions, ends in the disintegration of an already fragmented self at the end of the novel.

### **5.3.3. Anti-Mimetic Practices in *Midnight's Children***

Anti-mimesis, or unnaturalness, in literary texts refers to the self-conscious and self-reflexive practices that go against the mimetic principle and that draw the attention to the artificial status of narratives. Metafiction, one of the contemporary modes of anti-mimesis, intends to pose questions about the mimetic claim that art represents life as it is by blurring the ontological line between fact and fiction. Historiographic

metafiction is a further endeavor of metafiction in that it “attempts to demarginalize the literary through confrontation with the historical, and it does so both thematically and formally” (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 108). Like metafiction, historiographic metafiction, an important example of which is Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, also makes use of self-reflexive techniques. Rushdie himself explains the anti-mimetic and self-reflexive elements in his novel by embedding the characteristics of oral narratives in it. Accordingly, *Midnight’s Children* is

not linear. An oral narrative does not go from the beginning to the middle to the end of the story. It goes in great swoops, it goes in spirals or loops, it every so often reiterates something that happened earlier to remind you, and then takes you off again, sometimes summarizes itself, it frequently digresses off into something that the story-teller appears just to have thought of, then it comes back to the main thrust of the narrative. ... So it’s a very bizarre and pyrotechnical shape. (Rushdie, 1985, p. 7)

Oral narrative features embedded in the narrative universe of Rushdie’s novel account for proceeding in loops or spirals, for repetitions, summaries, digressions, and tangents, though wrapping all of them up and connecting them to “the main thrust of the narrative” in the end. Oral narrative characteristics also make room for the narratee to exercise authority and control over the narrator’s otherwise digressive narration. The existence of a teller and a listener turns the end of the narrative into a holistic and gratified experience despite the temporal and spatial disconnections. Consequently, the inclusion of oral narrative elements functions to account for the anti-mimetic, or, in this particular novel, deviant mimetic order.

Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*, as a postmodern historiographic metafiction, is concerned with history and the historical claim to truth. As opposed to the traditional view of writing of history and conventional historical novel genre, historiographic metafiction does not claim to represent history, but to rewrite and reshape it through fiction. Thus, the author’s subjective filter and interpretation is more foregrounded in the postmodern representation of reality or history. The novel in scrutiny consciously and intentionally highlights its historical awareness. In the novel, the boundary between history and literature is distorted since they are both considered as artefacts that reshape the past. The realistic reference to past events and the mimetic search for objective truth is problematized. History, very much like literature, is textual and

constructed through subjective filters and ideological processes; and that is why, it is not a reliable source to past events. These historiographic metafictional features are condensed into the re-telling of past by a self-conscious narrator with a split positioning in the novel. Saleem, the narrator and the protagonist of the novel, makes it clear from the very beginning that his life story is bathed in the historical events of his nation, India. In the chapter titled “Perforated sheet”, he begins his narrative in the textual actual world of the novel’s narrative universe as below:

I was born in the city of Bombay... once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there’s no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it’s important to be more... On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. ... Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India’s arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world. ... I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape. (2008, p. 3)

Saleem has been “handcuffed to history” from the moment he was born as his birth coincides with independence of India at the midnight of August 15th, 1947. Personal history and political history are inescapably mingled in his character and this urges him to mirror his own life in relation to the political events of the nation to such a degree that the line between the personal and the political is lost. By this means, the mimetic historiographic claims of objective truth and realistic representation of past is problematized and challenged, and the postmodern concern for the narrativity of historical knowledge is underlined.

By means of Saleem’s narrating self that can be seen as a postmodern historian, *Midnight’s Children* materializes and chutnifies history. In the process of “the chutnification of history” (2008, p. 642), Saleem describes his narrative fragments as “pickles of history” (2008, p. 644) and compares his art with pickling process in the last chapter titled “Abracadabra”:

To pickle is to give immortality ... The art is to change the flavour in degree, but not in kind; and above all ... to give it shape and form -that is to say, meaning. (I have mentioned my fear of absurdity.)

One day, perhaps, the world may taste the pickles of history. They may be too strong for some palates, their smell may be overpowering, tears may rise to eyes; I hope nevertheless that it will be possible to say of them that they possess the authentic taste of truth... (2008, p. 644)

Just as the pickling process is meant to extend the expiry date of vegetables and fruits, in other words to give immortality to them, Saleem's historically loaded narrative pieces are preserved artistically and intended to reach immortality. The process of pickling becomes a self-reflexive act on the part of the narrator since he relates the chapters of the novel to pickle jars that are labeled with the title of the chapters. Raw materials of both pickling and narrative are given "shape and form - that is to say, meaning" in these jars. This can be accepted as equally valid for the writing of history and the writing of fiction in that memory has a crucial role in selecting and emplotting past events in both processes. A historian emplots his account of history in a way it is meaningful to his subjective consciousness. In Saleem's case, he similarly rewrites his story through his memories in a way that will give meaning to his existence. That is why, preserving memory, whether it affords true or faulty remembrances, does not clash with historical records; instead reclaims and reshapes them through artificiality.

Saleem's narrating self asserts in the "All-India Radio" chapter, "[r]eality is a question of perspective; the further you get from the past, the more concrete and plausible it seems -but as you approach the present, it inevitably seems more and more incredible" (2008, p. 229). This declaration stresses the importance of the postmodern distinction between "event" and "fact" since the decision to label events as the recorded facts is basically a matter of remembering. Historical events are not meaningful by themselves; their meaning depends on the way they are designated and the order they are sequenced to construct a historical narrative. Therefore, emplotment plays a crucial role at this point as any representative act of history entails specific ideological implications and subjective consciousness of the historian/author and what events that person means to register as facts. In this respect, Saleem's narrating self self-reflexively selects the events in his familial history to be turned into facts and emplots his narrative in the same way as a historian. It does not matter whether he intentionally lies or unintentionally gives wrong information as this becomes a means to underline "the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history and the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error" (Hutcheon, 2005, p. 294). Then, the writing of history and the writing of fiction alike depend upon the memory and

subjective filter of the historian/author, which stresses the constructedness and narrativity of historical representation.

The violation of the excluded middle principle, the logical principle which confirms that any kind of impossibility is excluded from the ontological domain of a narrative universe, is another unnatural or anti-mimetic practice in Rushdie's historiographic metafiction. Incorporating magical elements into an otherwise realistic or historical narrative results in the construction of an impossible narrative world. The logically impossible, magical powers of midnight's children which work in a logically possible setting of 20<sup>th</sup>-century India are the prominent magical elements in *Midnight's Children*. The novel's narrator Saleem, like the other midnight children, is born at midnight of August 15, 1947, the exact time of India's independence from Britain. Magical powers are bestowed upon each and every one of these children. Among them, Saleem is gifted with telepathic power of reading into others' minds. His narrating self provides a catalogue of the gifted magical powers of the other midnight's children as well in the chapter titled "My tenth birthday":

Midnight's children!... From Kerala, a boy who had the ability of stepping into mirrors ... and a Goanese girl with the gift of multiplying fish... and children with powers of transformation: a werewolf from the Nilgiri Hills, and from the great watershed of the Vindhyas, a boy who could increase or reduce his size at will ... from Kashmir, there was a blue-eyed child [who] by immersing herself in water ... could alter [his/her sex]. ... near Jalna in the heart of the parched Deccan I found a water-divining youth, and at Budge-Budge outside Calcutta a sharp-tongued girl whose words already had the power of inflicting physical wounds. ... There was a boy who could eat metal and a girl whose fingers were so green that she could grow prize aubergines in the Thar desert; and more and more and more... overwhelmed by their numbers, and by the exotic multiplicity of their gifts, I paid little attention, in those early days, to their ordinary selves. (2008, pp. 274-275)

Saleem soon comes to realize that apart from being able to hear the thoughts of the other midnight's children, he can also broadcast his own thoughts and turn his mind into "a sort of national network, so that by opening [his] transformed mind to all the children [he] could turn it into a kind of forum in which they could talk to one another" (2008, p. 314). These magical, and logically impossible, elements function as a means to define the impossible narrative world in the novel's narrative universe. As reader is expected to adopt a new set of physical and logical rules while accommodating into



this narrative world, he/she is maximally departed from his/her ontological realm of actuality. In this way, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is differentiated in generic terms as an example of anti-mimetic fiction.

