

TEMPORALITY, CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

Approaching *Umbra*, my decision to treat temporality and representation of consciousness as the conceptual and analytical framework, led me to experiment with some bold narratorial decisions and employ literary devices I hoped would serve the non-linear structure whilst achieving the level of behavioural mimesis I believe is critical to psychological thriller. On a structural level, I chose devices to reflect temporal distortion and disintegrated unity of time. This included distended/slowed scene, semantical ambiguities and the cryptic use of prolepsis and analepsis to elicit suspense, tension and uncertainty. As a dark psychological thriller in the literary genre, *Umbra* explores themes of systemic childhood abuse, psychopathy and tachypsychia therefore exploring narrative modalities of consciousness became key to veridical representation. To successfully narrate Dominic's fractured reality while imbricating themes of consciousness and temporality, my research took excursions into strands of neurophenomenology and quantum theory as I built characterisation and plot; notably, the theories advanced by Feynman, Heisenberg, Schrödinger and Lacan.

As part of this discussion I will draw on the work of Ian McEwan, Ruth Rendell, Iris Murdoch, Daphne Du Maurier and P.D James; authors I believe excel at creating psychological suspense whilst shaping veridical characterisation. I was further influenced by the work of Delphine de Vigan, Tony Cavanaugh, Caroline Kepnes and Martin Amis when exploring character interiority and the psychopathological. I will also discuss the theoretical models of narrative temporality advanced by Gerard Genette, Mark Currie, Paul Ricoeur and David Lodge.

TEMPORALITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

How we configure time through the prism of consciousness while remaining faithful to the diegetic remit of the psychological thriller became the main determinant as I progressed *Umbra*. The interrelationship of temporality and representation of consciousness intersected with the wider genre requirements of suspense, obsession, delusional beliefs, compulsion, moral ambiguity, identity and character psychopathology to create a 'dissolving sense of reality,¹ became the definitive factor as I sketched character and plot.

¹ Christopher Pittard, *Psychological Thrillers*, Wiley Online Library (2012), <<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118398500.wbeotgp014>> [Accessed March 26, 2020].

Graeme Greene describes the world of Patricia Highsmith's characters as a 'claustrophobic and irrational world' of which we the reader enter with a 'personal sense of danger'² and it was exactly this type of world — highly interiorised and ambiguous — that I wanted to foreground in the prologue of *Umbra*. If, as David Lodge posits: 'Literature is a record of human consciousness, the richest and most comprehensive we have'³ then literary fiction, particularly the psychological thriller, must reflect upon temporality from which consciousness emanates. As José-Luis Díaz summarises:

From a phenomenological standpoint, consciousness can be regarded as a cinematic or narrative stream of explicit mental events. The word consciousness is used here as being analogous to awareness: the acts and processes of an individual while experiencing mental events such as perceiving, feeling, thinking, believing, imagining, remembering, desiring, intending, attending, manipulating, acting, and the like.⁴

According to Peter Hutchings, if character psychology doesn't subvert plot in the psychological thriller, it certainly takes centre stage.⁵ And if the distinguishing characteristic of the thriller is the mental and emotional terrain of its characters then as writers concerned with psychological suspense, we must explore character psychology at a forensic level to build any sort of nuanced, sophisticated and veristic characterisation.

QUANTUM THEORY AND TEMPORALITY

With detective, gothic fiction and the psychological thriller orbiting central themes, traditions and structural elements,⁶ when exploring a dissolving, dissociative sense of reality, I wanted to explore the seemingly paradoxical correlation between theoretical physics and the psychological thriller. Far from being esoteric, quantum mechanics is, in fact, a part of the everyday fabric of life and as such pertains to the psychological thriller in terms of recognising time as an ephemeral entity, thus extending the scope, tools and narrative modalities of story-telling. As Mark Curie elucidates: 'We should not be too surprised that

² Patricia Highsmith, *Eleven* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), Foreword by Graeme Green

³ David Lodge, *Consciousness and the Novel* (London: Vintage, 2002), p.10.

⁴ José-Luis Díaz, 'A Narrative Method for Consciousness Research' *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* (2013), < doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2013.00739 > [Accessed March 23, 2020], para.3.

