

## Blend of Ethics, Politics and Stylistics in Trauma Narrative: McEwan's Social and Political Critique via Trauma Presentation in *Saturday*

**Dr. Shabbir Ahmad**

Assistant Professor of English, The University of Sahiwal, Pakistan. Email: [shabbirahmad@uosahiwal.edu.pk](mailto:shabbirahmad@uosahiwal.edu.pk)

**Tanveer Akhtar**

Lecturer, Department of English, The University of Sahiwal, Pakistan.

**Samina Ilyas**

Visiting Lecturer, The University of Sahiwal, Pakistan.

**Sammar Abbas**

Research Scholar, Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan.

### ABSTRACT

McEwan blends ethics, politics and stylistics in the psychic exploration of the characters in his trauma-based novel *Saturday* (2005), revealing the traumatic process and the characters' post-traumatic life using linguistic and stylistic sources with great expertise. He adopts variable narrative means for trauma reconfiguration; after that, the narrative strategy is subject to ethical scrutiny. His trauma narration expounds on the major character's desolation and establishes the links trauma proceedings with the contemporary social and political framework. Via trauma narrative in this novel, McEwan explores the ethical and social implications of major traumatic events such as the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. His representation of never-ending traumatic aftereffects, causing an individual's alienation from others, endorses that McEwan expands individual trauma scope for an ethical and social critique of the contemporary world.

**KEYWORDS:** post-traumatic life, contemporary world, ethical scrutiny, linguistic tools, cultural critique

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### INTRODUCTION

Ian Russell McEwan (1948- ) has been acknowledged as one of the most proliferate and preeminent British contemporary writers. McEwan has maintained his reputation with works of variable genres, namely, fiction, short story, screenplay, oratorio and libretto, among which the novels, such as *The Child in Time* (1987), *Enduring Love* (1997), *Atonement* (2001), *Saturday* (2005), and *Sweet Tooth* (2012) to name a few are highly-praised globally. The most notable one is the Man Booker Prize for the satiric novella *Amsterdam* (1998) in his literary prizes. Being included in the list of "50 greatest British writers since 1945",<sup>1</sup> McEwan has consolidated his irrefutable literary status as a "national writer"<sup>2</sup> with an in-depth ethical inquiry

into contemporary history, society and above all, human nature.

His early works are regarded as no less than a shock to readers because of the bold exposure of irrational human desires. However, he contends that he intends to treat novels for an investigation of human nature via psychological inspection of human beings, in that it "is the kind of direction he's trying to find" since his short stories (Roberts, 2005, p. 18). However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, McEwan's novels expand contextual reference to historical and social settings. The intellectual movements of the 1960s, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Iraq War, the worry of global warming; which accords with his comments on current events such as the 9/11 terrorist attack and the bombing at the London tube, further reveals his ascending ideological and cultural critique as a social elite. These historically-grounded works earn him the title of "a latter-day humanist" writing with

<sup>1</sup> McEwan was ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in the list prescribed by *The Times* in 2008, with the represented novel *The Child in Time* (1987). See "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945". *The Times*. 5 Jan. 2008.

<<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/books/article2452094.ece>>. Accessed on 23 Feb. 2014.

<sup>2</sup> See Jason Cowley. "NS Profile: Ian McEwan". *New*

*Statesman*. 18. Jul. 2005.

<<http://www.newstatesman.com/node/151097>>. Accessed on 26 Feb. 2014.

“compassionate humanism” (Bradbury, 2004, p.536) because of the ethnic orientation of his works and ethical worry of the political and social harassment in a postmodern context.

Till now, the ethical themes projected, integrated and recognized in McEwan’s narrative manipulation become a focal point in McEwan study with a synthesis of the psychoanalysis, ethics and narrative perspectives. It is a fact that in trauma representation, “McEwan’s narrative strategy associates with his attempt at a psychic exploration of characters” (Ahmad, 2020, p.160). According to an American narratologist, James Phelan enriches the theoretical hypothesis of readers’ engagement in textual construction with an analysis of McEwan’s *Enduring Love* and *Atonement*. In the analysis of *Enduring Love*, he argues with Allen Palmer<sup>1</sup> on the extensive connotation of ethical criticism, insisting on the necessity of the comprehensive study of the rhetorically engaging moral relationship among character, narrator, reader and implied author. The McEwanian scholarship has accumulated in psychoanalysis, ethical exploration and narrative analysis.