The magical elements inserted into the realistic background of India provide a narrative occasion to constitute a specific theme for the novel. The fact that children who were born at midnight of India's independence are gifted with magical powers is by no means a coincidence. In the postcolonial phase of the nation, the magical powers of midnight's children, as Alber states, "highlight the opportunity for mutual understanding among different ethnicities, religions, and local communities in postcolonial India after independence from the British colonizers" (2016, p. 51). The multiplicity of voices in Saleem's mind hints at his ultimate aim of rewriting the story of both himself and his country by embracing the postcolonial India's multifarious heterogeneity in his personality and thus challenges the prime minister Indira Gandhi's political motto "*India is Indira and Indira is India*" (2008, p. 587; p. 597), which is set to homogenize the diversity of the country for the sake of ruling. In this respect, all of the magical midnight's children in Rushdie's novel can be evaluated as "hybrid" in the sense of Bhabha's use of the term since they are correlated with his concept of "Third Space" (1994). Bhabha claims that an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (1994, p. 5) and the Third Space, which is "the *in-between space* . . . makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the 'people'" (1994, pp. 38-39, original italics). Accordingly, Saleem describes the midnight's children as a space of hybridity thanks to "the very essence of [their] multiplicity" (2008, p. 317) in one of his broadcasts:

'Do not let this happen! Do not permit the endless duality of masses-and-classes, capital-and-labour, them-and-us to come between us! We,' I cried passionately, 'must be a third principle, we must be the force which drives between the horns of the dilemma; for only by being other, by being new, can we fulfil the promise of our birth!' (2008, p. 354)

What Saleem states here suggests that the midnight's children occupy Bhabha's Third Space, the space which transcends any positions in any kind of dualities or dilemmas. The magical midnight's children, who integrate humane and supernatural features into their character, therefore, become a narrative means to deconstruct the binary-valued

colonialist system which was dominant in India for a long time. With this deconstruction, the thematic purpose of magical elements in the narrative, a better postcolonial possibility with a common understanding which transcends hierarchies and welcomes differences, is carried out till the midnight's children fall apart. Then, Saleem remains more fragmented as all the miraculous potentiality and multiplicity provided by the midnight's children has left him. The fragmented nature of Saleem, in return, is ultimately reflected in *Midnight's Children's* narrative universe, narrator selves, and narrative circles constructed by means of the revised version of Possible Worlds Theory in an example of postmodern historiographic metafiction.

In conclusion, using Possible Worlds Theory in the analysis of a historiographic metafictional novel such as *Midnight's Children* shows that the theory provides a useful but inadequate outline for the anti-mimetic practices in fiction. Rushdie's novel, which presents the quest of its narrator, Saleem, to find a meaning in his existence by telling his life story in a deviant mimetic order, is functional to support this claim. As in the case of *Tristram Shandy*, another example of anti-mimetic fiction analyzed in this study, the theory helps detect a narrative universe encompassing two sets of narrative worlds and a split positioning for the narrator in the novel. However, there is a stark difference between the function of the narrative worlds and the narratorial agent of the narratee in these two novels' narrative universes. In *Tristram Shandy*, there is not an ontological difference between the textual actual world and the relative worlds and the existence of narratee does not turn the narrative's anti-mimetic line into a somehow mimetic one. In *Midnight's Children*, on the other hand, the textual actual world occupied by the narrating self is distinguished as the ontologically superior and autonomous narrative world; and the relative worlds are constructed as dependents on the former and house the narrated self. The textual actual world can dominate and orient the relative worlds thanks to the postmodern political agenda of reclaiming history in historiographic metafiction. The narrating self is also able to keep on with his narrative, despite his frequent digressions and the deviant mimetic narrative line, with the existence and motivation of another narratorial agency, the narratee. Similar to *David Copperfield*, the narrative worlds and narrator selves meet on the same ground and the narrative reaches the point where it is being narrated at the

end of the novel in *Midnight's Children*. Yet, as opposed to Dickens' narrator who achieves unity and wholeness in the end, Rushdie's narrator remains fragmented and cannot reach a closure in himself. This ontological structure in terms of worlds and selves results from an anti-mimetic, or deviant mimetic, process in terms of narration. Consequently, the original outline of Possible Worlds Theory, which is perfectly suitable for mimetic fiction, needs to be enlarged so as to accommodate the kind of anti-mimetic practices observed in *Midnight's Children*, a typical example of postmodern historiographic metafiction.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented a critical reading of Possible Worlds Theory through an examination of the construction of narrative worlds in mimetic and anti-mimetic fiction. Telling/making up a story is a means of narrative world construction in possible worlds discourse and this has been the case in the definition of the narrative worlds of the three selected novels, Dickens' *David Copperfield*, Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Although they have similar world-construction technique, they highly differ regarding the ontological features of their narrative domains and it is argued in this thesis that this difference results from their modes of representation. What Possible Worlds Theory offers for the analysis of the ontological domains of literary texts is valid for mimetic fiction; however, it is proven to be inadequate for the deviant characteristics of anti-mimetic fiction, as illustrated through an analysis of its two canonical examples. Therefore, this study has also proposed ways of revising the formulations of Possible Worlds Theory so that it can lend itself to fruitful analyses for anti-mimetic genres as well.

This study has argued that Possible Worlds Theory is compatible with the referential conventions of mimetic and realist fiction, but fails to function in the analysis of fictional texts which entail anti-mimetic practices especially with regard to the three parameters, identified and explored in the analytical chapters. This overall argument is reflected in the findings and conclusions of the study as indicated below:

1. The first parameter is the concept of "narrative universe". Possible Worlds Theory as applied in literary criticism prescribes a hierarchical stratification in the ontological narrative domain of a literary text. This postulation rests on binary logic and brings about clear-cut boundaries for the narrative worlds that constitute a text's narrative universe. In this respect, this thesis has foregrounded that the narrative universes of *David Copperfield*, *Tristram*

*Shandy*, and *Midnight's Children*, though belonging to different eras and distinct modes of representation, portray a similar narrative universe structure in which a textual actual world and a set of relative worlds are clearly constructed. The theory proposes that the textual actual world is the ontologically distinguished and autonomous reference world and the relative worlds are dependent ramifications in this structure. The analytical chapters of this thesis have illustrated that this hierarchical structure is valid for both Dickens' realist novel as an example of mimetic fiction and Rushdie's historiographic metafictional novel as an example of anti-mimetic fiction. The mimetic principle informs this hierarchy in the narrative universe of *David Copperfield*. In *Midnight's Children*, however, the political reclamation of history and the abundant oral literature characteristics enforce a mimetic, though deviant, order in the otherwise anti-mimetic narrative universe. For Sterne's metafictional novel, which is also an example of anti-mimetic fiction, this hierarchy is not detected since all the narrative worlds act and counteract upon each other and the textual actual world is not capable of exercising any authority or control over the relative worlds.

2. The second parameter is the concept of "narrator". Possible Worlds Theory literary criticism hypothesizes that the narrator of a literary text has complete authority and control all over the narrative worlds of a specific narrative universe. The narrator is assumed to be a reliable source and a stable center of coherence for the unity and wholeness of the narrative universe. This theoretical principle works well for the mimetic fiction example of this thesis. With its apparently realist narratorial intentions, *David Copperfield* offers a narrator whose word is expected to be taken for granted by the reader. The retrospective wisdom and the split positioning of the narrator as a narrated and a narrating self assist in the process of acquiring a privileged hybrid status. The narrators of *Tristram Shandy* and *Midnight's Children* also become hybrid narrators that transgress the boundaries of the narrative levels thanks to their retrospective wisdom and split positioning; however, Tristram's unidentified omniscience and Saleem's omniscience obtained through magical telepathy

result in a questioning of the unshaken status of the narrator in possible worlds discourse. Thus, examples of anti-mimetic fiction challenge the notions of narratorial authority, center, and coherence and this contest is also observed in the structure of their narrative universes.

3. The last parameter is the prevailing principle of “mimesis” or “anti-mimesis”. Mimesis in representation depends upon the logico-ontological rule of the excluded middle in that it rejects any middle ground between truth and falsity and terminates any kind of impossibilities, inconsistencies, ambiguities, etc. Violation of the principle of the excluded middle differentiates anti-mimesis from mimesis and opens room for anti-mimetic practices in representation. It is obvious that mimetic fiction respects this principle as it claims to imitate reality, while anti-mimetic fiction violates the principle since it self-consciously creates a different model of reality. Thus, the principle of the excluded middle applies to mimetic fiction, but it conflicts with anti-mimetic fiction. The narrative universe structure and the narrator characteristics as proposed by Possible Worlds Theory favor mimesis and mimetic fiction at the cost of anti-mimesis and anti-mimetic fiction. The mimetic fiction example of this study, *David Copperfield*, rests heavily on the mimetic principle in the construction of its narrative universe, the determination of its narrator features, and the teleological line and ultimate closure it achieves. On the other hand, the examples of anti-mimetic fiction analyzed in this thesis, namely *Tristram Shandy* and *Midnight's Children*, defy the mimetic principle, and thereby the structure proposed by Possible Worlds Theory. The unity and coherence of the narrative universes and the authority and control of the narrators in these novels are questioned and problematized as a result of such anti-mimetic practices as narratorial digressions and ruptures in narrative. Apart from that, Sterne's novel ends without any mimetic attempt of closure and Rushdie's novel can only reach an end by means of a deviant mimetic order.

Consequently, Possible Worlds Theory offers a systematic theoretical framework for the analysis of mimetic fiction; however, it needs to be updated and enriched so that it can be feasible for the analysis of anti-mimetic fiction as well.