⁵ Peter Hutchings, *The A to Z of Horror Cinema* (London: Scarecrow Press, 2009), p.253.

⁶ David Glover, 'The Thriller' in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Martin Priestman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.136-151.

theoretical physics, when it translates its sums into narratives, should display the same structural or temporal logic as detective fiction.’⁷

The theories advanced in the field of quantum mechanics, notably the work of Richard Feynman and Werner Heisenberg became the premise for *Umbra*’s treatment of temporality, and how we conceptualise time within an ontological sense. My research led me to explore the theoretical physics of Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle and Feynman’s Multiple Histories theory, examining the conflation between a linear, causal and continuous world and an arbitrary, fragmented universe where an infinite number of personal realities and histories exist coextensively. According to Feynman’s Multiple Histories theory and Path Integral Formulation, any number of possible realities, or uninhabited histories⁸ exist within the stratum of universal time. Einstein described time as a ‘stubbornly persistent illusion’; the observer creating his reality with no demarcation between past, present and future other than what individual consciousness selects from a protean, ever-shifting internal landscape. Or, if we apply the Kantian theory of time then it is ‘[...] Nothing more than the form of inner self itself [...] In short, time is all in the mind [...]’⁹

Schrödinger went further, explicating that the very act of observing anything changes it and we are therefore observers of a shifting reality which consciousness picks its way through.¹⁰ It was these epistemological explorations of time that encouraged me to explore a four-dimensional view that all events and realities across space-time are on an equal footing, obviating the concept of ‘now.’ My intension was to narrate how consciousness expands and even languishes in the moment; the concept of a divisible universe of infinite possibilities, paths and realities led me to examine the concept of entropy and the arrow of time.

For example, if we are continually moving from a known past to an unknown future and time’s arrow operates as a mirror, rendering memory and consciousness experientially ahead of the observer following the psychological arrow of time theory,¹¹ then I wanted this schism of temporal consciousness to reflect Dominic’s distorted cognition. By suspending temporal logic and increasing narratorial dissonance, the suspense and structural indeterminacies were intended to provoke curiosity and apprehension. It was also my

⁷ Mark Curie, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.88.

⁸ Stephen Hawking, *Brief Answers To The Big Questions* (London: Hachette, 2018), pp.53-56.

⁹ Curie, *About Time*, p.83.

¹⁰ John Gribben, ‘The Copenhagen Interpretation’ in *In Search of Schrödinger’s Cat* (London: Bantam Books, 1984), p.211.

¹¹ Phillip Ball, *Focus: Why We Can’t Remember the Future*, *APS Physics*, Physics 7, 47 (2 May, 2014), <<https://physics.aps.org/articles/v7/47>> [Assessed 2 April, 2020].

intension to reflect this sense of entropy in terms of pace, tempo, syntax and semantical ambiguities which I've built into the machinery of the narrative, discussed further on.

The interplay of these theories when looking at schizophrenic states of mind, cognitive dysfunction and tachypsychia became compelling.¹² I should add that neither Feynman nor Heisenberg were suggesting we need to be schizophrenic to grasp the concept of a temporal loop, but rather, as the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan advanced, there exists an inherent association between temporal distortion and psychological dysfunction; the collapse of linear temporality he attributes to certain forms of schizophrenia and the aporia between cosmological and phenomenological time consciousness.¹³

Temporal schism is explored in Caroline Kepnes' psychological thriller *You*,¹⁴ when serial killer, Joe Goldberg's distorted reality jumps between the present and past with no delineation between what is real (his relationship with Beck) vis-à-vis the temporal excursions/analepsis into his relationship with previous girlfriend/victim Candace. Temporality and consciousness feature heavily throughout the novel, capturing the delusional projections of a sociopathic mind. Kepnes intelligent and thought-provoking treatment on the line between obsession and sociopathy was of particular interest in crafting both Dominic and Anais' characters; determining where on the scale of anti-social personality disorders they respectively sit demanded a close investigation of diagnostic and behavioural features.^{15 16}

QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT

A further strand of interest within quantum theory was the concept of quantum entanglement; of two people inexorably bound beyond the spatial markers of time with the quantum effect influencing human cognition, in short creating quantum consciousness: 'Today some physicists suspect that, whether or not consciousness influences quantum mechanics, it might, in fact, arise because of it.'¹⁷ Einstein referred to quantum entanglement as 'spooky action at a distance'; the idea that two people who have fallen in love or who've shared a

¹² *APA Dictionary of Psychology* <<https://dictionary.apa.org/tachypsychia>> [Assessed 07 April, 2020].