Exploring the contextualized narrative framework via stylistic tools, helps to trace McEwan’s humanistic concerns, specifically the trauma-creating world’s contemporary trauma reconciliation. The traumatic setting which haunts McEwan in his 30-year writing and “the recurrent theme of loss in McEwan’s fiction ... dramatized as a trauma” (Gauthier, 2006, p.103) uncover the posttraumatic stress experienced by the traumatized characters and their psychological struggle with the trauma aftermath. As a “highly self-conscious writer” (Wells, 2010, p.78) pursuing fictional vitality within the range of contemporary historical and social context, Ian McEwan makes a successful endeavour in blending ethics, politics and stylistics in trauma narrative in his novel *Saturday* (2005).

### Theoretical Framework

Trauma refers to the physical and psychological injury incurred by natural or human-made catastrophe, and the victims’ psychological syndrome has been the subject of contemporary psychoanalysis. Trauma, defined as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 (Caruth, 1995, p. 3), is composed of syndromes such as

<sup>1</sup> The argumentation between Alan Palmer and James Phelan actually refers to the disciplinary divergence between cognitive narratology and rhetorical narratology, and Phelan attempts to take a compatible critique to account for McEwan’s aesthetic endeavor.

nightmare, insomnia, anorexia, self-disclosure and other long-term negative efficacy on survivors. Trauma study, embedded with ethical exploration and contextualized implication, primarily aims to tackle PTSD with efficient clinical psychotherapy. The forerunners of this school, Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, assume that trauma study should be an integration of the past and the present in a parallel chronological structure, in which the contemporary critics elaborate the historical burden as “an imperative to awaken that turns between a traumatic repetition and the ethical burden of a survival” (Caruth, 1996, p. 108). This representative theoretical thinking about the ethical aspect involving the harassment of traumatic recollection remains an issue in the works of Robert J. Lifton, Ruth Leys, Shoshana Felman, Dominic LaCapra and other scholars<sup>2</sup> exemplified by the holocaust in World War II and the nuclear bomb in Hiroshima. A complete trauma reconciliation has to go through the three stages: “safety and stability, trauma work, and integration” (Weiner and Craighead, 2009, p. 1804). To put it another way, the traumatized person has to endure the haunting of traumatic memory, the hesitance to confront the past responsibility before the intended relief is available in the end. The trauma reflection in literary works is the realm of McEwan’s novels featured with trauma.

Trauma representation in contemporary narrative fiction is not merely a recollection of traumatic moments. It further gets conceptualized as retrospection over the traumatized characters’ immediate response and the enduring aftereffect upon them. Posttraumatic stress, as Cathy Caruth proposes, “lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time” (Caruth, 1995, p. 9). This “belatedness”, or “latency” in Freud’s notion<sup>3</sup>, pervades with chronological and spatial dimension in the narrative reconstruction of catastrophic

<sup>2</sup> The school of trauma study also has repugnant argumentations among critics, for instance, Ruth Leys criticizes Cathy Caruth’s empiricism in the study of trauma narrative, Dominick LaCapra points out Leys’ ignorance of historicity in cataloguing the genealogy of trauma. These divergences, however, do not undermine the development of trauma theory, but enrich its connotation with enlarged disciplinary range and context. See Ruth Leys. *Trauma: A Genealogy*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 2000. Dominick LaCapra. *History in Transits: Experience, Identity, Critical Theory*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. 2009. p83.

<sup>3</sup> “Latency” originally refers to Freud’s definition of the fourth stage of child’s psychosexual development. Caruth uses this term to describe the repetitive phenomenon of post-traumatic stress upon victims.

experience, transiting the post-traumatic syndrome composed of memory flashback, haunting dreams of the disastrous circumstance into the victim's self-scrutiny over trauma itself and its sequence.