The contribution of this study to the Possible Worlds Theory literary criticism is mainly to propose a revised and customized framework informed by possible worlds discourse that can be valid for not only mimetic narratives but also those that employ anti-mimetic practices in differing degrees. With this aim in mind, the thesis has a comparative examination of three novels belonging to different literary eras and distinct modes of representation in which the same world-construction technique, narrating one's life story retrospectively, is employed. The findings of the research suggest that Possible Worlds Theory does not take the differences in terms of genres, subgenres, or modes of representation into account while proposing an analytical framework for literary texts and what it offers remains practical for the ontological domains of mimetic narratives. At this point, it is important to remind that not every narrative follows this structure; indeed, the basic hypothesis of anti-mimesis is to defy the ontological boundaries and hierarchies. This ontological deviance becomes a means of examining the texts that do not stick to the default template for world-constructing as originally proposed by the theory. Yet, when it goes through a revision that accommodates the dynamic ontological implications of anti-mimetic practices, it can offer significant results in the analyses of such deviant mimetic texts as metafictional or historiographic metafictional novels, as this research has attempted to illustrate.

In line with this overall conclusion of the thesis, it is also suggested that Possible Worlds Theory can be examined further by means of other novels which employ mimetic and/or anti-mimetic modes of representation and which make use of different techniques of world-construction to design a more comprehensive theorization. This thesis investigates three canonical novels that make use of autodiegetic narration so as to demonstrate its arguments as it is limited in scope as a dissertation; thus more research on different fictional examples can assist in the process of filling in the theoretical niche in the possible-worlds based narrative studies. Employing Possible Worlds Theory in the examples of non-mimetic narratives, of narrative poetry or of drama can also result in broader implications for its employment in the analysis of literary texts.

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## APPENDICES

### A. CURRICULUM VITAE

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Doğan Aslantatar, Sadenur  
Nationality: Turkish (TC)  
Date and Place of Birth: 23 August 1989, Erzincan  
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#### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	METU, Department of English Literature	2014
BA	Hacettepe University, Department of English Language and Literature	2011
High School	Çimentaş Foreign Language Intensive High School, İzmir	2007

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2021-Present	Uşak University, Department of Western Languages and Literatures	Research Assistant
2012-2021	METU, Department of English Literature	Research Assistant
2011-2012	Uşak University, Department of Western Languages and Literatures	Research Assistant

#### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Intermediate French, Elementary German

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Doğan Aslantatar, S. (2019) Prolepses as the Bridge between the Narrative Worlds of *Not to Disturb*. Paper presentation at *8th International Conference on Narrative and Language Studies*, Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey.
- Doğan Aslantatar, S. (2015) History as the Great Identity Marker for Samad Iqbal in *White Teeth*. Paper presentation at *22nd METU British Novelists Conference: Zadie Smith and Her Work*, METU, Ankara, Turkey.
- Doğan, S. (2013) The Three Estates Model: Represented and Satirized in Chaucer's General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 2(2), 49-56. ISSN: 2147-0626.
- Doğan, S. (2013) The Journey of Harry: A True Hero's Story. Paper presentation at *13rd International Language, Literature and Stylistics Symposium: The Power and Simplicity of Styles*, Kafkas University, Kars, Turkey.
- Doğan, S. (2013) The Three Estates Model: Represented and Satirized in Chaucer's General Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. Paper presentation at *1st International English Week on English Studies*, Karabük University, Karabük Turkey.
- Doğan, S. (2013) The Subversion of the Chronological Time Concept through Prolepses in Muriel Spark's *Not to Disturb*. Paper presentation at *Postgraduate Conference on Translation Studies and Literatures in English*, Çankaya University Ankara, Turkey.

## B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Bu tezin amacı, Mmkn Dnyalar Kuramı ve edebi metinlerdeki ontolojik etkilerini, seilmiş bazı mimetik ve anti-mimetik kurmacaların ışığında incelemek ve test etmektir. Bu amaçla Charles Dickens'ın *David Copperfield* (1850), Laurence Sterne'in *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) ve Salman Rushdie'nin *Geceyarısı Çocukları* (1981) adlı yapıtlarından yararlanılacaktır. Bu çalışma için Dickens'ın romanı, mimetik kurmacanın tipik bir örneği olduğu için seilmiştir. Sterne'nin ve Rushdie'nin romanları, Dickens'ın romanının ait olduğu çağdan sırasıyla önce ve sonra gelen tarihsel dönemlere ait anti-mimetik kurmaca temsilcileri olarak seilmiştir. Tüm bu romanlar, geçmişe bakan ve geçmişi anlatan anlatıcı-karakterleri içerir ve bu, geriye dönük anlatım yoluyla kurulan anlatı dnyalarının analizinin önünü açar. Anlatı dnyalarının bu analizi, Mmkn Dnyalar Kuramı'nın edebiyat araştırmalarındaki uygulaması baz alınarak, genel olarak mimetik ve anti-mimetik kurmacada özeldir ise bu üç romanda, kuramın nasıl ve hangi ölçüde etkili bir işlev gördüğünü araştırmak amacıyla gerçekleştirilecektir.

Çalışmada mimetik roman örneği olarak *David Copperfield* ve anti-mimetik roman örnekleri olarak *Tristram Shandy* ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları* inceleneceği için, bu noktada bu iki terim arasındaki kategorik ayrımı netleştirilmelidir. Bu tezde mimetik roman, "temsil açısından kendilerini kurgusal olmayan eserlere modelleyen veya büyük ölçüde onlara benzeyen" ve "deneyimlerimizin dünyasını tanımlanabilir bir şekilde sistematik olarak tasvir etmeye çalışan" kurmaca eser anlamına gelir; bu da "gerçekçilik veya gerçeğe yakınlık için çabalayan eserlerin geleneksel hedefi"dir (Richardson, 2015, s. 3). Benzer bir şekilde, mimetik roman, kurgusal evrendeki fenomenal gerçekliğin düzenini belirlemede okuyucunun dilsel yetkinliğini kabul eden geleneksel gerçekçi roman kavramına karşılık gelir; bu tür roman, kurgusal evreni deneyimsel gerçekliğin bir kopyası olarak temsil eder (Trebicki, 2014, s. 485). Öte yandan anti-mimetik roman, "kurgusal olmayan anlatının ön varsayımlarına aykırı, mimetik beklentileri ve gerçekçilik pratiklerini ihlal eden ve geleneklere meydan okuyan olaylar, karakterler, ortamlar veya çerçeveler içeren" kurmaca eserlere atıfta

bulunur. (Richardson, 2015, s. 3). Bu açıdan anti-mimetik roman, benzer şekilde, okuyucunun fenomenal gerçekliğin düzenini belirlemede dilsel yetkinliğini kabul eder, ancak kurgusal evreni büyümlü veya doğaüstü unsurlarla donatır ve deneyimsel gerçekliğin farklı bir modelini yaratır (Trebicki, 2014, s. 385). Richardson'ın, "anti-mimetik" ve "non-mimetik" terimleri arasındaki kategorik ayrım da anti-mimetik roman terimine derinlik katar. Bu ayrım anti-mimetik bir metnin anti-realist olduğunu, mimetik veya realist temsilin geleneklerine meydan okuduğunu ifade eder; buna karşın non-mimetik bir metin, örneğin bir peri masalı, gerçekçi değildir ve "tutarlı, paralel bir hikaye dünyası kullanır ve yerleşik gelenekleri takip eder veya bazı durumlarda, gerçek dünyanın mimetik tasvirine yalnızca doğaüstü bileşenler ekler" (2015, s. 4). Bu tezde incelenen üstkurmaca romanlara atıfta bulunmak için "non-mimetik roman" yerine "anti-mimetik roman" terimi kullanılacaktır çünkü anti-mimetik pratikler, mimesis kurallarını genişletmek yerine ihlal ettikleri için non-mimetik pratiklerin ötesine geçer. Sonuç olarak, bu tezde *David Copperfield*, kurgudaki mimetik geleneğin ana kategorisi olan kanonik gerçekçi bir roman olması nedeniyle mimetik roman örneği olarak incelenecektir. *Tristram Shandy* ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları*, her ikisi de gerçekliğe meydan okuyan ve kurgusalılıklarını özdüşünümsel olarak ön plana çıkaran üstkurmaca romanlar oldukları için anti-mimetik kurgu örnekleri olarak incelenecektir.