¹³ Curie, *About Time*, p.79.

¹⁴ Caroline Kepnes, *You* (UK: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

¹⁵ Robert D. Hare, PhD, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999).

¹⁶ American Psychiatric Society, *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

¹⁷ Phillip Ball, *The Strange Link Between the Human Mind and Quantum Physics*, *BBC Earth*, (16 February, 2017), < <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170215-the-strange-link-between-the-human-mind-and-quantum-physics>> [Accessed 20 February, 2020], para.9.

profound bond that exists beyond time and outside of it, defying space, distance and even death.

The phenomenon of quantum entanglement was of key influence as I drafted the relationship between Dominic and the girl. It is fifteen years on from Dominic's attempted murder of Anais, but there on the cliff, standing opposite (unbeknownst to him) their daughter, Luna, he believes it is Anais before him, with no point in time available to anchor him to the present reality. Time has coalesced, bent back on itself and contracted. The memory of Anais (whom he believes to be dead) is so rigidly identifiable as his present reality, that he is unable to escape the vortex of the past. In his mind they exist in the present, residing in a place outside of time: 'In perfect syzygy, they stood, the three of them reunited — bound together in a perfect event horizon — no escape; the perfect prolepsis.'

This temporal displacement or telescoping effect¹⁸ was intended to not only depict Dominic's mental disorder but to set up a structure that would allow the third person close narrator to make chronological time jumps as the story progresses.

Disintegrated unity of time was intended to increase structural indeterminacies and elicit speculation:

[...] He also didn't want to die. Not particularly. Not again. He'd died before, you see, several times, in fact. At one point, before the intervention, he was quite accomplished at it — an accomplished dier. But he had given all that up. On a Darwinian level, death had simply lost its bite.

The intension here was to create ambiguity (and signal unreliability). Had he actually died before (in a clinical sense and was resuscitated)? Or should the reader assume he is some sort of revenant existing within the liminal space? Or, more interestingly, the close reader may infer that what Dominic is experiencing is a collapse of linear temporality, as someone suffering from schizophrenia, and according to Lacan's hypothesis, may do repeatedly, in the manner of visual and auditory hallucinations as the psychological arrow of time bends back on itself.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL V COSMOLOGICAL TIME

¹⁸ *Telescoping Effect/Cognitive Bias, NLP Notes*, n.d < <http://nlpnotes.com/telescoping-effect/> > [Assessed 7 April, 2020].

According to Heidegger, time should be understood in and of itself as the unity of three dimensions; past, present and future. Heidegger believed temporality is a triadic structure, a unitive experience of one's past, present and future coalesced and projected into reality by the human being.¹⁹ This was an influential concept in narrating Dominic's interiorised world-view – his reality. In *Being and Nothingness*²⁰ Sartre defines the essence of being as a partial distance from the self. Reflexivity and qualia were germane to developing Dominic's inner life, and my intension was to encode these elements into the narrative layers expanding on the theme of telescoping bias.²¹

It was also my intension to capture the aporia between the cosmological *clock time* of the narrative and the phenomenological *mind time* of Dominic's psychological landscape to create intimacy while heightening tension and uncertainty. Multiple Histories theory gave me pause, enabling me to explore the idea that the ordinary conception of time is displaced and relocated within the labyrinths of the mind where a multiplicity of competing realities exist. As Curie elucidates:

The paradox of temporal distance then is merely the recognition that an account of the inseparability of past, present and future in the mind depends upon their separation in the ordinary, or metaphysical conception of time, and in reverse, that the metaphysical conception of time cannot deny the inseparability of past, present and future in consciousness.²²

In both the first and second parts of the prologue, I applied temporal distance and slowed scene for dual purpose. Firstly, to demonstrate how a moment of 'real time' is off-set by the psychological duration of the moment expanding, even languishing beyond the locus of clock-time and the spacial markers of the scene. Secondly, to allude to Dominic's mental fragmentation. For example, when he first observes the girl imperilled on the cliff (prologue part one) his response is to find it slightly comic and rather absurd. Instead of acting instantly as one might rationally do, his reflexivity slows down not only the narrated time but also the psychological duration of the climactic moment felt and lived.