Through a study of the rhetorical effect and ethical implication by exploring how trauma is represented, narrated and constricted in various narrative contexts, this study attempts to analyze the representation of trauma in McEwan's novel *Saturday* (2005). More specifically, this study unfolds, centring on the narrative vicissitude in the discourse, McEwan's ethical involvement in trauma representation, trauma narrative and trauma writing. In order to probe into the complex of ethical, political and social issues in McEwan's trauma fiction, the synthetic approach of trauma study and narratology serve as methodological means to his narrative vicissitude in technique, rhetoric and ethics.

The novel *Saturday* (2005) is narrated from the third-person perspective in which the protagonist shares the role of victim obsessed with individual and social trauma. The typical narrative feature in trauma representation is the diversification of discourse that exemplifies the posttraumatic stress upon trauma victims, whose reflective conscious directs to what Cathy Caruth has addressed as "the belatedness of trauma. The thematic focus in this novel emerges from trauma representation to cultural reflection on contemporary society, to which McEwan projects his anxiety about the accessibility to individual's trauma recovery under the social unease shadowed by 9/11 terrorist attack.

Emerging from the third-person panoramic perspective, the self-reflexive conscious in *Saturday* is designated within the narrative network of contemporary historical and social settings, giving rise to traumatized character's psychological mood via narrative discourse of various semantic functions. The victims' intuitive conscious, in the form of discourse consisting of direct, indirect speech, and more variations in syntax, constructs a traumatological narrative context whereas the trauma representation highlights the considerable impact of posttraumatic stress. The narrative focus in this novel highlights the belatedness of trauma representation in narrative discourse. As a "contemporary" writer who pours humanistic insight into the present social unease prior to individual experience, McEwan's conservative attitude toward victims' ultimate relief is unsettling in the master narrative of the 9/11 trauma.

Free Indirect Discourse (abbreviated as FID), termed as free indirect speech, interior monologue, narrated monologue in the field of narratology, used

to be the favor of stream-of-conscious writing in modern novelists, has remained the focus of narrative study. FID represents "a character's speech or thought by blending the character's thought" (James Phelan and Rabinowitz, 2012, p. 545), yet the proverbs or any verb affiliated to the thinking process of character is omitted. In other words, FID abandons the proverbs in the indirect discourse such as "he say" or "he thinks", leaving space for reader to inquire into the character's conscious and transverse the rhetorical effect distinctive from the primary neutral narrative attitude. This technique, as "the most characteristic and efficacious of all, ... can saturate the entire discourse insidiously assimilating the whole of it to the character's consciousness" (Genette, 1990, p. 762), with which the character Henry's psychological movement in *Saturday* resonates close to his endeavor of emotional rancor in trauma. Here the free indirect discourse is presented via anacoluthon which means a sentence or clause that is grammatically inconsistent.

## Discussion

As a novel "fundamentally and principally about consciousness" (Childs, 2005, p. 150), *Saturday* is a salute to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and James Joyce's *Ulysses*, concentrating on the bruise of a middle-class British neurosurgeon's "tortured ambivalent feelings about the impending invasion" (Roberts, 2010, p. 46) in the culturally-prescribed post-9/11 trauma society. The title is not merely a time mark signifying Henry Perowne's personal traumatic experience within one day, firstly an air crash in the morning and then break-in violence in the evening. It is more than a political metonymy to the real historical event on 15 Feb, 2003, when the demonstration against the invasion to Iraq accelerates into the largest anti-war protest in the UK.

The basic third-person perspective in *Saturday* is interjected with free indirect style aimed at exposing the protagonist's psychological status within the schema of a collective cultural memory. Therefore, *Saturday* is embedded with the contemporary ideological metaphor as "the most serious contributions to the post-9/11, post-Iraq war literature" (Lawson, 2005, p. 4), whose socio-historical context complicates the one-day record of Henry's traumatic experience and transfers it into "a novel about living in London in the aftermath of September 11 [with] new forms of consciousness" (Macleod, 2005, p. 45). The realistic 9/11 trauma in *Saturday*, like a latent phantom, is essential to the productive scheme of traumatic

feeling for the victim, from which the individual encounters have derived.

