'Over the Kite Path':
A novel and dissertation on the development of narrator and narrative voice.

Jenny Ruth Moran

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
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Volume I

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Abstract:

In the field of Creative Writing, much is written about narrative form and narrative voice. Narrator and narrative voice have always been important to me, and they were essential to the creation of my own novel, *Over the Kite Path*. It is my intention that this thesis (incorporating the novel itself, and the supporting dissertation) captures the creative process in a way that will be useful to other practitioners and writing scholars, by articulating complex and often abstract concepts in an accurate and unique way.

The success of my novel was largely dependent on the success of my handling of its narrator and narrative voice, and my ability to create the illusion that my narrator was real. But how could this be measured, and – ultimately – how did extensive research and close analysis of my working practice contribute to this?

While writing my novel, I researched many topics (including historical research, research on other practitioners in the field, and also the consideration of some of the philosophical and psychological aspects of my creativity), with a particular focus on the development of narrator and narrative voice. Within this context, I considered the novel's place within the fields of literature and creative writing and compared my work – and my working practice – with other authors, in order to help me understand and analyse how my narrative voice had developed.

As a result of this analysis and research, my novel has an original and convincing narrator. Whilst I am aware that the narrator can never be 'real', I am also comfortable with creating and maintaining the illusion of the narrator's 'reality' for the reader. In addition, I have demonstrated the importance of this illusion to the writer during the creative process. Via a deeply analytical account my own experience while writing this novel, I have documented how my own creative work was enhanced by my research, and I believe I have provided new approaches and theories on the creative – and often existential - qualities of the writing process.

It is my hope that these new approaches and theories make an original contribution to the field of Creative Writing, and will enhance the way in which the craft of writing is considered in the future by practitioners, critical theorists, and literary scholars alike.

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PART 2: DISSERTATION

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NARRATOR AND NARRATIVE VOICE

Introduction

For as long as I have known words, I have needed to tell stories. As a child, I always told stories to myself, drew narrative pictures, built worlds with Lego sets and play-acted, carving and shaping my own dramas, and re-enacting my favourite stories from film and television – and all of these things would lead me to writing.

In my earliest memories, I was always pretending to be someone else, or seeing my own life as a narrative. In my head, I used to narrate my own walk to school, line by line, conjuring different descriptions and phrases, perhaps trying to crystallise moments which I knew were coming or had gone, so that a twenty-minute walk through the town and under the yellow, sun-dappled chestnuts of Station Road might last beyond these childhood days and come with me into my adult life.

Perhaps writers - especially novelists - will always have more of a tendency to do this. Just as I narrated my own life, I give the God-like gift of a narrative to my protagonists and other characters, to create their world. To the character, narration and narrative voice are as vital and life-giving as breath. As writers, we give them breath, and a world to live in.

But is it so simple? When I began writing *Over the Kite Path,* I often felt like a resident of Mount Olympus, reaching down and orchestrating the beings I had created. Yet from the very beginning, they were never passive. They had voices that needed me to hear. I asked myself, what had made me reach for them in particular, as opposed to other characters, in other, unrelated worlds of my imagination? Why did I choose to write this particular novel?

In these early stages, I had little idea just how important those voices - those organic beings - would become, and how much they would evolve and grow to create their own future. Throughout the creative process of writing my novel, I would become intimately acquainted with the multi-layered matrix of Author, Narrator, Reader; and,

more interestingly, my first-person narrator would surprise me. While writing her story, I was a part of her, and she was a part of me, but - most importantly of all - she, and those around her, seemed to finish their own story, with very little help from me.

In his *Discworld* novels, Terry Pratchett created an element called 'narrativium'[1]. This is best described in the work of critical commentary, *The Science of the Discworld*:

> In the Discworld universe, then, there is narrativium. It is part of the spin of every atom, the drift of every cloud. It is what causes them to be and what they are and continue to exist and take part in the ongoing story of the world.
>
> (1999, p.10-11) [2]

In Pratchett's Discworld, it is accepted that narrativium exists, and it is this element that binds events into a story. Everything – no matter how inert - has a story because of narrativium. In *The Science of the Discworld,* there is discussion on how, as human beings, we give stories to things that would still exist whether we comprehended them as stories or not:

> Classically, at least, science itself has been the discovery of 'stories' – think of all those books that had titles like *The Story of Mankind*, *The Descent of Man*, and, if it comes to that, *A Brief History of Time.*
>
> (1999, p.11) [3]

Narrativium is conceived of a physical, tangible manifestation of the power of the imagination. Things have space and time, therefore they have narrative. We articulate things as stories in order to help ourselves understand them. Narrativium is a piece of fictional physics – or even the physics of fiction.

However, I would venture that the creative process and its outputs are more than physical and tangible – they often appear interactive.

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[1] Pratchett, T – (Discworld novels, 1983-2015) – Terry Pratchett invented 'narrativium' as part of his Discworld universe.
[2] Pratchett, T, Stewart, I & Cohen, J (1999) - *The Science of the Discworld* (2nd Edition**)** - Pub. London: Ebury Press (Random House) , 2000 - pp.10-11
[3] ibid. pp.11

When writing, there were times when I was neither creator, nor narrator, nor character. Sometimes I was so immersed in the story world I thought it might drown me. At other times, I felt so distant from it that I did not even know how to approach my keyboard to write. Where was my narrator? Who was my narrator? I knew I could write her, but could I actually make her live?

This is the story of Nora Cromby and me, and how we found each other as *Over the Kite Path* was created.

Section One will explain how historical and real-world research helped me to build my narrator, character and setting. It will also explore the roles of memory, experience and nature, and how, as a writer, I engaged with my own world in order to create Nora's. I will demonstrate how my creation of 'fictional artefacts' enhanced the writing process, and consider the effect they had on my imaginative capabilities. I will also reflect on why the majority of them were excluded from the final version of the novel, but how they still contributed implicitly to the novel's authenticity and credibility. Finally, I will discuss 'realism' - what does it mean and is it really appropriate to use this term? I will consider how free indirect style increases a psychological realism, adding a conviction and intimacy that appears to authenticate – make real – the character to the reader.

Section Two will explore reading for technique. I will analyse the work of a range of other authors and practitioners, focusing on novels that are similar to my own. I will explore their techniques in order to consider my own, and I will discuss how these authors influenced my approach to narrative voice and point of view, and my ability to harness that delicate relationship between Author, Narrator and Reader. As well as this, I will consider how they have influenced my approach to the voice and point of view of the child narrator. I will reflect upon the existential qualities of the novel and narrative

voice. How does my novel work in terms of space and time? What happens when a fictional world is built upon the foundations of a real world? I will also examine the evolution of narrative voice, through free indirect style, and the relevance of free indirect style in my own, first person narrative voice.

Section Three will articulate the complex process of creating Nora and making her appear real. I will show how, by applying the ideas and principles explored in Sections One and Two, I crafted a story into apparent life. I will reflect on my own creative process, and argue why it is so important for me to work under the beautiful illusion that my narrator is a real person.

Throughout this thesis, I hope to articulate what creative transition took place during the writing of *Over the Kite Path*, and how close analysis of my own experience and writing practice revealed to me the true nature and importance of Narrator and Narrative Voice. I hope to demonstrate how writing can be a precarious balancing act, and it can seem an intense, symbiotic collaboration between the writer and their own narrator.

I.

Creating the World and Consciousness of

'Over the Kite Path'

The novel's initial conception

It was a clear August afternoon, and my husband and I had gone walking in the Clwyd Hills. We climbed Moel Gyw, behind the farm where we were staying. As we came over the top of the hill, we gazed back at Liverpool, its buildings tiny but distinct. It seemed so close and yet we knew it was a long way away - approximately thirty miles by road.

I knew the town of Ruthin well, and whenever I visited, I wondered how it might have felt to have been evacuated out there. The Second World War - or more specifically the 'Phony War' of 1939-40 - had always fascinated me. It seemed likely that young evacuees would have walked up the paths to the top of the Clwyd Hills and looked back at Merseyside. What would they have experienced when the bombs started falling on Liverpool?

I stood on that hillside, imagining what the incendiary bombs would have looked like from here, as they burned docks and homes and civic buildings. The night sky must have looked volcanic. Residents of North Wales had described the sound of the bombs as being like thunder. In my mind's eye, I saw a small figure, standing in the dark and watching it all. I saw her terrified face, and sensed her yearning for her home and family. A novel was conceived.

The development of setting - Growing fiction from reality:

It is strange to me that the novel was born out of a place and a moment, when my focus ever since has been on Nora and creating her voice and character. But perhaps creating Nora's world - capturing it - has been an important part of capturing her.