¹⁹ Curie, *About Time*, pp.51-55.

²⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by the Philosophical Library (London: Methuen & Co, Ltd, 1958).

²¹ Janssen, S.M.J., Chessa, A.G. & Murre, J.M.J. 'Memory for time: How people date events.' *Memory & Cognition* 34, 138–147 (2006), < <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193393> > [Assessed 12 April, 2020].

²² Curie, *About Time*, p.71.

Furthermore, when he does decide to act, the narrator spends a disproportionately longer amount of time psycho-narrating Dominic's enmity toward the *meddler's* involvement and favouring qualia over a quantitative progression of events. Again, this was intended to impart a sense of displacement and temporal warping. As Curie summarises:

[...] These tensions and aporias are the very fabric of the novel: the tensions between narrated time and the time of the narration, chronology and plot, objective and subjective time, cosmological and phenomenological time, time as topic and time as technique [...]²³

The theme of temporal distortion became particularly relevant in the final paragraphs of the prologue when Dominic believes he sees the girl outside the fabric of time; in an alternate history as real to him as the present,²⁴ with no point in time available to anchor him:

Time had refracted, the cold measure of lost years assailing him. He saw her shining with infinite possibilities; the long blonde hair now black, the derisive cat eyes — the yawning glint of the blade he had run athwart against her lily-white throat. Her, always her. The past, the future contracted in a singularity.

The ambiguity of whether this is a play on prolepsis or analepsis (discussed in detail further on) depicts the increasing ambiguity and mounting tension by signalling to the reader Dominic's distorted cognitive function. As Curie assesses:

[...] The anteriority of the past and the posteriority of the future are questioned. The result is a mish-mash of pasts that take place in the future and futures that take place in the past, as the terminology of cosmological time strains to assert itself with the perpetual present of phenomenological time.²⁵

SLOWED SCENE

Monika Fludernik reflects on three different modalities when narrating extended time: stretch, slow-down and time-extending narration:

In narrative discourse descriptive passages or the portrayal of mental processes slow down the pace of the action. The cinematic equivalent of

²³ Curie, *About Time*, p.92.

²⁴ David Deutsch, *The Fabric of Reality* (London: Penguin Books, 1998).

²⁵ Curie, *About Time*, p.33.

this would be slow motion photography. Chatman refers to this device as stretch, Bal as slow-down and Lämmert as time-extending narration (Ger. zeitdehnendes Erzählen).²⁶

By slowing the scene and placing narrative stress on dramatic, pivotal and transformative moments of the focalised character, we can witness the moment expanding through the character's eyes, mimetically. This was my objective throughout the cliff scene of *Umbra's* prologue. While I have included action markers throughout the entire scene, I have slowed narrative time beyond the locus of clock time.

Hannah Courtney goes on to define the device of slowed scene:

[...] It must contain action markers (whether of physical or mental processes), but the duration of narrative time must be slowed beyond the duration of story time, allowing the moment to expand or languish (but not pause) as it glides on through time.²⁷

The psychological thrillers of Ian McEwan use the device of slowed scene frequently, and this influenced my own creative choices with *Umbra*. In each McEwan thriller, the use of slowed scene not only heightened my apprehension of the unfolding terror but afforded me, the reader, a greater sense of the lived moment unfolding mimetically. As Courtney further explicates: 'McEwan is aligning reader experience with character experience. The duration of narrative time expands (and so the readerly experience expands), just as the character feels his or her moment expanding.'²⁸

Umbra's slowed cliff-top scene allowed the narrator access to a more intimate purview of Dominic's mind. It also ensured the scene was gravid with unease, the felt life of the character engorged beyond a single frame of reference – a continuous past coexistent with present action. David Lodge states:

The deeper you go, as a writer, into the minds of your characters — the more detailed and refined your registration of their thoughts, feelings,

²⁶ Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p.33.