The metonymy of 9/11 trauma starts from an early morning at London when Henry “wakes to find himself already in motion” (McEwan, 2005, p.53), whose gaze through the window proclaims his identity as the witness of the air crash near the Heathrow Airport. The astonishing scene reflects a vivid mimesis of the terrorist attack in 2001 and haunts the protagonist’s conscious as a traumatic prelude to his later encounter with the car crash and break-in violence. The flaming of the plane, as the fundamental impetus of the traumatic moment, resides permanently in Henry’s conscious, “the attacks of that September morning hover over the narrative” (Gauthier, 2013, p. 11). What is worth noting is that the air crash Henry witnesses, according to the later news report, is a technical accident of a Russian cargo plane which lands safely in the end without any casualty. It is Henry’s subject association with the past collective memory that appraises it as a repressive horror, the empathy in the traumatic assimilation contriving what McEwan yearns to “describe private happiness against a background of gathering fear” (Roberts, 2010, p.140). Constantly afraid of being killed by terrorists, Henry believes “[t]he scale of death contemplated is no longer at issue” (McEwan, 2005, p. 81). This assumption ties with the air crash and perplexes an existential fear to be, in the words of Philip Tew, “a penumbra of fear and uncertainty” (Tew, 2007, p.200) which envelops Henry’s post traumatic behavior inconspicuously under the historical catastrophe. For Henry, the suppressed memory of the past is too formidable to speak out, and the flaming plane is prone to be configured as the incoherent factor in narrative frequency in depicting Henry’s tentative yet failed attempt of evading trauma.

As Gerald Prince claims, the narrative frequency reveals “the relationship between the number of times an event happens and the number of times it is recounted” (Prince, 1990, p.271) in a comparatively determined narrative context. The time duration in *Saturday* has already been certified as one single day, during which the traumatological sense in the mind of Henry remains in a narrative repetition or aphasia. Primarily, Henry assumes the flaming in the air to be a comet and intends to wake his wife Rosalind up to watch the spectacular sight together. Soon aware of it as a possible terrorist attack, he “no longer thinks of waking Rosalind” (McEwan, 2005, p. 15). Henry’s immediate response to the scenery is incurred by the vast stress from the 9/11 trauma, consequently, his fear impels him step

into the ambivalence “he keeps floating away from the line of his thoughts” (McEwan, 2005, p.23), or shoulders the psychological burden alone. Owing to the muscular gallantry, Henry chooses to confront the stress himself, since the tremendous “work” Rosa will face the next day “is why he cannot wake her” (McEwan, 2005, p. 24). They seem to be an intimate couple, yet Rosalind is none other than the last figure to whom Henry is willing to turn. Overtly, the temptation of speaking out the traumatic view emerges as the mark of narrative frequency which emphasizes on the formidability of appeasing Henry’s anxiety mesmerized by the consistent scenery of plane on fire.

The second time Henry tries to seek comfort from Rosalind is when she is engaged with lawsuit and has no time to talk with him. In their short conversation via telephone, Henry tells Rosalind that “when I couldn’t sleep I was at the window. I saw that Russian cargo plane”, but immediately “he hesitates” (McEwan, 2005, p.149) because he discovers the coldness in Rosalind’s voice. In psychotherapy, the endeavor of “establishment of safety” (Herman, 1997, p. 155) by seeking help from others marks the very first step to work through trauma. Unfortunately, Henry does not acquire the comfort that he assumes from his wife. Subsequently, this ethical appeal remains to be the mark of narrative frequency in Henry’s turn to his son Theo with whom the ideological disparity dwells on the cognition of the air crash and contemporary society.