As I worked my way through the novel, I learned that Nora's world consists of two primary locations - her home in Liverpool, and her adopted home in Ruthin. This

had always been at work on a subconscious level, and my title - *Over the Kite Path* - was something that came to me straight away. The Kite Path (my fictional name for a particular part of the Offa's Dyke Path) would be the threshold between the novel's here and there, then and now, now and the future. I worried that I would fail to justify such an instinctive title, but, as the novel evolved, it reinforced the notion of the threshold, and Nora's transition across it. Through the Phony War and the summer of 1940, the home for which Nora aches so badly when she is first evacuated becomes unfamiliar to her. The unfamiliar town and the farm that receives her becomes her home.

Sense of place was important, right from the earliest stages of writing the novel. But rather than articulate the inspiration and process for each and every location, I will focus on the key settings, and key moments that are defined by a sense of place.

Ruthin and the surrounding area remain close to my heart. My desire to set a novel there was one of the driving forces behind the whole project. I tried to capture some real locations in my setting, such as the cinema, the church, and even the castle walls. Various locations in the story are fictional, but some are fictional *versions* of real places.

Ty Cigfran and the surrounding farm are based on the farm where we have stayed for many holidays in our family caravan. The farm itself can be traced back to the Thirteenth Century, but most of the buildings that still stand today are from the 1700s. The main house and farm buildings (such as the old stables and barns) have now been converted into flats, but this work was carried out only recently.

There is something about the winding lane that leads to the farm that builds my excitement every time we visit. On autumn nights, when we have arrived after dark in the rain, it is easy to see how such a place might seem most unwelcoming to a child who is used to the city.

The description of Nora's arrival on her first night at Ty Cigfran comes from direct experience:

> The trees were like ghosts in the narrow shafts of light from
> the headlights, and at their roots, thick, thorny shapes
> flashed by. [4]

And also:

> Above the car rose a huge farmhouse. It was crooked, as if it
> had fallen out of the sky and just landed there, not quite
> broken but not quite whole either.[5]

But despite this initial, sinister appearance, I knew that Nora would eventually love the farm as I did, and she would love it so much that she didn't want to go home. I also knew that I would have to handle this transition with care. The psychological and emotional forces, which make Nora's transition possible, are explored in more detail later on in this thesis; but as the novel developed, it became apparent that the influence of Nora's surroundings, and her awakening to them, were central to the development of her character. Throughout the novel, her changing perceptions demonstrate that she is a changing person.

From the first moments after Nora's arrival ('Something shuffled and scampered away into a bush just to our right.'[6]) to the closing chapter ('In a nearby bush, two blackbirds chirped at each other angrily. Even the hedgerows were being fought over.'[7]), the whole farm is bustling with wildlife. Having grown up in the countryside, I've always had an obsession with the changing seasons, and how, in a natural environment, time is marked by every nuance of the turning year. The caravan site is surrounded by gigantic chestnut and oak trees, and the pitches are amongst buddleias and wild hedgerows.

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[4] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 2, pp.27
[5] ibid. Chapter 2, pp.27
[6] ibid. Chapter 2, pp.28
[7] ibid. Chapter 22, pp.250

On each visit to the site, I was careful to write notes in my journal about what I observed at certain times of the year, focusing on the little things that Nora might notice. My journal almost became hers. Being from the city, Nora would probably be unlikely to take the orange leaves in autumn, or new buds in spring, for granted. She would marvel at so many things that were familiar to me.

As an extract from my journal, written in July 2013, reads:

> It was wonderful to see Ruthin in the throes of a hot summer. We've had so many awful, wet summers that I realised I hadn't actually seen the effect of a truly hot summer on the valley. The grass in the fields was brown, and the cows desperately sought out the shade of huge trees. Yet in the middle of all this tiredness, the lanes had grown narrow as the hedgerows swelled with life…
> …Swallows pipped and squealed as they zoomed up to the treetops and then down across the field. Insects – golden flecks in the sunlight – hovered and danced in the shade, and bumble bees made it their mission to rub their legs over every single clover in the field. [8]

This was written shortly after we returned from visiting the caravan. I reflected on the natural world there, but I was back home in the city when I actually wrote this in my journal. My longing for the countryside contributed to the vivid reality of the recollections. These images transformed into various passages in the novel, becoming scenes where Nora walks to and from Ruthin, and a number of scenes on the farm. My perceptions became hers.

Another scene was developed during a later visit to the caravan, when I lay in the field and experienced everything around me with meditative intensity. I was captivated by the swifts and swallows, and how they reminded me of World War Two aeroplanes. There is a particular moment in Chapter 18 when Nora lies on the ground:

> Under the blue sky, the grass in the lower pasture was green and dusted with gold. Tiny insects hovered in the still air, dancing like seeds caught in invisible cobwebs. Cows called so loudly that their voices echoed off the trees and buildings

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[8] Extract from my working journal, Wednesday 31st July 2016.

and up into the hills. Daisies opened to show their petals to the sun, and bumble bees fussed around the clover.

I lay in the grass, not far from the bottom fence. I could feel the earth beneath me - all of it, where earthworms burrowed, and roots grew. I closed my eyes.

Every now and then, the wing-beats of swifts came so low they were almost on my nose. They pipped and rattled like machine gun fire.

I thought of the planes that had flown over France and Africa this last week. Just like the birds, they would have been chasing and darting, desperate to catch their prey. Or maybe they were prey themselves, like the flies that hovered. [9]

In such a seemingly blissful moment, it would be effective if Nora's thoughts turned to the war – and this would reinforce the sense of threat that built slowly through the summer.

But throughout my descriptions of the natural world, I had to be careful of the narrative voice, and that it was Nora's rather than mine. These descriptions were so closely linked to my experience that I often found my own voice invaded them. The scene where Nora uses the toilet in the early morning is an example of this. Having survived her first night at Ty Cigfran, she sits in the water closet and watches the dawn over the top of the door. In early drafts of this, the description had felt at a 'higher' level, and more separated from Nora than it should be.

In one of the earliest drafts, the opening to Chapter 3 read:

The following day, it seemed as if, outside that bedroom, it was a completely different world from the one I'd arrived in. The sun woke me early, streaming in through the curtains and making the patterns shimmer with magic. [10]

'Magical' as this opening seemed, it was not as effective as it should be. In the above description, the reader is given little except a statement that the sun came up the next morning. This was the first time that Nora – a city child – had awoken in the

[9] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 18, pp.209
[10] Early draft of *Over The Kite Path* – the original opening of Chapter 3

countryside. She was not likely to have slept well. I thought for a long time about how

this night would have been spent, and I came up with the idea that her bowels might

have given her some discomfort – which can happen to children who are anxious

(examples include the cases encountered by DW Winnicott (1931, p.8-11[11])). This

would provide the opportunity for dramatic tension: Nora would have to go out to the

toilet as early as she could, despite her fear of the farmyard. As I wrote the scene, Nora

noticed details of the world around her, a different world from the one that she was used

to.

I worked on this section of the novel while I was staying at the caravan, and this

gave me the opportunity to venture outside at dawn. My sensory observations fed my

writing, and I was able to make the final version of this scene – and its description -

much more immediate:

> …Sharp smells of wet plants and chicken-muck blew over
> me as I stepped outside.
> Birds twittered and things rustled. After the stillness of
> the night, the whole farm was twitching itself to life. Cool
> damp settled on everything, including my clothes and hair.
> Was I still asleep?...[12]

And slightly later in the same scene:

> … I watched the sunlight come up and spread from behind
> the hills. It was a clear morning, and orange glowed in the
> sky. Wisps of cloud touched the highest slopes. White
> flecks were dotted here and there, and I realised they were
> sheep. If I listened hard, I could just about hear them
> calling.[13]

But, of course, the novel is not just set on the farm. Much of the action takes

place in the town of Ruthin itself. I knew from the outset that I would need to undertake

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[11] In his 1931 work, *A Note on Normality and Anxiety*, DW Winnicott wrote about the effect that trauma could have on children. He reported on incidences of children experiencing difficulties with 'micturition and defecation'. (Winnicott, DW (1958) - *Collected papers: through paediatrics to psycho-analysis* - Pub. London: Tavistock, 1958 [Part 1 (1931) – *A Note on Normality and Anxiety*] pp. 8-11)
[12] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 4, pp.35
[13] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 4, pp.36

detailed historical research in order to depict wartime Ruthin accurately and evocatively.

Ruthin has undergone a lot of change since 1939. The station was demolished following the closure of the Prestatyn to Corwen line. There are new housing estates, which were built after the war and stretch out into areas that – in 1939 - had been open countryside or farmland. There is also a large, modern, Denbighshire County Council building, right in the middle of the town. Whenever I visited Ruthin and pictured 1939, I had to ignore this structure (though anyone who knows Ruthin will know how difficult this was). I found it easier to write scenes in the school, or in the church, because these were buildings I could still see or visit, and absorb them creatively. However, for the areas and locations that had changed since 1939, I needed to discover more by researching Ruthin's past.