²⁷ Hannah Courtney, 'Narrative Temporality and Slowed Scene: The Interaction of Event and Thought Representation in Ian McEwan's Fiction.' *Narrative*, vol. 21 no. 2, (2013), pp. 180-197. *Project MUSE*, <doi:10.1353/nar.2013.0008> [Assessed 1 March, 2020], p.184.

²⁸ Hannah Courtney, 'Narrative Temporality and Slowed Scene: The Interaction of Event and Thought Representation in Ian McEwan's Fiction.' *Narrative*, vol. 21 no. 2, (2013), pp.180-197. *Project MUSE*, <doi:10.1353/nar.2013.0008> [Assessed 1 March, 2020], p.185.

sensations, memories, scruples — the slower the narrative tempo becomes, and the less action there is.²⁹

Slowed scene is axiomatic throughout the crisis points in *Enduring Love*,³⁰ *The Comfort of Strangers*,³¹ *Black Dogs*,³² *The Child in Time*,³³ and of course, *Saturday*.³⁴ Each of these thrillers retains the use of slowed scene during seminal crisis points, highlighting the protagonist's interiority and operating as a temporal schism and break-away of clock time reality. On the effect of McEwan's slowed scene Hannah Courtney summates:

Contemporary British author Ian McEwan frequently employs slowed scene in his novels; [...] particularly salient moments for the characters involved—moments which are pivotal, momentous, or life-changing. [...] The physical action of important life episodes can feel as though it occurs in slow motion, just as other individuals feel the same moment passing at regular speed [...] This has become anecdotally referred to as the relativity of time....McEwan manages to reconstruct, and even evoke through the reading process, the personal, temporally warped experience of such stressful episodes.³⁵

In *The Child in Time* the narrator comments that Stephen is so constrained by the slowness of time that passes during a five-second interval that he could have written a monograph: '[...]The rapidity of events was accommodated by the slowing of time.'³⁶ Further on he observes: 'The whole experience had lasted no longer than five seconds. Julie would have appreciated what had happened to time, how duration shaped itself round the intensity of the event.'³⁷

Slowed scene is deployed again in the opening of *Enduring Love*, where McEwan distorts temporality by layering the narrative with an overarching sense of interiority and self-distance. Through Joe's recollection of the event, the crisis moment is slowed and expanded as the horror unfolds: 'The transformation was absolute: I don't recall dropping the

²⁹ David Lodge, *Sense and Sensibility*, *The Guardian*, 2 November, 2002, <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/nov/02/fiction.highereducation>> [Accessed 20 March], para.50.

³⁰ Ian McEwan, *Enduring Love* (London: Vintage, 1998).

³¹ Ian McEwan, *The Comfort of Strangers* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1981).

³² Ian McEwan, *Black Dogs* (London: Vintage, 1992).

³³ Ian McEwan, *The Child in Time* (London: Vintage, 1987).

³⁴ Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (London: Vintage, 2006).

³⁵ Courtney, p.180-197.

³⁶ Ian McEwan, *The Child in Time*, p.100.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.102.

corkscrew, or getting to my feet, or making a decision, or hearing the caution Clarissa called after me. What idiocy, to be racing into this story and its labyrinths [...]’³⁸ And further on:

The encounter that would unhinge us was minutes away, its enormity disguised from us not only by the barrier of time but by the colossus in the centre of the field that drew us in with the power of a terrible ratio that set fabulous magnitude against the puny human distress at its base.³⁹

There is no sense of fast pace action despite the escalating crisis because McEwan has slowed down clock time to such a profound degree to convey the indeterminant psychological duration of the moment. Joe observes what is happening but with a sense of self-distance so that he is almost outside the action. Further on, during the murder of Colin Tapp, the scene is slowed once more as the terror unspools over two pages and Joe’s mind whirs through a myriad of explanations and interpretations of the event.⁴⁰

Similarly, in *The Comfort of Strangers*, the penultimate moments of Colin’s murder are slowed, time is stretched and through Mary’s eyes, temporality is dilated/warped. In the hours after Colin’s murder and with the murderers, Robert and Caroline, already fled, Mary’s terror continues to expand across several pages.⁴¹ In *Black Dogs*, McEwan uses the device again to reflect June’s escalating fear, the narrative stress is on slowing the scene which not only evinces her interiority but impels reader uncertainty and trepidation.⁴²