Concerned with the potential terrorist attack, Henry could not relax even if this air crash is identified later as an outcome of mechanical failure that causes no casualty. When he narrates the event, he knows “it shouldn’t surprise him [Leon, my note] how little there is to tell” (McEwan, 2005, p.29). Their disparity further lies in Theo’s political stand because he “is against the war in Iraq” (McEwan, 2005, p.151), while Henry is always ambivalent in commenting “Saddam’s organizing principle was terror” (McEwan, 2005, p. 73) and approving of the enthusiasm for anti-war parade in London. Henry’s attempt for comfort from Theo ends with disagreement between father and son. Till then Henry is deprived of the communicative opportunity of releasing his suppressed fear, since his wife is too busy to listen to what is narrated, and his son Theo indifferent to what he is concerned. The air crash develops necessarily to be an unbearable handicap in the way of familial warmth. This ideological disparity amid Henry, Rosalind and Theo discloses Henry’s anguish of not being understood in an enclosed community, given that his psychological

suffering is associated with the maintenance of the historical calamity. His inherent response, no more than hysteria, expresses the solicitude of a traumatized figure burdened with collective trauma.

The narrative frequency finds its affinity in Henry's reflection on his second trauma experience - the break-in violence by the villain Baxter. The cognitive divergence of the dismantled crisis leads to the incompatibility between Henry's judgment on Baxter's behavior and that in the mind of Rosalind. Although the third-person narration oscillates between the sweet memory of Henry and Rosalind and their present disparity, when confronted with traumatic event, the reciprocal understanding between the intimate couple no longer exists, not to mention the mutative encouragement to work through the trauma together. In the second traumatic experience, Henry is obsessed with more moral burdens than Rosalind does. The action of the villain Baxter, who breaks into Henry's house threatens Rosalind with a knife on her throat and orders Daisy to take off her clothes, turns out to be his revenge for being humiliated by Henry in the previous car crash. More embarrassingly, when the crisis is dismantled with Baxter's falling off from the stairs, Henry, as a skilled neurosurgeon, is challenged by the moral dilemma of rescuing Baxter or not. The whole family is stabbed while Henry is compelled into making the choice of if operating on the man who endangers his family several minutes ago. Since there's no other senior surgeon capable of the operation when Baxter is delivered to the hospital, Henry has to experience the psychological struggle in accepting the operation arrangement. Out of virtuosity of professionalism, he assumes to have "possess[ed] so much" (McEwan, 2005, p. 227) in comparison with the diseased Baxter, yet his potential eagerness of retribution to the villain makes him "to regret the care he routinely gave Baxter" (McEwan, 2005, p. 230). Ultimately, the doctoral responsibility replaces his implicit intention of revenge when he determines to operate on Baxter. Retroactively, Rosalind neither embodies the dubious trauma identities nor holds the same post traumatic syndrome invoked by the earlier air crash or the collective memory as Henry does. She is worried that Henry may take revenge during the operation, which turns out to be her own vengeful thought as she admits later. This ethical decency uncovers Henry's estrangement to his wife in working through the break-in traumatic experience. When Rosalind is elaborating on her vengeful intention, Henry shows desire to discuss with her but he understands, "he won't get from her the kind of response he wants" (McEwan, 2005, p.265). He

attempts to arouse in her the same moralistic cognition of the one-day experience in details, but Rosalind "starts a story of her own" (McEwan, 2005, p.268). In the frequent desolation with Henry's perspective, a lonely image, one traumatized in the shadow of fear and moral confusion in a posttraumatic society, is putatively worthy of reader's compassion. The narrative frequency, accordingly, is contextualized in "McEwan's narrative accumulation of objects, thoughts, memories, projections and sensations, works as a structuring device that appears to legitimize the fear" (Michelis, 2011, p. 129) of living under a traumatological mood. The haunting memory with repetition of traumatic events in narrative frequency further arises from the juxtaposition of third-person narrative and free indirect discourse, namely, anacoluthon.