Bu tez, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nın gerçekçi romamın mimetik göndergesel kurallarla uyumlu olduğunu iddia eder. Bununla birlikte, *Tristram Shandy* ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları* gibi anti-mimetik metinlerin analizi için bir çerçeve olarak kullanıldığında, aşağıda tanımlanan noktalarla ilgili olarak özel olarak işlev görmez. Marie-Laure Ryan'ın (1985, 1991, 2001, 2005, 2014, 2016, 2019) ve David Herman'ın (2009, 2013) argümanları, çalışmanın bu iddiasının formüle edilmesine büyük katkı sağlamıştır. Ryan, gerçek dünya olarak kabul edilen merkezi bir dünya ve bir anlatıcı veya karakterler tarafından seslendirilen karşı-olgusal yapılar aracılığıyla erişilebilen ya da karakterlerin düşündükleri, hayal ettikleri, okudukları, anlattıkları vb. aracılığıyla oluşan çeşitli uydu dünyalardan oluşan ortak bir modal yapı nedeniyle anlatı evrenlerinin tanınabilir olduğunu savunmak için analitik felsefe ve modal mantıktan fikirler kullanır. Bu noktada Herman, her anlatının bu yapıyı aslına uygun

olarak örneklemediğini belirtir; aslında, anti-mimesis'in temel varsayımı, ontolojik sınırlara ve hiyerarşilere bağlı kalmayı reddetmesidir. Buradaki ontolojik yıkıcılık, bu tür metinlerin dünya kurulumu için varsayılan şablondan nasıl saptığını göstermek için incelenebilir. Bir mimetik ve iki anti-mimetik romanı inceleyen bu çalışma, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nı mimetik ve anti-mimetik kurmaca analizi için belirlediği aşağıdaki üç parametre açısından sorunsallaştırır:

1. Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, edebi çalışmalarda uygulandığı şekliyle, edebi bir metnin anlatı evreninde modal bir katmanlaşma yaratır. Bu, ikili bir mantığa bağlıdır ve Ryan'ın argümanlarında gördüğümüz "metinsel gerçek dünya" ve "bağlantılı uydu dünyalar"a katı sınırların çizilmesi gibi kesin ayrımlar oluşmasıyla sonuçlanır. Bu mantık, mimetik roman anlatı dünyaları için mükemmel bir şekilde çalışır, ancak her türlü ikiliğe ve sınıra aykırı olan anti-mimetik roman anlatı dünyalarıyla çelişir. Bir anlatı evreninin yapısını belirlerken, Ryan, gerçek dünyayı sorunsuz, istikrarlı ve ontolojik olarak belirli bir referans dünyası olarak görür. Mimetik, gerçekçi kurmaca için bu önemlidir. Hem deneyimsel gerçekliğin hem de metnin gerçek dünyası, mimetik kurmacada sabittir ve kolaylıkla ayırt edilebilir. Bununla birlikte, anti-mimetik kurmaca, bu hiyerarşik yaklaşımı sorunsallaştırır. Her türlü ontolojik sınırlama veya kategorizasyona meydan okunan yeni bir gerçeklik ve olasılıklar sistemine yer açar.
2. Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, edebiyat araştırmalarında uygulandığı şekliyle, edebi metinlerde oluşturulan anlatı dünyaları üzerinde yazarın veya anlatıcının otoritesini ve kontrolünü sorunsallaştırmaz. Yazar ve anlatıcı, anlatı evreninde tutarlılığın kaynağı ve merkezi olarak kabul edilir. Bu teorik varsayım, yazar ve/veya anlatıcı otorite kavramını sorunlu hale getirmeyen bazı mimetik roman örnekleri için doğru olabilir, ancak yazar ve anlatıcı ile ilgili otorite, merkez ve tutarlılık kavramlarına meydan okuyan anti-mimetik roman ile kesinlikle çalışmaz.
3. (Anti)mimesis kavramı, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nda dünyaları kategorize etmek ve evrenleri açıklamak için önemli bir faktördür. Bu bakımdan, Aristoteles'in "dışlanmış orta" ilkesini ihlal etmek, anti-mimetik kurguyu

mimetik kurgudan ayırır. Dışlanmış orta ilkesi ikili değerlidir; başka bir deyişle, gerçek ile yanlış arasındaki herhangi bir orta yolu dışlar ve kurmacanın ontolojik alanındaki her türlü imkansızlığı, tutarsızlığı, belirsizliği reddeder. Mimetik romanın gerçekliği taklit etme iddiasıyla bu ilkeye saygı duyduğu, anti-mimetik romanın ise farklı bir gerçeklik modeli yaratarak buna aykırı olduğu açıktır. Böylece, dışlanmış orta ilkesi mimetik roman ile uyumludur, ancak anti-mimetik roman ile çelişir.

Sonuç olarak, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, bir anlatı evreninde kesin olarak sınırlandırılmış ve kararlı bir şekilde kümelenmiş anlatı dünyalarının bir açıklamasını sunar. Anlatı evreninin merkezinde metinsel bir gerçek dünya ve ona bağımlı ya da bir şekilde onunla bağlantılı olan dünyaları belirlemek, mimetik metinlerin analizine kolayca ve etkin bir şekilde uygulanan, ancak geçerliliği anti-mimetik metinlerin analizi için sorgulanan ve sorunsallaştırılan katı bir formülasyonla sonuçlanır. Bu bağlamda, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, mimetik kurmaca analizi için verimli bir eleştirel çerçeve sağlar, ancak anti-mimetik kurmaca için de geçerli olabilmesi için revize edilmesi ve genişletilmesi gerekir. Üçüncü, Dördüncü ve Beşinci Bölümler, tezin bu ana argümanını kanıtlamaya çalışan orijinal olarak tasarlanmış diyagramları içerir. Diyagramlar, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nın edebi uygulamasına göre çizilmiştir ve farklı kurgusal alt türleri analiz ederken nasıl değiştirilebileceği ve özelleştirilebileceğine ilişkin önerileri göstermektedir.

Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı edebiyat eleştirisine yetmişlerin ortalarında girmiştir. Mümkün dünyaların felsefi tartışmalarına dikkat eden ve onu edebi çalışmalara uyarlayan ilk araştırmacı Thomas Pavel'dir. Pavel (1975, 1986), kurgusal bir dünya oluştururken edebi metnin bu dünyaya kendi yasalarını empoze ettiğini ve yeni bir olasılıklar dizisi oluşturduğunu iddia eder. Bunun bir sonucu olarak, okuyucu neyin var olup neyin olmadığına karar vermek için yeni bir ontolojik bakış açısı benimsemelidir. Bu açıdan Pavel, 21. yüzyılın bilişsel dönüşünü tahmin etmiş ve dolaylı olarak Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı ile uyumluluğunu doğrulamıştır. Bir sonraki dönüm noktası, David Lewis'in konu üzerindeki çalışmalarıdır. Lewis'e göre (1978), kurgusal dünyaların kurulumu, hayal gücünü harekete geçirmek için metin tarafından açıkça öne sürülen önermeleri ve onların katı mantıksal çıkarımlarını aşmalıdır.

Kurguları, karşı olgulardan, birincisine mümkün bir dünya için doğru olarak söylendiği, ancak ikincisinin gerçek dünya hakkında açıklamalar yaptığı iddiasıyla ayırır. Kurguların karşı olgularla karşılaştırılabilir olmasına izin vererek, kurgusal dünyaları hayal etmek ve yorumlamak için sayısız yol açar. Lubomir Dolezel'in çalışmaları (1976, 1998) da, mantıkçılar tarafından öne sürülen mümkün dünyaların ontolojik eksiksizliği ile kurgusal dünyaların tamamlanmamışlığı arasındaki ayrımı korumak için mümkün dünyalar kavramını hassas bir şekilde işler. Dolezel, tüm özellikleriyle bir dünya hayal etmenin imkansız olduğunu ve bu nedenle kurgusal metinlerin belirsizlik alanları sunduğunu iddia eder. Boş ve doldurulmuş alanlar veya belirtilmiş ve belirtilmemiş bilgiler arasındaki oyun, edebi anlamın önemli bir parçası haline gelir.

Lucia Vaina'nın çalışması (1977) Umberto Eco'nun ve daha sonra Marie-Laure Ryan'ın eserleri üzerinde güçlü bir etki bırakmıştır. Vaina kurgusal dünyaları olayların anlatıldığı durumlar olarak, anlatıları ise olayların aracılık ettiği bu tür durumların ardışıklığı olarak tanımlar. Bu mümkün dünyalar kavramını kullanan Eco (1979), anlatı metinlerini tek bir dünyanın temsilleri olarak değil, mümkün dünyaların kümelenmesinden oluşan evrenler olarak görür. Edebi bir metnin, mümkün dünyaların kurulumu yoluyla işlediğini iddia eder. Bu süreçte, hikayenin tüm durumlarına tekabül eden yazarın tasavvur ettiği dünyayı; karakterlerin hayal ettiği, inandığı, arzuladığı dünyaları; ve okuyucu tarafından hayal edilen, inanılan veya arzu edilen dünyaları ayırt eder. Marie-Laure Ryan'ın konu ile ilgili detaylı çalışmaları da edebi eleştiride kuramlaştırıldığı şekliyle mümkün dünyalar kavramıyla ilgili birçok konuyu derinleştirir ve geliştirir. Ryan (1991), Lewis'in kurgudaki gerçeğe ilişkin karşı-olgusal analizini, okuyucunun içinde bulunduğu gerçek dünya ile edebi bir metinde oluşturulan kurgusal dünyalar arasındaki erişilebilirlik ilişkileri önerisiyle "minimal ayrılma ilkesi" adını verdiği kavrama dönüştürür. Ayrıca Eco'nun anlatı semantiğini, metinsel bir gerçek dünya ve ona bağlantılı mümkün dünyaları zorunlu olarak içeren kapsamlı bir anlatı evrenleri modeline dönüştürür. Benzer şekilde, Ruth Ronen'in çalışması (1994) mümkün dünyalar kavramına dair yararlı ve sofistike bir inceleme sunar ve bu terimin edebiyat eleştirisinde kullanımını araştırır. Ronen, öncelikle olası dünyalar hakkında düşünmenin felsefi kaynaklarına değinmiş, ardından mümkün

dünyaların edebi alana aktarım sürecini ve kavramın edebi analiz için nasıl bir metafor haline geldiğini incelemiştir.