Early on in my creative journey, I visited the Denbighshire Record Office in Ruthin Gaol[14], to look at old photographs and maps of Ruthin, which were taken around the time of the war. In particular, I was interested in finding out about the station, as many important scenes in the novel took place there. Today, it is difficult to imagine that a station existed in Ruthin. Very little remains of the railway's presence. There is a row of red-brick railway cottages by the main road into the town centre, but that is all – at least, that is all in terms of obvious evidence.

When I visited the archives in Ruthin Gaol, I studied a number of photographs of the station. It seemed quite a large station, and – since Ruthin was a market town – this shouldn't be surprising. But its size and grandeur did impress me. Perhaps it wouldn't have impressed Nora if she'd come straight from Liverpool, but it was certainly a striking feature of the town. I also noticed how there always seemed to be

[14] Denbighshire Record Office (Denbighshire Archive), Ruthin Gaol, Ruthin.

tall, dense oak trees in the background, serving as a reminder that nature seemed ever-present here.

I discovered the precise location of the station when I contacted members of Ruthin Local History Group. They informed me[15] that the station had been slightly out of the town centre, and had been situated where the Craft Centre now stands. Looking at the lie of the land in that part of Ruthin, this now seems obvious to me, but I could not have found that out without their assistance.

Another challenge for me, especially when writing scenes such as the Harvest Festival[16] or the Easter Parade[17], was remembering the layout of the town centre, and where things were in relation to each other. I used maps and photographs to help me, but these didn't help me to imagine what it was actually like to walk from one place to another. What was nearby that wasn't on the maps? What would I be able to see in the distance? What would I be able to hear? Each time I visited the town, I took some time to 'walk out' another location.

Slowly, I built up a kind of memory-bank of experiences. With each new walk, I recorded my thoughts and observations in my journal. Elements of these journal entries came to be seen through Nora's point of view and in her diction. The free indirect style of her narrative voice allowed me the flexibility to achieve this. I discovered and observed some things in the town that enabled me to capture key moments – such as the walk around the old castle walls, and the view it gave of the back of the houses and shops on Clwyd Street, which enlightened me on the logistics of the scene where Nora comes across Miss Edgerton on the footpath.[18]

The settings for individual scenes had a significant contribution to make in building the novel's sense of tension. The hush and anxiety backstage in the Nativity

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[15] Personal email from Ruthin Local History Group – sent to me on 8th April 2010
[16] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 6, pp. 78-83
[17] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 17, pp. 192-195
[18] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 14, pp.161

Play[19] is based partly on my own experiences as a child. I never had a nosebleed on my angel costume, but I do remember the terrifying blackness as the house lights went down, the blinding spotlight, and the audience I couldn't see. This was an instance when I gave my own biographical account to a character, and it allowed me to write the scene with clarity in a way that held true to my own recollections.

Equally, when I walked alone down the narrow, frosty walkway around the castle walls one October, I sensed the isolation and secrecy of the place – this was surely a perfect setting for a bullying scene, and for an unexpected rescue.

The long grass of the churchyard at St Meugan's in Llanrudd was just the place for Nora to show Tommy the sketches. I sat there on many summer afternoons, and fell in love with the idea of a child's smutty laughter breaking the peace of the wildflowers and the gravestones. It seemed so out of place, and the sense of taboo was palpable.

Most of all, I tried to build the significance of the Kite Path as a threshold. Ever since I first had the idea of seeing Liverpool burn from that spot on the hill, I knew that was where Nora's world had to crumble. As I wrote, I was aware of a growing sense of impending tragedy. The seed is planted early for Mr Owen's love for the path, and Nora's daydreaming about the hills also keeps them in mind. The Kite Path is her escape route when she tries to run away from the consequences of her actions, and, ironically, this is also where she has to face them head-on.

Up until Nora's theft of the sketchbook, the novel's key plots have a glacial movement – a slow, pressing, unstoppable force that moves forwards almost without the characters noticing. After this key plot point, where the sketchbook is taken and Nora has done something she can't reverse, the tension builds more quickly, and Nora's world is suddenly exposed to her – along with a truth that the reader has known all

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[19] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 12, pp.134-138

along: the world, the truth – Nora's existence - are out of her control and will surely

crash.

The locations I visited and absorbed did not just help me to build tension. They

helped me to make the Ruthin of my novel – and Nora herself - feel convincing.[20]

Longing for other places

Nora's homesickness is one aspect of the novel that was enriched and enhanced

by my observation and analysis of the real world. Her longing for home and fear of

being forgotten by her family did not come through strongly enough in early drafts of

the novel. This continued to be a challenge even in areas of later drafts. I seemed to

capture some moments so easily while in others she seemed indifferent to being away

from home, and her family were 'forgotten'. What would the evacuation have been

like? I needed to immerse myself further into Nora's consciousness.

There is evidence that many evacuees saw their departure to the countryside as

an adventure, and some evacuees reported few feelings of homesickness;[21] but the true

feelings of evacuees are difficult to gauge and examine in detail. Many anecdotes and

accounts have been recorded in more recent times, such as the collection of letters and

stories I accessed at Denbighshire Record Office [22]. These memories and reflections

about 1939-40 were retrospective, recorded by adults in the 1980s.

One account by a Liverpool woman who was evacuated as a child in 1939 [23]

states '... I don't know how many times I tried to run away, but where could I run to?...'

(Lonergan, D, 1989), and even refers to how her foster parents tried to turn her against

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[20] In Section Two of this thesis, I explore aspects of this in more detail, and consider the idea of Nora and I being on dual planes of existence.
[21] Denbighshire Record Office (Denbighshire Archives), Interviews, BBC People's War Archive.
[22] Letters desc. Reminiscences - Archive number DRODD/DM/1259/1, Denbighshire Record Office (Denbighshire Archives), Ruthin Gaol, Ruthin.
[23] Ibid. Lonergan, D (1989) – 'Letter and memoir of Mrs D Lonergan', Liverpool 1989.

her parents. But this is recorded in hindsight, and - from the letter and memoir themselves, it was difficult to distinguish what was her actual experience at the time, and what was hindsight or mature reflection.

Primary and secondary sources from 1939-40 may have put a positive spin on the evacuation so as not to worry parents who were already missing their children. Some seemed at pains to point out that the evacuation was a great success, and all the children were enjoying themselves. The BBC radio programme from September 1939, *We Have Been Evacuated* by Olive Shapley[24], reported:

> We took our recording then, last week, to a small
> Lancashire mill town about fifteen miles from Manchester,
> and found almost without exception that the children were
> happy, excited by their new life, and pleased by the new
> friends they were making. [25]

The same programme interviewed a young boy who said:

> 'Hello Mum and Dad. Don't get worried about
> us...we're all very happy here and I don't think anybody
> wants to go home yet.' [26]

Since the war, opinion has been divided about the extent to which the evacuation could be called a success. While sources at the time were - understandably - optimistic, sources from the post-war era began to question its purpose, and suggested it could have been an over-reaction. In *The Evacuees*, edited by BS Johnson (1968)[27], former evacuees talk about their time away from home in a different way. Even taking hindsight into account, their descriptions are less romantic than those in Olive Shapley's documentary. Sheilah Ward Ling writes:

> It seems to me that all the complaints against my generation
> (our reluctance to assume responsibility; our distrust of
> strange adults; our preference for expressing ourselves
> through art rather than building social structures) are things

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[24] 'We have been evacuated' (1939) BBC Radio [Radio documentary programme by Olive Shapley], Broadcast September 1939. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/ww2outbreak/7922.shtml
[25] ibid.
[26] ibid.
[27] Johnson, BS (ed.) (1968) - *The Evacuees* - Pub. London/Worcester: Trinity Press.

that might be expected of people of whom so much was expected, and hoped for: who were scooped up, and planted out arbitrarily, without a great deal of foresight, in strange places, to struggle with alien environments as best they might, while the grown ups got on with the battle for their survival.

(1968, p.188) [28]

In my quest to gauge these experiences and inhabit the voice of my own narrator more convincingly, I immersed myself in a range of sources and activities: regular visits to Ruthin and the surrounding area, visits to archives, reading letters, receiving emails with personal accounts[29], and I even had the privilege to interview evacuees and listen to their accounts of what happened[30].

Some of my most interesting research took place at the Imperial War Museum, London. I accessed the archives and listened to audio recordings of conscientious objectors discussing their reasons for not fighting, which I hoped would support the writing of Mr Owen's story[31]. I visited the museum's various collections from the Second World War, including their 'Children's War' exhibition (on display between 2005 and 2012), a wealth of material from the evacuation, including children's gas masks, cardboard name tags, and audio recordings of popular songs and radio broadcasts. One such recording was *Goodnight, Children Everywhere* (Rogers, G and Phillips, H 1939)[32], a song broadcast regularly on the BBC's *Children's Hour* to bring comfort to children and parents who were separated by the evacuation.