Imagery and qualia feature heavily throughout the crisis scenes in both novels, indicative of the acutely reflexive world the characters inhabit at these respective crisis points. *Saturday* is another adroit example of using slowed scene at climatic points to reinforce character consciousness; the first is as Henry Perowne watches as the burning plane descends over London late at night,⁴³ then the confrontation with Baxter and his cronies,⁴⁴ and, further on, Baxter’s terrifying invasion of Henry’s home.⁴⁵

I also reference Sartre’s *Age of Reason*,⁴⁶ which may at first appear an incongruous choice within some of the more obvious formulaic elements of the thriller genre, but I would

³⁸ Ian McEwan, *Enduring Love* (London: Vintage, 1998), p.1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.171-172.

⁴¹ Ian McEwan, *The Comfort of Strangers* (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1981), pp. 155-160.

⁴² Ian McEwan, *Black Dogs* (London: Vintage, 1992), pp. 170-180.

⁴³ Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (London: Vintage, 2006), pp. 13-19.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.82-99.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.205-228.

⁴⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Age of Reason* (London: Penguin Books, 1961).

argue that it is a brilliant example of how the treatment of time and consciousness underpin narrative tension and psychological suspense.

In the psychological thriller, *D'apres une Histoire Vrai*,⁴⁷ author Delphine de Vigan takes the reader through three-quarters of the novel where little high octane action occurs, although the tension is insidious and suspense persistent. The autodiegetic narrator glides the reader through her interiorised world and her increasingly claustrophobic relationship with L to the point where the horror is allowed to evolve and transpire organically, the reader having been conferred with intimate psychological scope provoking a strong sense of apprehension from early on.

Similarly, I was guided by the subtlety crafted yet profound tension and suspense that builds throughout Rendell/Vine's *A Dark Adapted Eye*,⁴⁸ *A Judgement in Stone*,⁴⁹ *The House of Stairs*,⁵⁰ *The Bridesmaid*,⁵¹ *The Birthday Present*,⁵² *TigerLily's Orchids*,⁵³ and *A Sight for Sore Eyes*,⁵⁴ also P.D James' *Innocent Blood*,⁵⁵ and finally Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince*.⁵⁶ In each of these thrillers, the focus on character interiority and the psychopathological came at no expense to the plot.

PROLEPSIS AND ANALEPSIS

I was further influenced by the work of Ian McEwan, Martin Amis and Daphne Du Maurier in the use of prolepsis and analepsis to pique speculation and suspense as John Mullen notes:

[...] McEwan has in common with Spark a gift for chilly narrative control that compels attention yet repels sympathy [...] They are the two novelists of the last 50 years who most cunningly use the trick of prolepsis – letting the reader glimpse the narrative future before it has arrived.⁵⁷

Curie argues that the primary significance of prolepsis is anticipation. For the purposes of this commentary, I shall be applying Gerard Genette's taxonomy that narratological prolepsis

⁴⁷ Delphine de Vigan, *D'apres une Histoire Vrai* (Paris: JC Lattes, 2015).

⁴⁸ Barbara Vine, *A Dark Adapted Eye* (London: Penguin Books, 1986).

⁴⁹ Ruth Rendell, *A Judgement In Stone* (London: Random House, 1977).

⁵⁰ Ruth Rendell, *The House of Stairs* (London: Penguin Books, 1988).

⁵¹ Ruth Rendell, *The Bridesmaid* (London: Hutchinson, 1989).

⁵² Barbara Vine, *The Birthday Present* (London: Viking, 2002).

⁵³ Ruth Rendell, *Tigerlily's Orchids* (London: Hutchinson, 2010).

⁵⁴ Ruth Rendell, *A Sight For Sore Eyes* (London: Hutchinson, 1998).

⁵⁵ P.D James, *Innocent Blood* ((London: Faber and Faber, 1980).

⁵⁶ Iris Murdoch, *The Black Prince* (London: Vintage, 1973).