Orijinal haliyle, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, herhangi bir türe, alt türe veya temsil tarzına özel bir referans olmaksızın tüm edebi metinler için geçerli bir analiz aracı olmayı amaçlar. Ancak, bu tezin analitik bölümlerinin göstermeyi amaçladığı gibi, durum böyle değildir. Kuram, mimetik kurmacanın analizi için verimli bir araç olarak işlev görse de, anti-mimetik kurmacanın farklı ontolojik özelliklerini içerebilmesi için üzerinde yeniden çalışılması gerekir. Bu bağlamda, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nın kurmacadaki (anti)mimesis kavramı açısından geçerliliğini araştıran veya bu tezde olduğu gibi mimetik ve anti-mimetik kurgu örneklerini kuramı test etmek için bir araya getiren başka bir çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Aslında, kuramın edebi anlatıların analizine ne ölçüde uygun olduğu sorusunu araştıran eleştirel çalışmaların sayısı da azdır. George Shamsayooadeh'in tezi (2018) de bu çalışmalardan biridir. Shamsayooadeh, Rushdie'nin tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca eserlerini, *Geceyarısı Çocukları* ve *Utanç*'ı, görünürdeki büyülü gerçekçi ve politik-tarihsel kaygıların ötesine geçen çok yönlü bir yaklaşımla araştırır. Hindistan'ın sömürge sonrası tarihinin politik-tarihsel yörüngesinin büyülü-gerçekçi yeniden kurulumunu analiz etmek için Dolezel'in mümkün dünyalar kavramına dayanan argümanlarını önermektedir. Bir başka kitap uzunluğundaki çalışma, Raghunath'ın eseri (2020), karşı-olgusal tarihsel kurguyu analiz etmek için mümkün dünyalar söylemiyle bilgilendirilmiş kapsamlı bir teorik çerçeve sunar. Yazar, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'na dayalı eleştirel bir yaklaşım formüle eder ve bunu okuyucuların karşı-olgusal tarihi roman okurken deneyimlediği farklı süreçleri açıklamaya yardımcı olan bilişsel kavramlarla tamamlar. Bu tez ile bahsi geçen iki eleştirel eser arasındaki en büyük fark, bu çalışmanın teorik bir uygulamanın ötesine geçmeyi ve farklı dönemlere ait üç roman aracılığıyla farklı temsil biçimlerinin çözümlemeleri yoluyla teorinin kendisine katkıda bulunmayı amaçlaması ve daha kapsamlı sonuçlara ulaşmaya çalışmasıdır.

Edebi metinlerin analizinde Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nı kullanan az sayıdaki çalışma, mümkün dünyalar temelli anlatı araştırmaları için değerli bilgiler sunmaktadır. Bu tezin amacı, mimetik ve anti-mimetik kurmacanın kanonik



örneklerini kuramın gözden geçirilmiş bir modeli aracılığıyla inceleyerek bahsi geçen çalışma alanını geliştirmektedir. Buna göre, İkinci Bölüm, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı için teorik bir çerçeve sunar. Mantıksal-ontolojik bir terim olan “mümkün dünyalar” kavramının edebi eleştiri tarafından nasıl ödünç alındığını; “dünya” teriminin kurgusal bağlamlarda ne anlama geldiğini; ve kurgusal dünyaların nasıl “kurulduğunu” açıklar. Ayrıca, takip eden analitik bölümler için bir arka plan hazırlamak amacıyla, “anlatı dünyası”, “anlatı evreni”, “minimal ayrılık” ve “kurgusal yeniden konumlandırma” gibi kuramın edebiyat eleştirisine uyarlanmasıyla ilgili anahtar kavramları da inceler.

Üçüncü Bölüm, Charles Dickens’ın romanı *David Copperfield*’a odaklanarak mimetik kurmacada anlatı dünyalarının kurulumunu inceler. Bu romanın anlatıcısı geçmişe bakar ve geçmişe dönük anlatım yoluyla hayat hikayesini kronolojik olarak aktatır. Bu şekilde, hiyerarşik olarak sınırlandırılmış iki anlatı dünyasını kapsayan bir anlatı evreni kurulur ve anlatıcı, anlatan benlik ve anlatılan benlik olarak bölünmüş bir konum kazanır. Bu yapı, romanın mimetik temsili ve gerçekçi içeriği ile güçlendirilmiştir. Sonuç olarak, bu analiz, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı’nın genel olarak mimetik roman incelemesinde sorunsuz bir şekilde işlediğini ileri sürer. Geri kalan analitik bölümler, anti-mimetik romanın dinamik özellikleri açısından yetersiz olduğu için gözden geçirilmesi gereken Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı’na, üstkurmaca ve tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca örneklerini analiz ederek teorik öneriler sunar.

*David Copperfield* dönemin önde gelen İngiliz yazarı Charles Dickens’ın bir romanıdır ve her zaman Dickens’ın en beğenilen romanlarından biri olmuştur. Roman, Dickens’ın olgun kişiliğini şekillendiren çocukluk ve gençlik deneyimlerini, yani bir fabrikada çocuk işçi olarak çalışmasını, eğitimini ve öğrenimini, ve bir parlamenter gazeteciden başarılı bir romancıya dönüşmesini anlattığı en otobiyografik eseridir. Hikaye, birinci ağızdan, yetişkin David Copperfield’in geçmişine bakıp şimdiki yaşamı üzerinde oldukça etkili olan çocukluk ve gençlik deneyimlerini, duyuşal izlenimler, kişiselleştirilmiş karakterler, sıradan hayatlar, bireysel durumlar, tanınabilir ortamlar ve ayrıntılı betimlemeler ile dolu gerçekçi bir 19. yüzyıl Viktorya döneminde anlatır. Bu gerçekçi, geçmişe dönük ve otodiegetik anlatım, bir anlatı evreninde kümelenmiş iki farklı anlatı dünyası dizisinin kurulumunu çerçeveler.

Anlatan David, ev düzeninin huzur ve mutluluğunu ve başarılı bir romancının ününü yaşayan orta yaşlı bir adamdır. Yaşam hikayesini anıları aracılığıyla anlatır ve bu anlatım eyleminin yer aldığı semantic alan, anlatı evreninin onaylanmış sabit noktası olarak görülebilecek metinsel gerçek dünya haline gelir. Bu merkezleştirilmiş anlatı dünyasının özerkliği, anlatı eylemi aracılığıyla üretilen bağlantılı bir dünyayla çelişir. Özerk bir anlatı dünyası ile onunla bağlantılı bir anlatı dünyası arasındaki bu tür bir ilişki, özerklik bahsedilenin değerine göre ayrıcalıklı olduğu hiyerarşik bir yapı üzerine kuruludur. Anlatı evreninin hiyerarşik bir sistem içinde işleyen iki anlatı dünyası grubuna bölünmesi anlatı evreninin birliğini veya tutarlılığını engellemez. Aksine, bu tabakalaşma nihayetinde anlatı evreninin yapısal birliğini sağlar. Anlatan David, hikayesine doğumundan başlar, çocukluk deneyimleriyle devam eder, gençlik yıllarına ilerler ve hikayesini, anlatım eyleminin gerçekleştiği zamana karşılık gelen yetişkin yaşamının bir açıklamasıyla bitirir. Böylece anlattıkları nihayetinde yaşadıklarıyla birleşir; ve yetişkin David'in anlatım eyleminin bir sonucu olarak kurulan bağlantılı dünya, romanın sonunda bu anlatım eyleminin tam alanı olan metinsel gerçek dünya ile eşleşir. Bu da anlatı evreninin yapısal ve bağlamsal birliğini sağlamanın bir aracı haline gelir.