Despite the obvious propaganda, there is something pure about those lyrics, and the simplicity of the tune, which seems to understand the pain and longing that families endured. As I listened, I imagined being a nine-year-old evacuee in a big, scary

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[28] ibid. Sheilah Ward Ling - pp. 188.
[29] Personal email from Anon #3 – sent to me 17th June 2011 / Personal email from Anon #4 – sent to me 29th September 2011
[30] Interview A [7th March 2011] and Interview B [7th March 2011]
[31] I will revisit the effect that these recordings had on my writing, later in this section.
[32] Rogers, G and Phillips, H - *'Goodnight Children Everywhere (with a tender thought to all evacuated children)'* - The J. Norris Music Publishing Co. Ltd. (1939) - first broadcast on 'Children's Hour' by the BBC in 1939.

farmhouse, watching the darkness fall and hearing that song, and I felt an ache. It was an ache that came from my empathy for a whole generation of mothers who, perhaps, questioned their decision for the rest of their lives. (This empathy was increased when – later that year - I became a mother myself and imagined what it must have been like for those women). It was also an ache from my own childhood, and those (admittedly rare) occasions when I was genuinely homesick.

The night after my visit to the Imperial War Museum, I sat in my hotel room and scribbled furiously. This became a scene in Mrs Caddick's parlour with the wireless playing[33], and then the following scene where Mrs Caddick sings to Nora as she puts her to bed[34]. From those scenes, came the other moments of homesickness and longing throughout the novel. By surrounding myself with the thoughts, possessions and memories of those who went through the evacuation, I had deepened my understanding of Nora, and saw her much more clearly. I imagined her as a truly conscious being, rather than just a two-dimensional, fictional creation.

Fictional Artefacts

Another unexpected outcome from my visit to the Imperial War Museum was my creation of what I came to call 'fictional artefacts'.

The IWM held letters and telegrams from the war, and all of them told individual stories. They gave first-hand glimpses into the realities of the times. They were voices, touching my writer's consciousness through history. I imagined what letters and telegrams Nora might encounter while she was at Ty Cigfran. What would they look like, and what information would she get from them?

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[33] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 17, pp.202.
[34] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 17, pp.202.

I decided to create these 'fictional artefacts' in order to discover their impact for myself. Whether or not Nora would have seen them, their creation would be likely to aid my understanding of her world.

The first fictional artefact I created was a transcript of Mr Owen's tribunal as a conscientious objector.[35] This was because, in earlier drafts of the novel, I was having trouble identifying Mr Owen's motivation. I was determined that his objections would not be based on religious grounds, as this would probably have been easier for the authorities to approve. I needed him to take a position that was convincing to the modern reader, but not one that would have been viewed with sympathy by the authorities of 1939. I decided to research the motives and moral stance of conscientious objectors at the time.

My exploration of this theme began in the library of Liverpool John Moores University where I found a catalogue of the recordings held in the Imperial War Museum Archives (IWM, 1985)[36], which had captured interviews with conscientious objectors. In particular, I focused on those who objected during the Second World War. The catalogue only summarised what was covered within each recording. I noted down those that were of interest and visited the IWM Archive to hear the selected tapes in full.

I had not anticipated that the range of reasons for conscientious objection would be so broad. The recordings detailed objection on religious, ethical, and political grounds; one CO had objected to the war because he believed it was the government's war, and a war of profit.[37]

Some of the recordings evidenced how difficult it was to argue a case for objection if the CO was not based on religious grounds. One CO stated:

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[35] See Appendix 1
[36] Imperial War Museum (1985) (Comp.) - *The anti-war movement 1914-1945* – Pub. London, Imperial War Museum.
[37] Ibid. – IWM Archive - Recording 4686, Reel 5.

'It's much harder to argue pacifism from other points of
view than the Christian standpoint because you're building
up arguments, rather than making your own belief on a faith,
on a conviction that you have formed out of your
understanding of the life of Christ.' [38]

This statement more than anything else helped me to begin putting together

Lewis Owen's reasons for objection. From these recordings, and other sources (such as

R Barker's *Conscience, Government and War: Conscientious Objection in Great*

Britain 1939-45 (1982)[39]), I gathered information on some of the questions asked in

tribunals. Then, it was simply a case of putting these questions to Mr Owen in an

imagined tribunal, and finding out what his answers were. I hoped that by drafting a

fictional transcript, I might gain a deeper understanding of Mr Owen's grounds for

objection. The transcript itself can be seen at the end of this thesis, in Appendix 1.

By creating this imagined interrogation of Mr Owen, I was able to bring his

character to life. The reader did not necessarily need to read the transcript, but they did

need to believe there was one in Nora's world. Nora would not even be aware of how a

tribunal worked, but it needed to be real to me, and 'real' in the story world, for this

sub-plot to be convincing.

I also drafted a series of letters sent from Mr Caddick to his wife during the First

World War. I originally intended them to be discovered by Nora in the middle of the

night, just before the plane crashed in the valley. They revealed some of the back-story

of the Caddick household, and provided explicit evidence that Mr Caddick had deserted

the trenches. However, when I put them into the novel itself, they did not seem to sit

very comfortably.

One of the most interesting creative decisions for me was whether or not to

include these fictional artefacts in the novel, as part of the storytelling. I had seen

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[38] Ibid. - IWM Archive, recording 4762.
[39] Barker, R (1982) - *Conscience, government and war: conscientious objection in Great Britain 1939-45 - Pub.* London:
Routledge Kegan & Paul.

examples of this in novels such as *Postcards* by Annie Proulx (1992)[40] and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon (2003).[41]

As a reader, I believe this strategy had limited success in *Postcards*. Would the novel have been as powerful if I had not actually seen the postcards written by Loyal Blood and his family, with their scrawled and sometimes (to me at least) illegible handwriting, or the postcard reminders from doctors and sales executives, neatly typed? Undoubtedly, there are parts of the novel when they help to tell the story, but I am unsure of whether other methods would have been more effective. In the closing chapters, some of the postcards are difficult to read, and for me this is a distraction. However, it should also be acknowledged that Proulx's debut novel has been highly praised for its innovative approach - for example, David Bradley, of the New York Times, wrote:

> Ms. Proulx's expansion of the concept of postcards is what transforms a rambling tale into a minimalist saga. They appear in the novel as graphics, complete with franking, address and message, and serve to introduce narrative sections, keeping the reader oriented over the sweep of half a century, sketching in background, casting foreshadows.
>
> (1992)[42]

This praise is not undeserved, as Proulx has done something bold with her novel that - for some readers - is highly effective. But despite the delicacy of Proulx's creation of the postcards, they do not convince me. They do not confirm or enhance the novel's relationship with the real world. They do not make the story any more or less credible than it would have been without their inclusion. Why is this?

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[40] Proulx, EA (1992) - *Postcards* (5th Edition) - Pub. London: Fourth Estate, 2009.
[41] Haddon, M (2003) - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* - Pub. London: Vintage, 2003.
[42] Bradley, D (1992): *A Family Running on Empty* (1992) [Newspaper article, electronic version] - New York Times (Books section), 22nd March 1992 – Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/books/99/05/23/specials/proulx-postcards.html

While searching online for reviews of *Postcards*, I stumbled across this from

Elizabeth Baines' Blogspot:

> ... I found the framework of the handwritten postcards rather
> forced and artificial, not much more than a linking device
> for the episodic structure... [another member of the reading
> group] said the postcards had really irritated her, as she
> found them extremely difficult to read, which meant that
> she often lost their significance to the chapters they
> headed ...
>
> (2011)[43]

Perhaps the postcards might have failed because they either draw attention to the

fact that the narrative is fictitious, or they interrupt the 'dream' that Gardner (1984,

p.17-38)[44] describes as the reader's desire. The irony is that this is not their aim – they

are placed in the novel to make it appear more tangible to the reader but, as reader, I

found the author kept reminding me that this was a story by over-insisting on its

apparent 'realness'.

As a reader, I had found much to enjoy in *Postcards*. Its scope, sense of place

and sense of character are moving and rewarding. Yet I was not affected by the

postcards themselves. I found myself trying to skip over them to get back to the prose. I

hungered to return to the intimacy of the novel's free indirect style, and preferred this to

reading the postcards written by the characters themselves. Despite the postcards being

presented as written by the characters, they are less intimate than the narrative point of

view they interrupt. Because of my eagerness to return to the prose, I often found

myself skipping the postcards, and having to revisit them afterwards, just to check I had

not missed anything. Perhaps this was not Proulx's fault, but my own. Perhaps, as a

reader, I was not in the right frame of mind for Proulx's admirable attempts to give me

something tangible from her story world - fictional artefacts.