Projecting the semantic ambiguity, the component portion of anacoluthon - FID emerges from Henry's consistent comparison of the air crash he witnesses at the window with the catastrophe in 2001. When Henry first observes that "the leading edge of the fire", he is horrified to witness the expanding flaming in the air. Overtly, the familiarity between the present trauma and the past terrorist attack intrigues the catastrophic aftereffect upon Henry; coincidentally, the juxtaposition of third-person perspective and "character-bound perspective" (Bal, 1997, p. 72) rationalizes Henry's subconscious analogy of the historical trauma to the on-site accident in the emersion of traumatological mood. He is aware that he becomes the witness of a new trauma. The words such as "familiarity" and "familiar" remove the presumably impartial stand of the narrative, being intermingled with the vague opinion from Henry's perspective, and lead to the recurrent horror originating from the 9/11 terrorist attack in the victim's conscious. This analogy emphasizes the historical shadow that disperses later in the narrative procession, as the sequel to the immanent worry prevalent in the West. The stylistic hybrid in the anacoluthon of discourse enlarges Henry's helplessness, who keeps remembering the scenery of the terrorist attack and sighing "it's already almost eighteen months since half the planet watched, and watched again the unseen captives driven through the sky to the slaughter" (McEwan, 2005, p. 16). The narrative shift in angles, weavers between third-person perspective and Henry's inner sight, elaborates on the contrast of narrative voice which is endowed with Henry's judgment: the previous half sentence is an omniscient narration which demonstrates the period of the 9/11 trauma, while the following phrases indicates what Henry

assesses at the impression of a fired plane with a repetitive sorrow. The verbal phrase, “watched again”, lack of subject indeed, accounts for Henry’s worry about another possible terrorist attack and clarifies the darkened horror as a product of typical posttraumatic stress originating from historical memory. Accordingly, the visibility of Henry’s self-reflexive conscious jeopardizes the authority of the third-person narration, and reminds readers that “the subjects all perceived ... can be a generalized or even an imagined consciousness” (Brinto, 1980, p. 373). Thus the ostensibly objective narration, within the confinement of free indirect discourse, “manipulates the border of narrator and character ” (Green, 2-010, p.62). In other words, readers are confronted with the pervasiveness of interior monologue and simultaneously accessibility to the character’s emotion incurred by duplex traumatic response composed of the temporary reaction and the memorial taint in history.

The point is that the anacoluthon in *Saturday* is stylistically very significant. Dominic Head summarizes that “the most striking stylistic feature of the novel that McEwan writes, is an extended fiction in the present tense for the first time” (Head, 2007,192). McEwan reverses the tradition of free indirect style with continual narrative progression in present tense, consequently, the distance between the narrated events and plot is framed into a parallel in time and space where “the reader [is] as close to the narrator as possible” (Möller,2011, p. 145). With regard to the rhetorical effect of free indirect discourse in present tense, it “not only emphasizes the spontaneous quality of Perowne’s [Henry’s] thoughts but also his conclusion” (Strauß,2013,p. 137-138) in his reflection on the encounter with personal and collective trauma. Accorded with the historical memory projecting into the sight of the crash plane, Henry’s overreaction after witnessing the wrecked aircraft is labeled with culturally traumatized taint.

Henry’s indulgence in the tremendous similarity between the past and the contemporary further arises from the variation of discourse in syntactic structure. As witness of the trauma, He could not escape from the sense of shame because “without moving or making a sound, half dreaming as he watched people die” (McEwan, 2005, p. 22-23). He takes it for granted that it’s a “catastrophe observed from a safe distance” and that “there’s something he should be doing” (McEwan, 2005, p. 16) to minimize the casualties. He even struggles in the dilemma of being involved in the rescue and hesitates to telephone for emergency help in the midnight: he continues to watch the sky in the

west, fearing the sight of an explosion (McEwan, 2005, p. 18). The present tense exhibits Henry’s moral dilemma in responding to the sudden trauma. In his assumed disaster, the sense of shame transfers to self-criticism in retrospection in free indirect discourse: “yes, he should have phoned” (McEwan, 2005, p. 23). Kristal states that one has different feelings as anger, guilt, or shame when someone is “unable to accept the necessity and unavoidability of what happened” (Kristal, 1995, p.87). Hence, Henry’s moralistic speculation derives from his memory of the great casualty in 9/11, in that he could not bear his own survival as a witness who has no accessibility to the rescue conducts. This psychological repel develops into an unspeakable secret, accompanying him in his later encounters as an inducement to his comprehensive speculation over his life, and prefigures the reason of his mercy in treating the villain Baxter who threatens his family in the second traumatic event.