Metinsel gerçek dünya ile bağlantılı dünyada anlatıldığı şekliyle David'in yaşam hikayesi, birleşik bir sona doğru katı bir kronolojik sıra izlediğinden teleolojiktir. Anlatılan alandaki bu doğrusal gelişme, anlatan alan tarafından açık ve düzenli kesintilerle müdahaleye uğrar. Başka bir deyişle, bağlantılı dünya, metinsel gerçek dünyadan gelen David'in anlatan benliğinin açıklamaları ve yorumlarının açık ve tutarlı bir şekilde etkisinde kalır. Bu etkiler, o anda anlatılan olaylarla ilgili daha fazla bilgi sundukları için anlatı evreninin yapısal birliğini güçlendirir. Anlatan David, aynı anda geçmişte ne olduğu ve gelecekte ne olacağı bilgisine sahip olduğundan, onun müdahaleleri göreceli dünyada anlatılan hikayeyi değiştirir ve bu yapısal birliğin genel etkisini güçlendirir. *David Copperfield*'ın anlatı evreninde, bahsi geçen bu iki dünyanın birleştiği romanın sonu dışında, metinsel gerçek dünya ile onunla bağlantılı dünya arasında net bir hiyerarşik anlatıbilimsel ayrım vardır. Ancak, bilgili ve deneyimli anlatıcının varlığı ve bakış açısı, bağlantılı dünyada her zaman hissedilir. Bu, anlatıcının anlatım eylemi ile anlatısı, anlatan benliği ile anlatılan benliği arasında

bağlantı kurmak için kullandığı geriye dönük anlatım sayesinde mümkün olmuştur. İki anlatı dünyasının çalışma mekanizması, kahramanın iki benliği (yani anlatan ve anlatılan) arasındaki ilişki ve bu iki dünya ve benlik dizisinin kesişimi, *David Copperfield*'ın evreninde anlatının yapısal birliğini sürdüren can alıcı faktörlerdir. Bağlamsal bir analizde ise, bu faktörlerin romanın tematik birliğine de katkıda bulunduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Anlatıcı olarak bölünmüş bir konumlandırmaya sahip bir kahramanın varlığıyla mümkün kılınan iki katmanlı ve birbirine bağlı anlatım, anlatı evreninin bağlamsal birliğine ve tutarlılığına da ışık tutar. Bu nedenle, *David Copperfield*'deki kahramanın işlevi, anlatıcının işlevinden çok daha büyüktür: David, yapıyı şekillendirmek için romanın geçmişe bakış çerçevesinde çalışır; küçük bölümlerin romanın daha geniş bütünlüğüyle bütünleşmesine daha derin bir anlam verir; dolayısıyla romanın toplam etkisine ve yaygın tonuna büyük ölçüde katkıda bulunur. Nitekim okuyucu önce anlatılan David'in gözünden olaylara tanık olur ve o anlarda anlatılan David odak bir karakter olarak ortaya çıkar. Daha sonra, anlatan David'in bakış açısıyla bu olaylar tekrar gözden geçirilir. Anlatılan genç benlik tarafından deneyimlenen şey, yetişkin anlatan benlik tarafından gözden geçirilir ve yorumlanır. Bu ikili süreç, David'in karakterini ortaya çıkarmanın ve duygusal gelişiminin izini sürmenin bir yolu olarak ortaya çıkar. Olgunlaşan hissetme kapasitesi, duygusal ilişkilere karşı gelişen duyarlılığı ve gelişmiş gözlem yeteneği, yetişkin kahraman tarafından gözden geçirilerek ve yorumlanarak aktarılır. Bu, David'in hikayesini bütün ve entegre hale getirir ve böylece anlatı evrenindeki tematik birliğe katkıda bulunur.

Dördüncü Bölüm, Laurence Sterne'nin *Tristram Shandy* romanına, anlatıcının kendi yaşam hikayesini, düşüncelerini ve gözlemlerini diğer karakterlerle ilgili hikayeler ile birlikte kronolojik olmayan bir şekilde anlattığı bir üstkurmaca metin örneği olarak odaklanır. Bu anlatım, *David Copperfield*'de olduğu gibi, iki anlatı dünyası kümesinden ve anlatıcı için bölünmüş bir konumlandırmadan oluşan bir anlatı evreninin kurulumuyla sonuçlanır. Bununla birlikte, anti-mimetik anlatı pratikleri, romanın anlatı dünyaları arasında hiyerarşik bir yapıya izin vermez, çünkü bunlar sürekli olarak birbirleriyle etkileşir ve birbirlerine karşı koyar. Sonuç olarak, bu

bölümde anlatı dünyaları ile anlatıcının benlikleri arasındaki anti-mimetik açıdan karmaşık ilişkileri vurgulayan Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'na bir revizyon önerilmiştir.

*Tristram Shandy*, Laurence Sterne tarafından yazılan, ilk ikisi 1759'da diğer yedisi ise sonraki yedi yıl içinde olacak şekilde toplam dokuz cilt olarak yayımlanan bir romandır. “Kendi döneminin diğer kurmaca türleriyle veya postmodern dönem öncesi herhangi bir şeyle çok az benzerlik taşıyan; oyalayıcı, kasıtlı, kuralları çiğneyen bir eser” olması bakımından sıradışıdır, ve aynı zamanda roman türünün, erken evriminin elli yıldan daha kısa süren bir zaman zarfı içinde, neye dönüştüğünü ortaya koyar. (Spacks 2006:254). Aydınlanma ilkelerinin kurmaca için gerçekçi normları desteklediği on sekizinci yüzyılda üretilmiş olmasına rağmen, *Tristram Shandy* gerçekçi roman türünün geleneksel kurallarına uymaz. Gerçekten de, önceki biçim ve tekniklerin yeniden işlenmesi yoluyla bu edebi normları ve gelenekleri sorunsallaştırır ve hatta bunlara meydan okur. Çağdaşlarının çoğu gibi, kahramanı Tristram Shandy'nin hayat hikayesini sunmak için yola çıkar; ancak bu çaba, benzer bir teleolojik ve mimetik anlatımla sonuçlanmaz. Kasıtlı bir düzen ve kapanış eksikliği, konuyu saptıran anlatım tarzı, geniş zaman değişimleri kullanımı ve özdeşünümsel yapaylığı aracılığıyla mimetik temsile meydan okur. Ana karakterin “düşüncelerine” odaklanan başlık bile bu romanı, kahramanların “deneyimlerine” vurgu yapan çağdaşlarından ayırır. Bu farklı anlatı pratikleri mimesise karşıdır, bu da o zamanlar “üstkurmaca” teriminin kendisi henüz olmasa da bu romanı üstkurmacaya çok iyi bir örnek yapar. Bu sıradışı anti-mimetik roman, kahramanı Tristram tarafından geriye dönük olarak anlatılır ve bu geriye dönük anlatım, Dickens'ın gerçekçi romanı *David Copperfield*'de olduğu gibi, iki anlatı dünyasının kurulumunu çerçeveler. Anlatının ontolojik alanı açısından mimetik kurmaca analizine mükemmel bir şekilde uyum sağlayan Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, aynı zamanda anti-mimetik kurmaca analizi için de geçerli bir çerçeve sunar; ancak üstkurmaca veya genel olarak anti-mimesis ile ilgili temel kavramları açıklamak için yetersiz kalır.

Anlatıcı Tristram, hayat hikayesini çeşitli konulardaki görüş ve düşünceleriyle ve ayrıca diğer karakterlerle ilgili hikayelerle birlikte anlatma arayışında olan yetişkin bir adamdır. Kronolojik olmayan ve düzensiz ilerleyen anlatımına farklı belge ve çizimler gibi birçok yazılı ve görsel malzemeyi entegre eder. Bu anlatım eyleminin

gerçekleştirdiği semantik alan, anlatıcının kendisinin açıkça anlatım sürecine ve geçmişe dönük bilgeliğine atıfta bulunduğu yer olduğu için metinsel gerçek dünya olarak ayırt edilir. *David Copperfield*'in metinsel gerçek dünyasının aksine, *Tristram Shandy*'nin metinsel gerçek dünyası anlatı evrenine hükmetmez ve onaylanmış sabit nokta olarak işlev görmez. Anlatı evrenini kontrol etme girişimi, romanın diğer anlatı dünyalarının hareketleri tarafından etkisiz hale getirildiğinden, merkezileştirilmiş veya özerk değildir. *Tristram Shandy*'deki metinsel gerçek dünya ile bağlantılı diğer dünyalar, bu karmaşık anlatım eylemi üzerine kurulmuştur. *Tristram Shandy*'deki metinsel gerçek dünya ile onunla bağlantılı olan diğer dünyalar arasındaki çalışma mekanizması, *David Copperfield*'de bulunandan oldukça farklıdır. Dickens'ın romanında, metinsel gerçek dünya ile onun tarafından düzenli olarak duraklatılan ve etkilenen bağlantılı bir dünyayı açıkça tespit etmek mümkündür. Sterne'in romanında ise, metinsel gerçek dünya birden fazla bağlantılı dünya üretir; bunların hepsi zaman çizelgesinde ileriye veya geriye doğru gider ve aynı zamanda birbirleri ve metinsel gerçek dünya arasında sürekli hareket eder. Romanın anlatı dünyaları arasındaki bu tür bir ilişki, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nın öne sürdüğü, metinsel gerçek dünyaya özerklik bahşeden ve onu bağlantılı olarak kurulmuş olanlardan daha üstün kabul edilen hiyerarşik yapıya meydan okur. *Tristram Shandy*'nin metinsel gerçek dünyası, kendi bağlantılı dünyalarını tanımlamaya çalışır; ancak bunu yapmayı başaramaz, çünkü bağlantılı dünyalar aynı zamanda yönelimi ve kontrolü ne olursa olsun hareket ederek ve olay örgüsünün gidişatını değiştirerek metinsel gerçek dünyayı karşıt olarak tanımlamaya çalışır. Anlatı evreninin karmaşık ve etkileşimli bir sistem içinde çalışan iki anlatı dünyası grubuna bölünmesi, *Tristram Shandy*'nin anlatı evreninin birliğine ve tutarlılığına engel olur. *David Copperfield*'de anlatı evreninin genel yapısal bütünlüğünü sağlayan bu tabakalaşma, Sterne'in üstkurmaca romanında anlatı evreninin parçalandığı ana strateji haline gelir.