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[43] Baines, E: 'Reading group: Postcards by E Annie Proulx' - BlogSpot, 1st April 2011 -
http://elizabethbaines.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/reading-group-postcards-by-e-annie.html
[44] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage,
London, 1991 – Chapter 2, pp. 17-38

But why did *Postcards* not work for me, when other texts - using similar devices - are more successful? Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003)[45] uses various methods of actually showing the reader what the narrator is seeing. The narrator (or rather, the author) often shows the reader pictures and diagrams, such as the plan that the narrator makes of Randolph Street (p.46)[46] or the 'big pointy' raincloud (p.86)[47] that the narrator thinks is like a space ship. The reader is also shown objects from the story world (i.e. fictional artefacts), such as the picture of the Cottingley Fairies (p.111)[48] and the postmark on the letter (p.123)[49].

Although these images and diagrams break the flow of the prose, they don't jar me away from the fictional world or the narrator. Because the narrative voice is already that of an autistic adolescent, and therefore erratic and full of unfocused energy, the diagrams and pictures merely add to this, and make the narrator more immediate. The narrative voice and the use of pictures and diagrams are carefully selected to reveal how this particular narrator – Christopher - perceives and makes sense of the world, to a reader who may otherwise not have understood. The reader is brought closer to the narrator because the influence of free indirect style in the first person narrative voice, but the opportunity to see the narrator's visual aids enhances the whole experience, and makes the narrator convincing. When I was reading this text, there were moments when I believed I was having a direct conversation with this specific narrator, and the author was not present at all.

This was partly because the visual aids showed me how Christopher's perception was different from my own. My world is similar to the narrator's world, and so if the events of the story were simply described, I would see them 'my' way. But

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[45] Haddon, M (2003) - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* - Pub. London: Vintage, 2003.
[46] ibid. - pp. 46
[47] ibid. - pp. 86
[48] ibid. - pp. 111
[49] ibid. - pp. 123

when visual aids are provided, the reader is able to see how the world seems different to the narrator – Christopher's world differs from that of the reader not just because his world is fictional, but because he sees and experiences his world in a different way. The visual aids make Christopher an active observer, and are a highly effective way of demonstrating how his perceptions differ from our own. It is the differences in perception that give us the convincing illusion that the narrator is real.

Having stood in the Imperial War Museum and seen real telegrams which told of the death of a loved one, I wondered whether the reader actually being shown the telegram telling of Gwilym's death would generate immediacy, and possibly greater empathy than that which would have been generated by using prose alone.

To explore this, I created the telegram itself. This telegram can be found in Section Two of this thesis (as Figure 6), where it is discussed in terms of its effect on the narrative structure of the novel. But, for the purposes of this section, I would like to discuss its creation, and the effect the completed telegram would have on my narrator – both in terms of Nora's character, and in terms of her role as narrator.

The original plan was to describe the arrival of the telegram boy (or similar) and then present the reader with the telegram itself to deliver the news to Nora, Mrs Caddick and the reader in the same moment, via the same means.

In order to achieve this, I would have to create a telegram. I found, in my family's archives in the loft, a series of telegrams, which had been sent to my great-grandmother. I took one of these, and scanned it into a JPEG image. I then opened it with image editing software and converted it from a real-world artefact, into a fictional artefact from the story. I overlaid the details of Gwilym's death, and set the postmark as 'Wrexham'.

Although I was pleased with the telegram itself, and how it captured the moment for me as the author, I was somewhat disappointed with its impact in the body of the

novel. What I had thought would be an innovative and effective approach, was revealed through the exercise of its creation to be nothing more than a gimmick. When I removed the telegram and replaced it with carefully constructed prose, and even denied the narrator the opportunity of seeing the telegram by only allowing her to see its effect on Mrs Caddick, I found the whole scene to be more effective. Why was this?

In my novel, the fictional artefacts would have worked as Proulx had intended her postcards to work, but they would also have over-emphasised the novel's 'written-ness'. They would perhaps have drawn the attention of the reader to their own fabrication.

There must be a certain degree of trust between reader and writer - even in instances when the narrator is obviously unreliable. As author, I was delivering the story through Nora's eyes, and by this point in the novel, I anticipated that the reader would have settled comfortably into this position. Why, then, would I want to jar their consciousness by removing myself and placing a fictional primary source before them?

In *Narrative Form* (2015)[50], Suzanne Keen discusses narrative distance as 'Realms of Existence' (2015, p.107-144)[51], and the closeness - or the lack of closeness - a reader can perceive in relation to the fictional world of a novel:

> Considering the position of the narrator as 'inside' or 'outside' the story world relies upon the idea of narrative level. All narrative fiction has a discourse or textual level and a story world. These distinctions reflect a basic division within narrative level, as comprised of (at least) a discourse level, a realm of narrated words-in-order, and the story level, a realm of imagined actions and agents.

<div align="right">(2015, p.108)[52]</div>

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[50] Keen, S (2015) - *Narrative Form* (Revised and Expanded Second Edition) - Pub. Hampshire, UK, Palgrave Macmillan
[51] ibid. Chapter 8 'Levels: Realms of Existence', pp. 107-114
[52] ibid. pp.108

The concept of the separation between the textual level and the story world was something I was comfortable with, but when creating the letters, the transcript and the telegram, I considered the impact and potential of taking the reader straight through the textual level and presenting them with the story world. Would the impact of actually seeing these fictional artefacts be greater than the impact of reading about them in my prose and Nora's narration? The answer depended partly on whether my prose was strong enough, but I also believe there were other dynamics at work.

It would be impossible to insert the fictional artefacts into the novel slickly or seamlessly. They would stand out to the reader, and therefore risk jarring them out of their continuous 'dream' (Gardner, 1984)[53]. Since one of the key aims of my novel is to make this 'dream' (op. cit.) seamless and credible, anything that drew self-conscious attention to the fact that the novel is 'real' would most likely fail. In addition, unlike those in Proulx's *Postcards* (1994)[54], the 'fictional artefacts' in my own novel would not be consistent, structural tropes, or consistent evidence of how the protagonist 'views' and 'interprets' her world. They would more likely be occasional authorial insistences on the novel's 'realness'.

In post-modern novels, this breaking of the 'dream' (Gardner, 1984)[55] is sometimes done intentionally (for example, Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001)[56] where Briony Tallis is revealed as the fictional author of most of the book), but this was not my intention with *Over the Kite Path.* Anything which over-emphasised the novel's closeness to reality to the reader, would awaken them to the presence of the author as if I was shouting 'Look, dear reader, at how clever I am being!' In turn, this would

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[53] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 1991 - Chapter 2, pp. 17-38
[54] Proulx, EA (1992) - *Postcards* (5th Edition) - Pub. London: Fourth Estate, 2009.
[55] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 1991 - Chapter 2, pp. 17-38
[56] McEwan, I (2001) - *Atonement* (2nd edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 2002.

counteract the illusion that the story is told directly by the narrator – the illusion that the novel is Nora's and not mine.

Unlike *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Haddon, 2003)[57], nothing would be gained from the inclusion of these fictional artefacts in *Over the Kite Path*. However, their creation was important to me as the author, to convince myself of the reality of my fictional world.

This three-tiered relationship between Author, Narrator and Reader is something I explore in the second section of this thesis, part of which will return to the 'fictional artefacts' as I try to define them more clearly, and discuss the implicit contribution they made to the novel.

For the reasons described above, I opted not to use the telegram or the transcripts within the text of my novel. The letters which remain in the novel are worked into the story via Nora's point of view, and I have removed any that were not seen by her, or any which had been forced into her sphere of existence (therefore stretching the credibility of events). This way, at any given point in the novel, the reader remains closer to Nora than anyone - or anything - else. Once again, I found in practice that Nora was my closest ally in being able to construct this novel.

In his book *Solutions for Writers*[58], Sol Stein (1998) compares point of view to a surgical instrument:

> If all but one of the instruments on a surgeon's tray had been sterilized, that exception would be a danger to the patient. It can be said that one slip of point of view by a writer can hurt a story badly, and several slips can be fatal.
>
> (1998, p.129)[59]

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[57] Haddon, M (2003) - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* - Pub. London: Vintage, 2003.
[58] Stein, S (1998) - *Solutions for Writers* (4th Edition) - *Pub.* London: Souvenir Press Ltd, 2003.
[59] ibid. – pp. 129 (Choosing a Point of View)

By experimenting, and attempting to bring my own 'fictional artefacts' before the reader, I was bypassing the established point of view and undermining Nora[60]. This was not 'several slips' but one gigantic one. Eager to push the boundaries of novel-writing, I struggled with this concept for a while. I was the author - surely Nora was my character to undermine if I chose to? Or was Nora's established relationship with the reader the most fundamental life force - the Carotid Artery - of the novel?

I then came to the realisation that Nora was not just my creation. Her consciousness and apparent *existence* enabled me to make the novel convincing and real. Whenever I distanced the prose from her (whether through a slight slip in narrative style, or through a larger error[61]), the credibility of the novel was reduced, and its 'life force' was threatened. I had once again proved that Nora herself was assisting me in the writing process.