The important point is that the free indirect style in *Saturday* has nuance with the traditional exhibition of conscious, and authorized narrative manipulates the trauma representation. Other than the innovative usage of present tense in anacoluthon, McEwan adopts a great range of parenthesis in the narrative construction of traumatological mood, which attracts readers to speculate on Henry’s self-assessment with a sympathetic and ironic narrative attitude. Parenthesis is the first predominant stylistic variation in the free indirect discourse. Grammatically, it appears either in the way of dash or bracket, to change a complete sentence into phrases of adversative semantic incoherence. The tradition of parenthetical reference traces back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the writing of stream-of-conscious by William Faulkner and E.E. Cummings. The transition in the coherence of narrative rhythm curtails the timeline of the conventional parallel between third-person narrative and free indirect style, and enables the reader to grasp the momentary shift in the character’s conscious. As “a work of meticulous observation and accumulated descriptive detail” (Foley, 2009, p. 264) in regard to the traumatized protagonist’s psychological movement, *Saturday* is situated with hundreds of parenthetical citations which are introduced by dash in free indirect discourse. The parenthetical citation in the free indirect discourse entangles the narrative perspective on the basis of simplified third-person narration and interior monologue. The explicit turning point in narrative attitude, or voice, underlies the conscious movement of the character, from which “a stitching motion” arises as “it moves inward to Henry’s thoughts and

feelings and then outward to objects and events and events transpiring around him” (Thraillkil, 2011, p. 185). The unique stylistic feature merges Henry’s judgment of himself and others in the distribution of a traumatological framework with disclosure of his alienated relationship with others.

Henry suffers as an indirect witness to the historical terrorist attacks, the torture deteriorates his relationship with families and colleagues. Apart from the opacity with his wife Rosalind and his son Theo, as mentioned previously, the ideological divergence between father and daughter derives from the appreciation of literature and intensifies in their political stands. Henry’s desperation to contemporary society, as Judith Herman expresses that “[the] traumatized people suffer damage to the basic structures of the self. They lose trust in themselves, in other people, and in God” (Herman, 1997, p.56), and individual’s separation from community is thereby inevitable.

Estranged from the prize-winning poet daughter, Henry loses the opportunity of communicating with Daisy who is guided by her laureate poet grandfather and enchanted with the literary world. Henry is required to read literary cannons: “he submits to her reading lists - they’re his means of remaining in touch as she grows away from her family.... tonight she’ll be home for the first time in six months - another cause for euphoria” (McEwan, 2005, p. 6). Here the two dashes in the sentence clarify Henry’s perspective in the dominant third-person narration, in particular, his resistance to the separation in family. The first parenthetical citation indicates that Henry has no alternative but follows his daughter’s arrangement to maintain the family union. It is comparatively objective in the intensification of free indirect discourse, in contrast to the phrases introduced by the latter dash which displays his excitement to have his daughter back home. Owing to the interjection of the two parenthetical references, Henry’s paradox of being far away from the family or maintaining harmony represents his inner anxiety and loneliness. In Henry’s eyes, literature is a bridge to mend the gap between him and his daughter; however, his ironic tone towards literary works appears in the emergence of parenthesis, such as the sudden appearance of phrases like “in Perowne’s humble view” (McEwan, 2005, p. 58). This ironic tone paves the way for his ridiculous commentary on the books favored by his daughter, for instance, his disgust to magic realism leads to the conclusion that “This notion of Daisy’s, that people can’t ‘live’ without stories, is simply not true. He is living proof ” (McEwan, 2005, p. 68). In this parenthetical