Beşinci Bölüm, Salman Rushdie'nin *Geceyarısı Çocukları* adlı tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca metni üzerinde yoğunlaşmaktadır. Bu roman da geçmişe dönük bir anlatımla, diğer birçok karakterle ilgili hikayelerle birlikte kendi yaşam hikayesini sunan bir anlatıcı tarafından anlatılmaktadır. Hiyerarşik olarak düzenlenmiş iki anlatı dünyası, romanın anlatı evrenini oluşturur ve anlatıcı süreç içinde bölünmüş bir konum

kazanır. Bu anlatı yapısı, *David Copperfield*'ın anlatı yapısına oldukça benzer. Ancak Dickens'ın anlatıcısı teleolojik hikayesinde özerk olup romanın sonunda yolculuğunu tamamlarken, Rushdie'nin anlatıcısı konu dışına çıkma eğilimindedir ve ancak parçalanmış bir benlik olarak, bir anlatılan motivasyonu ile sona ulaşabilir. Bu anlamda, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı için bu bölümde de bir revizyon öngörülmüştür, çünkü orijinal formülasyonunda teori, kurmacadaki böyle bir aykırı mimetik veya anti-mimetik pratiği dikkate almaz.

*Geceyarısı Çocukları*, 1981'de yayınlanan, Salman Rushdie'nin eleştirmenler tarafından oldukça beğenilen bir tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca romanıdır. Kahramanı Saleem Sinai'nin yaşam hikayesini, Hindistan'daki İngiliz sömürge yönetiminin sonu, Hindistan'ın bağımsızlığını kazanması ve bölünmesi altyapısında anlatır. Bu anlatımda, gerçek tarihsel olaylar, aynı zamanda başkahraman olan anlatıcının anti-mimetik ve özdüşünümsel öğelerin iş başında olduğuna işaret eden kurgusal anlatımlarıyla sunulur. Anlatıcı, yaşam hikayesini *David Copperfield*'deki anlatıcı örneğinde olduğu gibi kronolojik bir çizgi izleyerek sunmayı amaçlasa da, çabası aynı teleolojik ve mimetik anlatım ile sonuçlanmaz. Buna karşılık, *Tristram Shandy*'nin anlatısında olduğu gibi, parçalanmış bir olay örgüsü, konuyu saptıran anlatım, zamansal yer değiştirme ve özdüşünümsel yapaylık aracılığıyla mimetik temsile karşı çıkar. Bu anti-mimetik anlatı pratikleri, gerçek ve kurgu, tarihsel ve kurgusal arasındaki ontolojik ayrımların çarpıtılmasıyla birleştirilir ve bu da romanı bir tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca örneği olarak tanımlar. Bu anti-mimetik ve özdüşünümsel roman, kahramanı Saleem tarafından yürütülen geçmişe dönük anlatımı kullanır ve anlatıdaki bu geçmişe bakış aracılığıyla iki anlatı dünya kümesi kurulur. Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, Dickens'ın gerçekçi romanıyla mimetik kurmaca için tipik bir uygulama sağlar; Sterne'in üstkurmaca romanı için ise anti-mimetik kurmaca analizi açısından geçerli bir çerçeve sunar. Bu sebeple, kuramın *Tristram Shandy*'ye tam olarak uygulanabilmesi için bir revizyon gerekli olduğu gibi, *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'ndakitemsili anti-mimesis ile ilgili bazı temel unsurları açıklayabilmesi için de genişletilip zenginleştirilmesi gerekir.

Otuz birinci yaş gününe yaklaşan Saleem, romanın anlatı evreninin metinsel gerçek dünyasında, ülkesi Hindistan'ın kaderini şekillendiren tarihi olaylarla birlikte

kendi hayat hikayesini anlatma görevine kendini adanmıştır. Kendisi, akrabaları ve arkadaşları hakkında çeşitli hikayeleri ve aynı zamanda ilgili dönemin gerçek kişilikleriyle ilgili tarihsel aktarımları, *Tristram Shandy*'deki anlatım tarzı gibi sapmalarla parçalanmış ama aynı zamanda belli bir kronolojiye de sahip olan anlatımına entegre etmektedir. Bu anlatı eyleminin anlatan benlik tarafından yürütüldüğü semantik alan, anlatıcının anlatım sürecine ilişkin dışsal açıklamaları ve geçmişe dönük bilgeliği aracılığıyla metinsel gerçek dünya olarak belirlenir. *David Copperfield*'ın metinsel gerçek dünyası gibi, *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'nın metinsel gerçek dünyası da anlatı evreninin merkezinde yer alır, özerk demirleme noktası olarak işlev görür ve bağlantılı dünyaları kontrol eder ve onlara hükmeder. Bununla birlikte, bu, Saleem'in kendi başına sıralı bir anlatı düzeni veya anlatısında birleşik ve tutarlı bir anlam oluşturma yeteneğinden yoksun olduğu için kasıtlı olmayan bir etkidir. Saleem'i anlatısını tamamlaması ve teleolojik bir sona ulaşması için cesaretlendiren, teşvik eden ve hatta zorlayan, sadık dinleyicisi ve sevgilisi Padma'dır. *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'ndaki bağlantılı dünyalar, zorunlu anlatım eyleminin bir sonucu olarak kurulmuştur. Bu açıdan, Saleem'in anlatılan benliği, herhangi bir ekstrapoletik gerçeklik nosyonundan yoksun bahsi geçen bağlantılı dünyalarda yer alan bir karakterdir; anlatan benliği ise hikayede doğru ve gerçek olarak sunulanı somutlaştıran metinsel gerçek dünyaya atfedilir.

Rushdie'nin tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca romanı eğlendirici şekilde anti-mimetiktir, ancak aynı zamanda, Hindistan alt kıtasının tarihini ve kahramanının kişisel tarihini de yaklaşık yetmiş yıl boyunca takip ettiği için güçlü bir mimetik konu çizgisi vardır. Bir anti-mimetik kurmaca eserdeki aykırı mimetik olay örgüsü, bu tezde incelenen romanların anlatı evrenleri arasındaki benzerliklere referansla daha iyi açıklanabilir. *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'nın metinsel gerçek dünyası ile bağlantılı dünyaları arasındaki çalışma mekanizması, *David Copperfield*'daki işleyiş biçimine benzer, çünkü her iki romanın da anlatı evrenlerinde özerk ve merkezi bir metinsel gerçek dünya, ontolojik olarak onunla bağlantılı dünyalarına göre önceliklendirilir. *Tristram Shandy* ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları* da anlatı dünyalarının işleyiş sürecinde benzer özellikler taşır. Her iki üstkurmaca romanda da metinsel gerçek dünya birden fazla kendisine bağlantılı dünya kurar ve bu dünyalar özdeşünümsel olarak parçalar

ve sapmalar aracılığıyla sona doğru hareket eder. *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'nın anlatı dünyaları arasındaki son derece karmaşık ilişki, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı edebiyat eleştirmenleri tarafından formüle edilen ve Dickens'ın mimetik romanında uygulanabilen temel anlatı evreni yapısına meydan okur. Aynı zamanda, Sterne'nin anti-mimetik romanında anlatı evreni için önerilen gözden geçirilmiş teorik formülasyonu da aşar. Bu nedenle, bir tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca örneği olan *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'nın anlatı evrenindeki hareketlilik için de geçerli olabilecek, yalnızca olayların zorunlu da olsa doğrusal ilerlemesini değil, aynı zamanda özdeşünümsel pratiklere ve konu dışına sapmalara izin veren bir başka revizyon önerilmiştir. *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'nın anlatı evrenindeki bu hareketlilik, romandaki anlatının yapısal ve bağlamsal açıdan parçalanmasını açıklar. Anlatı evreninin, ontolojik olarak üstün bir metinsel gerçek dünya ve özdeşünümsel ve aykırı bir mimetik sistem içinde çalışan bir dizi bağlantılı dünya halinde tabakalaşması, birleşik ve tutarlı bir anlatıyı deneyimlemeyi zorlaştırır. Bu anlatı bölümlemesi, aslında, romanın yapısal ve bağlamsal olarak parçalanmasının arkasındaki temel nedendir.

Tezin son bölümü, teorik ve analitik tartışmaları ve revizyonları sonuçlandırmayı amaçlar ve Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nın mimetik kurmaca ile ilgili olarak verimli bir şekilde çalıştığı, ancak anti-mimetik kurmacanın aykırı ontolojik özelliklerini açıklayacak şekilde revize edilmesi gerektiği yönündeki ana iddiasının altını çizer. Tezin bu ana iddiası, mimetik ve anti-mimetik kurmaca analizi için belirlediği üç temel parametreyle doğrudan ilişkili olan ve çalışma sonucu ortaya çıkan bulgulara ve sonuçlara yansımıştır.