The Kite Path as a Threshold

While I was writing *Over the Kite Path,* I spent a weekend with my husband and young son on the farm we visited regularly. On the second evening, we witnessed an enormous thunderstorm, which, according to the news, stretched from Shrewsbury in the south, to Liverpool in the north. I remember sitting in the awning of our caravan, watching the clouds over the Clwydian Range, and thinking about how this one storm was over us, but also over my husband's parents in Liverpool, *and* my own parents who were (at the time) in Shrewsbury.

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[60] In Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (*Pub. London: Vintage (2003)*,* the use of the narrator's visual aids enhances the reader's perceptions, and demonstrates that the narrator is trapped in his point of view. Nora's point of view is a mistaken one, but she is not trapped.
[61] For example trying to include the transcript of a tribunal that Nora hadn't seen.

Three 'worlds' were now connected by the same storm. The geographical distance between our family members became a psychic intimacy - the sense of 'togetherness' was intense. We shared one sky.

I thought about Nora, and her perceptions of the world of home, and the world of Ruthin - and I realised that the novel was as much about her transition within these worlds as it was about her personal development.

In his work, *Transformations* (1965, p.151)[62], WR Bion referred to objects in terms of their 'Arithmetic' state - whether they were fragmented or whole - and their 'Geometric' state - whether they were present or absent.

This mathematical way of expressing states of being appealed to me greatly while I was working on my novel, as Bion had presented a nice, neat way of capturing an abstract concept. Bion explores the idea that as humans, we crave a state of being where things are present and whole, and we are uncomfortable, or sometimes even distressed when things are absent and/or fragmented. He compares this need for comfort to a baby remembering the breast, and ventures that - because the baby has memory of the breast, it hallucinates instinctively that the breast is still there, and - in turn - notices its absence. (1965, p.130-135)[63]

In his earlier work, *Elements of Psychoanalysis* (1963, p.27)[64], Bion referred to certain states of human anxiety in terms of a container wanting to contain[65]. In other words, if these concepts are combined, we can interpret that if something is whole and present, it is 'contained' (Bion, 1963)[66] and the 'container' (Bion, 1963)[67] is satisfied. Therefore, if it is fragmented or absent, it is 'un-contained'.

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[62] Bion, WR (1965) - *Transformations* - Pub. London, Tavistock. – pp.151
[63] ibid. pp.130-135
[64] Bion, WR (1963) – *Elements of Psychoanalysis* – Pub. London, Karnac Books, (4th Edition) 2005– pp. 3, 6-8, 26-27, 31, 40- 41, 48, 96 and 105.
[65] The 'container' and 'contained' are also revisited in Bion, WR (1965) - *Transformations* - Pub. London, Tavistock, on pp.140, pp.150-151, and pp.154
[66] Bion, WR (1963) – *Elements of Psychoanalysis* – Pub. London, Karnac Books, (4th Edition) 2005– pp. 3, 6-8, 26-27, 31, 40- 41, 48, 96 and 105.
[67] ibid.

When I put these ideas into the context of my novel, I was able to identify what the driving forces were behind Nora's feelings as she made the transition from one side of the Kite Path to the other.

If my novel were to hold the reader, it was important that Nora should be put through some kind of ordeal. Throughout her journey to Ruthin, she is homesick, tired and insecure. I worked to make her need for home and for all that is 'normal' to her seem like the absence that Bion described. The fragmented, uncertain way in which she is evacuated amplifies her sense of discomfort and distress. At the beginning of the story, her home is a 'contained'[68] world, and Ruthin is 'un-contained'.

However, as the novel takes its course, this dynamic is reversed. In some ways, Nora is made an unfilled 'container'[69] because she is placed in an unfamiliar environment. She settles into this environment because of the events of the plot, and the way they change her, and as she does so, she, as a 'container'[70], is slowly filled. For example, the growth of her love for nature and her integration into the life of the town increases her sense of belonging and reduces her homesickness. Her resentment of her parents being kept in Liverpool by her brother's illness results in her feeling alienated from her home. Slowly, Ruthin becomes the 'contained'[71] and home becomes the 'un-contained'. The two 'worlds' either side of the Kite Path switch places in Nora's instinctive perception.

In classical storylines, the protagonist follows a 'call to adventure' (Vogler, 2007, p.99-105)[72] - or one is imposed upon them - and in answering the call (whether by choice or by force), they cross a threshold (Vogler, 2007, p.127-132)[73] into the unknown. Nora's threshold is obviously her evacuation. But what is her 'quest'?

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[68] ibid.
[69] ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] ibid.
[72] Vogler, C (2007) - *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers (Third Edition) - Pub.* USA: Michael Wise Productions, 2007 - pp. 99-105
[73] ibid. pp. 127-132

The thing which stands out for me - and it should be noted that it was my understanding of who Nora was that led me to this[74] - is Nora's desire to contain the un-contained by *understanding* the things around her. She is curious about everything, including things that she has no business to know, for example her curiosity into the relationship between Mr Owen and Miss Edgerton, or her prying into the past of Mrs Caddick's husband. In some ways, her 'quest' to contain some things results in them being more un-contained.

The Contained and Un-contained in the plot

Undoubtedly, Nora's lack of knowledge at the beginning of the novel represents the 'un-contained' in her world - at least, that which is un-contained to Nora. She seeks to contain things through her curiosity and quest for knowledge.

The adults around her are constantly trying to hide things from her and the other children. Even as they are evacuated, they are not given enough facts to be confident about their situation (for example, in Chapter 1, Nora and the boys speculate over how long they will be sent away for, and when they will go home, in an effort to understand their situation)[75].

Nora is uninformed of other things (such as Mr Owen's conscientious objection, and his tribunal), and she is kept that way by the adults around her, and so she speculates wildly to 'fill in the gaps'. She makes assumptions, and ultimately becomes a destructive force to some of those around her.

The child in the adult world is a familiar figure in literature, and I will discuss Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* (1897)[76] and his portrayal of a child protagonist later

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[74] I will expand upon this in Section Three
[75] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 1, pp.16-17
[76] James, H (1897) - *What Maisie Knew* (Penguin Classics Edition*)* - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2010

in this thesis[77], but for now, I would like to note the transition that this character makes through the events of the novel.

In her paper, *"It seemed to do with something else..." Henry James's What Maisie Knew and Bion's Theory of Thinking* (2002)[78], S Brookes examines Bion's 'container' and 'contained', and the theme of 'knowing' and 'not knowing', in the context of James's novel, and explores how:

> [James] became more and more interested in how his people variously know and do not know themselves, each other and the experiences with which their creator presented them.
>
> (2002, p.1)[79]

Maisie perceives herself as comfortable and secure but, as the story progresses, she becomes more confused and distressed as her world becomes unfamiliar. Her parents divorce and re-marry, she is manipulated by them, and so on. However, Maisie is, at least, learning truths, making her – as a person – more aware of the world around her. The events of the story give her the *potential* to become more 'knowing'. At the end of the novel, her decision to leave with Mrs Wix shows that her world is more familiar, and she takes control of this world. She has *chosen* this course of action.

It is Maisie's development throughout the novel that ultimately elevates her above the adults around her in terms of understanding and integrity.

In the early stages of the novel, she is confused by the adult world and her place within it, and to some extent appears to be a victim:

> Waiting patiently, and above all waiting till she should come back there, seemed to Maisie a long way round – it reminded her of all the things she had been told, first and last, that she should have if she would be good, and that, in spite of her goodness, she had never had at all.
>
> (James, 1897, p.17) [80]

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[77] see Section 2, under *Point of View, Voice, and Character: Writing the Child vs. Writing as a Child*
[78] Brookes, S (2002) - ' "It seemed to do with something else..." Henry James's What Maisie Knew and Bion's Theory of Thinking' – International Journal of Psycho-Analysis - 83, 419-431 – This paper explores Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* in terms of Bion's 'knowing' and 'not knowing', 'k' and '-k', 'Contained' and 'container'.
[79] ibid. pp.419
[80] James, H (1897) - *What Maisie Knew* (Penguin Classics Edition*)* - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2010 – pp.17

In comparison, in the closing chapter, Maisie is much more in control, and aware that her fate rests solely with her, and – though daunted by the decision – she approaches it with maturity:

> The question of settlement loomed larger to her now: it depended, she had learned, so completely on herself. Her choice, as her friend had called it, was there before her like an impossible sum on a slate…
>
> (James, 1897, p.249)[81]

Maisie is evidently uneasy about the choice she must make, and the narrative goes on to describe her procrastination in finding an answer; but she does acknowledge that the choice is hers, and she must make it.

This is a transformation that is common in literature (including the Bildungsroman, which I discuss in more detail in Section Two), but it was not quite the transformation I was seeking for Nora.

In *Over the Kite Path*, I see Nora's transformation as an awakening. She is less naïve at the end of my novel than she was at the start, and the events around her – and her growing awareness of them – leave her on a threshold, which, in itself, is almost typical of James. Just as we do not follow Maisie into her new life beyond the end of James's novel, we are left with Nora at a turning point: we ponder what happens next.