⁵⁷ John Mullen, *Good books, Bad films: Why Does Ian McEwan Never Translate On Screen? The Guardian*, 24 August, 2018, <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/aug/24/good-books-bad-films-why-does-ian-mcewan-never-translate-on-screen>> [Accessed 23 March 2020], para.4.

serves as a flash-forward or temporal excursion. The significance of anticipation and prolepsis has functional importance suggesting imbrication of present or possible futures while invoking reader indeterminacies. Gerard Genette describes prolepsis as:

[...] any narrative manoeuvre that consists of narrating or evoking in advance an event that will take place later, designating as analepsis any evocation after the fact of an event that took place earlier than the point in the story where we are at any given moment [...]⁵⁸

I allude at separate points to both prolepsis and analepsis cryptically. The purpose of commixing the devices was to signify the temporal loop whilst evoking suspense. For example, is Dominic's premonition of murdering the girl (on the cliff) a temporal excursion into the future, or is this moment entrenched in analepsis (a flashback of trying to murder Anais' fifteen years ago?) 'Of course, he had seen her before. He had known her before. The glint, always the dusty glint of the blade: eyes, throat, mouth... always catching him, telescoping time.'

Curie observes the advantages these devices have for arousing suspense: [...] We anticipate an unknown future in the whodunnit no less than we may, through various forms of analepsis, take excursions into the past in the thriller, making curiosity and suspense a feature of both reading processes.⁵⁹ Furthermore, Curie describes the device of prolepsis as: '[...] a glimpse of the future which identifies the killer but not the motive,⁶⁰ and '[...] the installation of a future memory within the moment.'⁶¹ Using the elisions of analepsis and prolepsis to create tension and curiosity between the forward motion of anticipatory event and the retrospective movement to a recollected one also served the disintegrated unity of time theme and Dominic's splintering reality.

Referencing back to McEwan, *Atonement* is embedded with examples of temporal prolepsis. Similarly, in *The Comfort of Strangers* prolepsis is woven throughout the narrative to invoke a glimpse of an unseen, prophetic future where Mary and Colin are predestined to become Robert and Caroline's victims, or as Dominic Head describes, 'victims in waiting.'⁶² John Mullen observes time manipulation as emblematic of McEwan's work: 'Above all, in their unpacking of narrative McEwan's novels have brilliantly demonstrated how time is the

⁵⁸ Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), p.40.

⁵⁹ Curie, *About Time*, p.88.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.98.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.99.

⁶² Dominic Head, 'The Novellas' in *The Cambridge Companion to Ian McEwan*, ed. Dominic Head (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp.135–149.

novelist's element [...] No novelist is more adept at manipulating the tricks and jumps of chronology.⁶³

Paul Ricoeur's view, postulated by William C. Dowling, is that a story followed at a mimetic level is '[...] irreducibly temporal involving the state of partial or imperfect knowledge on the part of both characters and audience [...]'⁶⁴ Dowling goes on to say, 'What is at stake a cognitive process, the movement from imperfect knowledge to a total clarity, that lays bare a new and alternate landscape of reality.'⁶⁵ This is acutely germane to the world of the thriller whose future proceeds tenuously through a world of indeterminacies. Or, as Curie assesses: '[...] The crime unfolds in relation to a future event which is already known and lies in wait, whereas the temporal logic of the thriller is that of life, of an open and unpredictable future.'⁶⁶

I was further influenced by Du Maurier's use of both devices in her short story *Don't Look Now*;⁶⁷ significant examples are when John Baxter intuits the tragic death of his daughter, Christine, and secondly when he foresees his own death and funeral cortege (Laura with the psychic sisters) along the canals of Venice. One of the many ways subtext is presented throughout the story is the fragmented and tenebrous depiction of Venice which increases the sense of claustrophobia, mental deterioration and the impending disaster. The non-linear structure serves the narrative, steeped in motif, symbolism (particularly the colours red and blue, and water) analepsis and flashforward, and Du Maurier excels at creating an insidious sense of foreboding.

LANGUAGE

David Glover posits: '[...] the thriller is unusual in its reliance upon, or subordination to, the single-minded drive to deliver a starkly intense literary effect,⁶⁸ and the desire to impart a strong literary flavour determined my choice of language. I intended to heighten the sense of ambiguity and speculation by using schesis onomatopoeia to emphasize atemporality and

⁶³ John Mullen, *Good books, Bad films: Why Does Ian McEwan Never Translate On Screen?* *The Guardian*, 24 August, 2018, <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/aug/24/good-books-bad-films-why-does-ian-mcewan-never-translate-on-screen>> [Accessed 23 March 2020], para.10.