Bunlardan ilki “anlatı evreni” kavramıdır. Edebi eleştiride uygulandığı şekliyle Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, edebi bir metnin ontolojik anlatı alanında hiyerarşik bir tabakalaşma öngörür. Bu varsayım ikili mantığa dayanır ve bir metnin anlatı evrenini oluşturan anlatı dünyaları için kesin sınırlar getirir. Bu bağlamda, bu tezde, *David Copperfield*, *Tristram Shandy* ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları* romanlarındaki anlatı evrenlerinde, farklı dönemlere ve farklı temsil tarzlarına ait olmalarına rağmen, bir metinsel gerçek dünya ve bununla bağlantılı bir dizi dünyalar kurulduğu açıkça gözlemlenmiştir. Kuram, metinsel gerçek dünyanın ontolojik olarak seçkin ve özerk referans dünyası olduğunu ve bağlantılı dünyaların bu yapıdaki dallanmalar olduğunu



öne sürer. Tezin analitik bölümleri, bu hiyerarşik yapının hem bir mimetik roman örneği olarak Dickens'ın gerçekçi romanı için hem de anti-mimetik bir roman örneği olarak Rushdie'nin tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca romanı için geçerli olduğunu göstermiştir. Mimetik ilkeler, *David Copperfield*'ın anlatı evreninde bu hiyerarşiyi belirler. Ancak *Geceyarısı Çocukları*'nda, tarihin politik olarak yeniden yazılması ve çokça yer alan sözlü edebiyat özellikleri, anti-mimetik özellikli anlatı evreninde aykırı da olsa mimetik bir düzeni zorunlu kılar. Anti-mimetik kurmacanın bir örneği olan Sterne'nin üstkurmaca romanında ise tüm anlatı dünyaları birbirlerini etkileyip harekete geçirdiğinden ve metinsel gerçek dünya kendisine bağımlı dünyalar üzerinde herhangi bir otorite veya kontrol uygulamaya yetkili olmadığından bu hiyerarşi saptanmaz.

İkinci parametre ise “anlatıcı” kavramıdır. Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nı baz alan edebiyat eleştirisi, edebi bir metnin anlatıcısının belirli bir anlatı evreninin anlatı dünyalarının tamamı üzerinde tam yetkiye ve kontrole sahip olduğunu varsayar. Anlatıcının, anlatı evreninin birliği ve bütünlüğü için güvenilir bir kaynak ve istikrarlı bir tutarlılık merkezi olduğu varsayılır. Bu kuramsal ilke, bu tezin mimetik kurmaca örneği için oldukça geçerlidir. *David Copperfield*, gerçekçi olan anlatıcı niyetleriyle, okuyucunun sözüne kesin gözüyle bakması beklenen bir anlatıcı sunmaktadır. Geriye dönük bilgelik ve anlatıcının anlatan benlik ve anlatılan benlik olarak ikiye bölünmüş konumu, anlatıcıya ayrıcalıklı bir statü edinme sürecinde yardımcı olur. *Tristram Shandy* ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları* romanlarındaki anlatıcılar da geçmişe dönük bilgelikleri ve bölünmüş konumları sayesinde anlatı düzeylerinin sınırlarını aşan ayrıcalıklı anlatıcılar haline gelirler; ancak *Tristram*'ın tanımlanmamış kaynaklı bilgisi ve Saleem'in büyüleri telepati yoluyla elde ettiği bilgisi, anlatıcının mümkün dünyalar söylemindeki sarsılmaz statüsünün sorgulanmasına neden olur. Böylece anti-mimetik kurmaca örnekleri, anlatısal otorite, merkeziyetçilik ve tutarlılık kavramlarına meydan okur ve bu çekişme anlatı evrenlerinin yapısında da gözlenir.

Son parametre, “mimesis” veya “anti-mimesis” ilkesidir. Temsilde mimesis, doğru ile yanlış arasındaki herhangi bir orta yolu reddetmesi ve her türlü imkansızlığı, tutarsızlığı, belirsizliği, vb. sona erdirmesi bakımından, mantıksal-ontolojik “dışlanmış orta” ilkesine bağlıdır. Dışlanmış orta ilkesinin ihlali, anti-mimesis i

mimesisten farklılaştırır ve temsilde anti-mimetik pratiklere yer açar. Mimetik kurmacanın gerçeği taklit ettiğini iddia ettiği için bu ilkeyi uyguladığı, anti-mimetik kurmacanın ise bilinçli olarak farklı bir gerçeklik modeli yarattığı için ilkeyi ihlal ettiği açıktır. Bu nedenle, dışlanmış orta ilkesinin mimetik kurmaca için geçerli olduğu, ancak anti-mimetik kurmaca ile çeliştiği sonucuna varılır. Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı tarafından önerilen anlatı evreni yapısı ve anlatıcı özellikleri, mimesis ve mimetik kurmacayı, anti-mimesis ve anti-mimetik kurmaca kurgu karşısında destekler. Bu çalışmanın mimetik kurmaca örneği olan *David Copperfield*, anlatı evreninin kurulumunda, anlatıcı özelliklerinin belirlenmesinde ve ulaştığı teleolojik çizgi ve nihai kapanışta ağırlıklı olarak mimetik ilkeye dayanmaktadır. Öte yandan, bu tezde incelenen anti-mimetik kurmaca örnekleri, yani *Tristram Shandy* ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları*, mimetik ilkeye ve dolayısıyla Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı tarafından önerilen yapıya meydan okur. Bu romanlarda anlatı evrenlerinin birliği ve tutarlılığı ile anlatıcıların otorite ve denetimi, anlatısal sapmalar ve anlatıdaki kopuşlar gibi anti-mimetik pratiklerin bir sonucu olarak sorgulanır ve sorunsallaştırılır. Bunun dışında, Sterne'nin romanı herhangi bir mimetik kapatma girişimi olmadan sona erer ve Rushdie'nin romanı ancak aykırı bir mimetik düzen aracılığıyla sona erer. Sonuç olarak, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı, mimetik kurmaca analizi için sistematik bir teorik çerçeve sunar; ancak kuramın anti-mimetik kurmaca çözümlemesi için de uygulanabilir olması açısından güncellenmesi ve zenginleştirilmesi gerekmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nı baz alan edebiyat eleştirisine katkısı, esas olarak, yalnızca mimetik anlatılar için değil, anti-mimetik pratikleri farklı derecelerde kullanan anlatılar için de geçerli olabilecek, mümkün dünyalar söyleminden beslenen, gözden geçirilmiş ve özelleştirilmiş bir çerçeve önermesidir. Bu amaçla, tez, aynı dünya kurulumu tekniğini, yani bir hikaye anlatma tekniğini, kullanan fakat farklı edebi dönemlere ve farklı temsil tarzlarına ait üç romanın karşılaştırmalı bir incelemesini içerir. Araştırmanın bulguları, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nın edebi metinler için eleştirel bir çerçeve önerirken türler, alt türler veya temsil biçimleri açısından farklılıkları dikkate almadığını ve sunduğu argümanların mimetik anlatıların ontolojik alanları için geçerli olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu noktada her anlatının kuramın önerdiği bu yapıyı takip etmediğini hatırlatmak

önemlidir; aslında, anti-mimesisin temel hipotezi, ontolojik sınırlara ve hiyerarşilere meydan okumaktır. Bu ontolojik aykırılık, kuram tarafından orijinal olarak önerildiği gibi dünya kurulumu için varsayılan şablona bağlı kalmayan anti-mimetik metinleri incelemenin bir aracı haline gelir. Yine de, kuram, anti-mimetik uygulamaların dinamik ontolojik içerimlerini içine alan bir revizyondan geçtiğinde, bu araştırmanın göstermeye çalıştığı gibi, üstkurmacasal ya da tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca romanlar gibi aykırı mimetik metinlerin çözümlemelerinde önemli sonuçlar sunabilir.

Tezin bu genel sonucu doğrultusunda, mimetik ve/veya anti-mimetik temsil tarzlarını kullanan ve farklı bir dünya kurulumu tekniğinden yararlanan diğer romanlar aracılığıyla, daha kapsamlı bir genellenmenin mümkün olup olmadığını görmek için, Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nın daha fazla incelenebileceği de önerilmektedir. Bu çalışma, bir tez olarak kapsamı sınırlı olduğu için argümanlarını göstermek için otodiegetik anlatımdan yararlanan üç kanonik romanı incelemektedir; bu nedenle, farklı kurgusal örnekler üzerinde daha fazla araştırma yapılması, mümkün dünyalar ilkeleri baz alan anlatı çalışmalarındaki teorik boşluğu doldurma sürecine yardımcı olabilir. Mümkün Dünyalar Kuramı'nı mimetik olmayan (non-mimetik) anlatılar, anlatı şiiirleri veya dramının örnekleri için kullanmak, edebi metinlerin analizinde kullanılması için daha geniş çıkarımlar ortaya çıkarabilir.

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