But what brought me to this turning point? Was it the way that I wanted to steer the novel as author, or was it because Nora herself brought me there?

When I embarked upon writing the novel, I envisaged that a full transformation would take place – that an 'awakening' would happen quickly towards the end of the story, when all was revealed to Nora and the dramatic irony experienced by the reader was finally vindicated. The future would be set out, and known to Nora and the reader.

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[81]Ibid. pp.249

However, as the writing process progressed, and Nora became an increasingly strong force in this, I came to realise that the novel's movement towards the ending was more 'glacial' – it was gradual, definite and unstoppable.

The 'transformation' was more of a 'transition'.

The writing process and 'enhancing' life

Throughout the writing process, I worked to use the real world to inspire and inform my creative work. Since the task of writing a novel is to convince and engage the reader, it is also surely the intention of the author to give the reader the illusion that what they are reading about is a reality. This is why many writers obsess over what is convincing, or how truly real life (and real experiences) are evoked in their prose.

In, *How to Read Literature* (2013)[82]*,* Terry Eagleton is uneasy with the concept of readers of literature perceiving the characters of a novel as 'real':

> One of the most common ways of overlooking the 'literariness' of a play or novel is to treat its characters as though they are actual people. In one sense, to be sure, this is almost impossible to avoid… Hamlet was not really a university student before the play opens, even though the play tell us he was. He was nothing at all. Hedda Gabler does not exist a second before she steps on stage, and all we shall ever know about her is what Ibsen's play decides to tell us. There are no other sources of information available.
>
> (2013, p.45)[83]

This is an interesting argument, but it is perhaps a little limited. Surely the writer knows the history of the character, or they could not make their characters convincing. Therefore – in the *fictional world* - the character does have a history. Eagleton may withdraw from this notion, but it cannot be assumed that readers will do the same. Take,

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[82] Eagleton, T (2013) – *How to Read Literature* – Pub. Yale University Press, London.
[83] Ibid. pp.45

for example, the popular genre of Fan Fiction. This would not exist if fans had not taken the original television programme or film, and looked beyond what is already presented to them. They are convinced by what they have seen that – for them - the characters have a 'life' – even if it is a fictional one – which stretches beyond the boundaries of the existing script. In *Textual Poachers – Television Fans and Participatory Culture,* (1992)[84] Henry Jenkins gives an example of how fans of *Star Wars*[85] '[transform] some six hours of primary material into hundreds of new narratives spanning centuries of Imperial history.' (Jenkins, 1992, p.74)[86]

In some ways, writers of all genres do this with their own characters – or at least they need to if their characters are going to be credible.

Eagleton goes on to argue that 'Literary figures have no pre-history'[87]. This opinion might be more justified in the field of literary studies, but from my perspective as a writer, I would contest this. They do have pre-history *in the story world.*

How to Read Literature opens with a description of a group of students reading *Wuthering Heights* (Bronte, 1847[88]) and discussing the characters as if they are real people. Eagleton states:

> What is wrong with this discussion? … The problem is that
> if someone who had never heard of *Wuthering Heights* were
> to listen in on this discussion, they would find nothing to
> suggest that it was about a *novel*.
>
> <div align="right">(2013, p.1)[89]</div>

He follows this by raising concern that the students are 'gossiping' (2013, p.1-2)[90] about the characters, rather than discussing the book's technical and literary

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[84] Jenkins, H (1992)– *Textual Poachers, Television Fans and Participatory Culture* - Pub. Routledge, Chapman and Hall, New York, 1992

[85] *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* – 20th Century Fox, USA, 1977

[86] Jenkins, H (1992)– *Textual Poachers, Television Fans and Participatory Culture* - Pub. Routledge, Chapman and Hall, New York, 1992, p. 74. Fan Fiction – and the richness of fan culture – is explored extensively by Jenkins throughout this book, particularly in Chapter 2, 'How Texts Become Real'.

[87] Eagleton, T (2013) – *How to Read Literature* – Pub. Yale University Press, London. 2013. pp. 46

[88] Bronte, E (1847) – *Wuthering Heights* – Pub. Penguin Popular Classics, London, 1994

[89] Eagleton, T (2013) – *How to Read Literature* – Pub. Yale University Press, London, 2013 – pp.1

[90] Ibid. pp.2

qualities (2013, p.2)[91]. Of course, Eagleton is writing here about students of Literature, and it is probably a fair judgement that informed literary debate should stretch beyond discussing the lives and actions of the characters. But – as a writer - if I imagined that my own readers were discussing my characters as if they were real people, I would perhaps give myself a pat on the back. Moreover, if the readers' conviction that my characters were real people had generated an engaging discussion, I would have felt like I had accomplished something. Despite the fact that I knew (and often hated to admit) that the characters and events in my story were not real, I took a great deal of research, effort and imagination to make them credible. I would view a discussion such as the one described by Eagleton as an achievement. If students of Literature then went on to discuss the literary qualities of my novel, this would also be highly pleasing, but my primary task with my novel was to convince. The novel is a portal, not a terminus.

However, I was not necessarily aspiring to achieve true 'realism'[92]. If I had chosen to write each scene by stating facts, down to the smallest detail – for example, the exact time, exactly what Nora was wearing, the way in which the furniture was arranged, the volume in decibels of the surrounding birdsong… - it would soon become very dull indeed. As a writer, I am forced to be selective because I cannot write it all. The task of writing forces me to be selective, and to decide upon what is worth including.

In his book, *How Fiction Works* (2008)[93], James Wood challenges the term 'realism', exploring the idea that as writers, we are not trying to depict the real world exactly as it is.

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[91] Ibid. pp.2

[92] In this thesis, the term 'realism' should not be confused with the term used in literary studies to define particular genres of fiction. In the context of this thesis, (and of creative writing), 'realism' is used to refer to the 'capturing of reality'. Wood (see reference 87 below) is one example where this is referred to, discussed, and challenged.

[93] Wood, J (2008) – *How Fiction Works (2nd Edition)* – Pub. Vintage, London, 2009

As writers, we are trying, not only to give the essence of events (or as I like to call them, the edited highlights), we are also trying to get this essence across to the reader in an economical, but effective and transcendental way.

Wood suggests that we look at the terminology we use:

> So let us replace the always problematic word 'realism' with the much more problematic word 'truth'… Once we throw the term 'realism' overboard, we can account for the ways in which, say, Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, and Hamsun's *Hunger*, and Beckett's *Endgame* are not representations of likely or typical human activity, but are nevertheless harrowingly truthful texts.
>
> (2008, p.180)[94]

This concept could be applied to any novel.

Take, as a simple example, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945)[95]. We know that, although it might just about be possible for animals to overrun a farm, it is a safe assumption that it would not be possible for them to run it for several months – years even - and then form an alliance with their former owners, the humans. This novel is not supposed to be 'realistic'[96]. However, its construction on carefully selected metaphors and, more so, on the anthropomorphic characterisation of the animals with human names and traits, showing them to be capable of development and dissimulation, means that the reader accepts it as realist for the purpose of enjoying the book as a novel. Through all of this, the novel contains profound *truths* about our own world.

Similarly, it could be argued that Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003)[97] is made more believable by its truths. While the narrator is convincing as a young person with autism, he is also a construct that the

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[94] ibid. – pp.180 (Chapter 120)
[95] Orwell, G (1945) – *Animal Farm* – First published by Secker and Warburg, London
[96] It should be noted that *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1945) does not claim to be 'realistic', and its title is sub-titled 'A Fairy Story'. It is, from the outset, an allegory.
[97] Haddon, M (2003) - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time (*Pub. London: Vintage, 2003.

reader is prepared and willing to accept as real because the narrative contains *truths* that he observes with honesty.

As a lover of weaving stories, I found it tempting to write in flowery prose, when – in order to capture Nora's true voice (as demonstrated at various points in this thesis) – I needed to resist the temptation to use my own, elaborate vocabulary.

But this is something that is specific to my novel because of my choice of narrator. Other narrative forms are more elaborate.

Critics can be quick to judge the likes of Flaubert as verbose or detached. In *How to Read Literature,* for example, Eagleton describes an extract from *Madame Bovary* as '… verbal overkill with a vengeance.' (2013, p.55-56)[98]

This is a valid opinion when viewed in certain contexts, and I am not convinced that every reader would have patience with Flaubert's description of the long, arduous death of Madame Bovary (Flaubert, 1856, p. 242-251)[99], as she fights with the poison for hours and the many symptoms of this are described in excruciating detail. But the attention that Flaubert gives to Madame Bovary's suicide emphasises and empathises its long, painful course. The full, descriptive attention that Flaubert gives to this part of the plot, underlines and undermines Emma's romanticism. This is not the short, sharp suicide of Juliet – 'Oh happy dagger!' (Shakespeare, 1596 – Act V., Scene ii, 169-70[100]) – it is an insistent record of Emma's passionate battle with – and submission to - death.