citation, Henry’s protest to Daisy’s literary taste arises in the renunciation of the objectivity of third-person narration. Unexpectedly, what he teases for the biased judgment of the didactic function of literature proves to be helpful for the whole family, as the climax of the novel shows, when the break-in villain Baxter converts to kindness after listening to Daisy’s recitation of Mathew Arnold’s *Dover Beach*.<sup>1</sup> This poem, well-known in the Victorian age, embodies Arnold’s concept of cultural refinement to guide people for novelty and beauty. Henceforth, Henry’s ultimate agreement with the dialectic cultivation of poetry replaces his earlier despise upon literature, the ironic narrative voice “allow[s] the reader to see the complex” (Courtney, 2013, p. 192) of plausible neutrality beneath third-person perspective.

Apart from the cognitive disparity in literary appreciation, Henry and Daisy clash over the contemporary political situation. He deeply doubts the justice of Iraq War; meanwhile, he is afraid of the extreme activity of strong power as there is possibility “to kill him and his family and friends” (McEwan, 2005, p.181). To his surprise, his daughter Daisy participates in the promenade, a performance showing civilian’s dissatisfaction with the Western hegemony headed by the US and its allies such as the UK. Henry recalls the traumatic memory in “the genocide and torture” (McEwan, 2005, p. 191). In other words, he assumes that he possesses the superiority of morality in judging the current events which is hard to explain to those who have not yet achieved the same cognitive level as he has. Till now, the third-person narrative is not as neutralized as the traditional authorial voice originally is. The self-evaluation in the incoherence of attentive shift between omniscient narration and parenthesis opposes what Henry assumes others in the third-person narration, in particular, the description of the villain Baxter. When Henry first encounters Baxter after the car crash, his disdain directs the judgment that “the car is a series five BMW, a vehicle he associates for no good reason with criminality” (McEwan, 2005, p. 83). Traditionally, the third-person narration is supposed to hold neutral ethical stand when dealing with characters, yet, the image of Baxter is dwarfed in Henry’s hostile portrayal. Therefore, in the biased narrative, Henry’s dominant position in narrative emphasis sketches out his egoistic pride and moral

<sup>1</sup> McEwan’s quotation of the poem “Dover Beach” in the novel is in full length, as a metaphor to the crisis that contemporary society and Arnoldian times face a similar situation, implicating the vanished belief in beauty and truth shadowed by the social chaos.

vantage point, in contrast with his cowardice that is disclosed in the street encounter. In the car crash, Henry is at risk of being hit by Baxter and his companion, when the urgency disperses and Baxter leaves, Henry is entrapped into the fear of being punched, “eases forwards - for pride’s sake, he does not want to appear hurried ... After he’s parked, and before getting out of the car, he phones Rosalind at work - his long fingers still trembling, fumbling with the miniature keys” (McEwan, 2005, p. 99). The first parenthesis exposes Henry’s hypothetical dignity in front of horror, while the second tends to be as impartial as the narrator’s objective tone, which enlarges the ironic effect in conceptualizing Henry’s dread. These two parentheses supply readers with Henry’s self-reflection, and the ambiguous narrative, as Groes analyzes, emulates “the loss of narratorial authority .., while capturing the post-9/11 climate of anxiety” (Groes, 2009, p.112). The opposition between objective narration and character-bound biased focalization, consequently, contributes to the limpidity of conscious representation in *Saturday*.

### Conclusion

*Saturday* is McEwan’s attempt at framing his novel of ideas via progressively mature narrative technique with the meaningful use of linguistic and stylistic tools. The trauma representation through narrative discourse, with manipulation of stylistic devices as narrative frequency, free indirect discourse, variation in tense past and present, anacoluthon, parentheses, successfully portray McEwan’s integration of personal trauma with the contemporary traumatological social and political ambience. The adjustment of narrative procession with the strategy of using various discourse markers invokes a powerful rhetorical effect that arouses reader’s sympathy with the traumatized character, bringing into focus not only the ethical and social aspects of the contemporary world but also bringing into critique the political scenario of the current world order.

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