⁶⁴ William C. Dowling, *Ricoeur on Time and Narrative: An Introduction to Temps et Recis* (University of Notre Dame Press (2011), p.14.

⁶⁵ William C. Dowling, *Ricoeur on Time and Narrative: An Introduction to Temps et Recis* (University of Notre Dame Press (2011), p.14.

⁶⁶ Curie, *About Time*, p.87.

⁶⁷ Daphne Du Maurier, *Don't Look Now and Other Stories* (London: Penguin Books, 1973).

⁶⁸ David Glover, 'The Thriller' in *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Martin Priestman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.135.

depersonalisation whilst infusing the narrative with satire and irony. This was something of a bold divergence for me in terms of style, and I was influenced in this choice by the work of Martin Amis, particularly, *London Fields*⁶⁹ and Tony Cavanaugh's *Blood River*.⁷⁰

I was also influenced by deconstructivism and its techniques to subvert identity, truth and meaning. This included deploying the devices of leitwortstil, anaphora, parallelism, diacope, periodic sentences and aposiopesis to reinforce the speculative, dissonant gaze of the extradiegetic narrator whilst heightening tension and a sense of refracted time. Employing elements of the carnivalesque such as self-reflexivity, eccentricity, parody and absurdism, the extradiegetic narrator also fuses the psycho-narration and with vituperative, sardonic language and elements of heteroglossia.⁷¹

FREE INDIRECT DISCOURSE AND PSYCHO-NARRATION

By eliding the voice of the character with the narrator's, my intension was to create intimacy, the superior narratorial knowledge acting as a transcription of Dominic's inner life. Using psycho-narration as a device enabled me to convey Dominic's labyrinthine thought processes whilst simultaneously withholding information. It was also a device of expressing authorial intention in a refracted way while signalling unreliability⁷² and narratorial dissonance. Susan Keen discusses the benefit of narrated thought in creating empathy, tension and ambiguity in the relationship between the narrator and character while showing privileged knowledge of the character.⁷³ Cohn argues that psycho-narration enables narratorial superior knowledge of the character's mind, denoting cognitive privilege⁷⁴ and operates with vast temporal scope, enabling the narrator to describe the felt life of the character over long periods or within a heightened moment of conflict or crisis.⁷⁵

Not only can it order and explain a character's conscious thoughts better than the character himself, it can also effectively articulate a psychic life that remains un verbalized, penumbral, or obscure. Accordingly psycho-

⁶⁹ Martin Amis, *London Fields* (London: Vintage, 1989).

⁷⁰ Tony Cavanaugh, *Blood River* (Australia: Hachette, 2019).

⁷¹ Nasrullah Mambrol, *Bakhtin's Impact on Postmodern Sensibility, Literary Theory and Criticism*, 5 April 2016, < <https://literariness.org/2016/04/05/bakhtins-impact-on-postmodern-sensibility/>> [Assessed 10 April, 2020], para.3.

⁷² Paul McCormick, 'Claims of Stable Identity and (Un)reliability in Dissonant Narration' *Poetics Today* (2009), 30 (2): 317–352 < <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2008-012>> [Accessed 11 March, 2020].

⁷³ Keen, Suzanne. 'A Theory of Narrative Empathy.' *Narrative*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2006, pp.207–236. *JSTOR*, <www.jstor.org/stable/20107388> [Accessed 15 April, 2020], pp.213-224.

⁷⁴ Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, p.29.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.34.

narration often renders, in a narrator's knowing words, what a character "knows," without knowing how to put it into words.⁷⁶

Furthermore, the fusion of psycho-narration with free indirect speech to slip in and out of character consciousness expanded the theme of reflexivity and psychological dysfunction that was so critical to Dominic's characterisation and creating the ironic, speculative narratorial voice I reached for. Narrative dissonance was further facilitated through the choice of abstract, gnomic and analytical language allowing the narrator to assess two dimensions of the character and what Cohn describes as psychic depth and ethical worth.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Cohn, *Transparent Minds*, p.46.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.26-46.

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