Equally, there is vivid, human suffering in Charles's desperate attempts to help her, and in his mourning:

> In the passage downstairs, they met the undertaker's men,
> who were coming in. Then Charles for two hours had to
> suffer the torture of hearing the hammer resound against the
> wood.

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[98] Eagleton, T (2013) – *How to Read Literature* – Pub. Yale University Press, London.- pp. 55-56.

[99] Flaubert, G (1856) – *Madame Bovary* – Pub. Wordsworth Classics, 2001 – Chapter 8, pp.242-251

[100] Shakespeare, W (1596) - *Romeo and Juliet* - Act V., Scene iii, 163-201 – Sourced in this instance from: Shakespeare, W - *The Complete Works* – Pub. Wordsworth Editions Limited, Hertfordshire, 1996 (pp. 277)

The fact that Bovary is able to hear the nails going into his wife's coffin has little effect on the plot. But it does affect our experience of it. The reader is presented with this fact, and immediately they are transported to the Bovary household, hearing the blows of the hammer with him. The purpose of this passage is to demonstrate that in the midst of grief and uncertainty, Charles suffers most immediately from the noise. It is a moment that convinces us of the reality of his grief – and of the novel - because it complicates. This shows the value of the writer taking time to present the detail.

James Wood concludes *How Fiction Works* (2008)[102] by introducing the term 'lifeness' (p.186)[103]. This is not realism, but 'life on the page, life brought to different life by the highest artistry.' (2008, p.186)[104] In this single sentence, Wood has captured, beautifully, what I aspire to when I write, and it is something that is only truly achieved by the most highly skilled practitioners.

In *Over the Kite Path,* there are scenes when I have let moments linger. I have paused to elaborate, knowing that – although this pause will not further the plot – it might allow the reader to savour a particular setting, or rest on the same thoughts as the narrator. Examples are the scene where Nora watches the dawn over the toilet door[105] (which gives a sense of her loneliness, a sense of place, and was a moment's calm before the shock of Mr Roberts appearing), the scene where Nora walks along the old castle walls and imagines the past[106] (which again gives a sense of setting, and a sense of her character because of the fact that she thinks about history), and the scene with the go-cart rolling down the hill and crashing in Mrs Williams' garden.[107] None of these

[101] Flaubert, G (1856) – *Madame Bovary* – Pub. Wordsworth Classics, 2001 – Chapter 9, pp. 257.
[102] Wood, J (2008) – *How Fiction Works (2nd Edition)* – Pub. Vintage, London
[103] ibid. pp.186 (Chapter 123)
[104] ibid. pp.186 (Chapter 123)
[105] *Over the Kite Path* - Chapter 4, pp.36
[106] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 14, pp.157
[107] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 6, pp.83-85

moments further the plot, and it could be argued that they could be reduced or cut. But I felt the need to include them – and other moments like them - because they add a richness to the novel and deepen my conception of Nora. Put simply, I take more time to be with her. The third example with the go-cart is especially interesting, as – unlike the first two – it is not a pensive moment. It is a bit of action to add humour and excitement, and to remind the reader not only that Nora is a child, but also that she is a child in 1939, grazing her knees, falling off go-carts and damaging gardens. Here, both writer and reader have a chance to savour Nora as she is more the natural child, and less the lens through which we view her world.

In its quest to capture 'lifeness,' (Wood, 2008)[108] the novel (as a form) has come a long way since its origins, and today we see a range of narrative voices and points of view being used. In Section Two of this thesis, I will explore different examples, and articulate how different writers and techniques have informed and developed my own style.

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[108] Wood, J (2008) – *How Fiction Works (2nd Edition)* – Pub. Vintage, London – pp.186 (Chapter 123)

II.

Reading for technique: A focus on Narration

__Narrative Voice: The Mechanics of Author, Narrator, and Reader__

The way in which a story is presented to readers is central to how they perceive the fictional world. Though Gardner implies that a series of errors can break the fictional 'dream' (Gardner, 1984)[109], I believe this dream is created largely by the narrative voice. If this voice is weak or unconvincing and the reader's dream is broken regularly or intermittently, the novel loses its impact.

While writing *Over the Kite Path,* the biggest challenge for me was finding Nora Cromby's voice. It was Nora who spoke to me first, and inspired the novel, but in the early stages of writing her story, I struggled to hear her. Through workshops and re-drafting, it became apparent that – although the image of Nora was vivid to me – her voice was not. I had to stop my own authorial voice from invading her storytelling – and dominating the reader's consciousness. I needed to become closer to the reality I was creating, and 'inhabit' my narrator.

Practised writers are likely to be familiar with what Suzanne Keen refers to as 'Narrative Levels' or 'Realms of existence.' (2015, p.107-115)[110] A novel tells a story via a level – or levels - of consciousness, which the reader experiences with both the author and the characters; but all three have slightly different perspectives, and slightly different experiences. I needed to ensure that my perspective as a writer and my experiences didn't dominate the novel. The narrative voice needed to come from Nora.

What exactly is narrative voice? Perhaps more importantly, who is it that comes to us as readers as we consume this narrative voice? In first person narration, is it the character who speaks, or the author? In the work of – for example – Dickens or Tolstoy, the most omniscient third-person narration can hold weight, and has a strong perspective of its own.

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[109] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 1991 – Chapter 2, pp. 17-38

[110] Suzanne Keen (2015) – *Narrative Form* (revised and expanded second edition) – Pub. Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire UK pp. 107-115

Authorial intrusion, such as George Eliot's discussion of the 'narrowness' of everyday life (1860, p.276-277)[111] in *The Mill on the Floss,* shows how third person omniscient narration allows the author to communicate directly with the reader, and to reflect on the events of the plot from 'outside'.

The narrative perspective (Third Person or otherwise) can be made clear to the reader from the outset of the novel, in order to engage them and draw them into the story via a certain point of view. An example of this is Emma Donoghue's *Room* 2010)[112]*,* which opens with:

> Today I am five. I was four last night going to sleep in
> Wardrobe, but then I woke up in Bed in the dark I'm
> changed to five, abracadabra.
>
> (2010, p.1)[113]

The reader also knows straight away that this is a five-year-old child narrator, to whom (at least at this point in the novel) the world seems simple. But this opening raises immediate questions for the reader – Is this a boy or a girl? Why are capital letters used each time there's mention of the furniture?

It seems as though the writer's creative work is a medium, channelling thought, emotion, imagination and consciousness from author, through narrator, to reader. Characters and events, which are vivid in the writer's mind, can seem to write themselves, and it is the writer's job to make them accessible to the reader.

I used a first person, unreliable narrator, and the impact of the story's climax depended very much on how the narrative voice of nine-year-old Nora engaged the reader. As part of my research, I looked at a range of novels, and narrative voices.

When I read the work of other authors, I pay particular attention to how the story is being told, and by whom. I became more mindful of my own consciousness being

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[111] Eliot, G (1860) – *The Mill on the Floss* (Penguin Popular Classics edition) – Pub. Penguin Popular Classics, London, 1994. – pp. 276-277, Book 4, Chapter 1.
[112] Donoghue, E (2010) - *Room* – Pub. Picador, London, 2011
[113] ibid. – pp.3

manipulated by other writers; my awareness of my own authorial consciousness (and that of my narrator) also grew. Reading the work of other authors not only gave me an awareness of the range of structures in contemporary fiction, but it also helped me to place my own novel in terms of its narrative voice.

While the layers of consciousness are theoretical or cerebral as a novel is written, and then read, I awakened to the possibility that they may also almost (but not quite) be physical.

At its most basic level, a novel is what happens in between creator and consumer; more specifically, the novel *translates* the intentions of the author into the perceptions of the reader. As part of my research, I wanted to study these narrative mechanisms at work, to present them in a defined way, and to discover whether it would be possible to show the relationship between Author, Narrator and Reader in diagrammatic form.

This use of diagrams has already been explored for plot and story patterns by other practitioners. Christopher Vogler's notion of the story arc in *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structures for Writers* (2007, p.206)[114] is a good example of this, as it examines the plot solely as the protagonist's journey.

Diagrams have also been drawn to define the mechanisms of consciousness that are at work during the imaginative processes of writing and reading (for example, Charles R Embry's work, *The Philosopher and the Storyteller: Eric Voegelin and Twentieth Century Literature* (1942, p.55)[115]). As part of my reading for technique, I have tried to capture as diagrams some of the books I have read. This is in order to help me to visualise the structures of consciousness that are at work in each text, and to show

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[114] Vogler, C (2007) - *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structures for Writers* (3rd Edition) - Pub. Michael Wiese Productions, USA – pp. 206
[115] Embry, CR (1942) - *The Philosopher and the Storyteller: Eric Voegelin and Twentieth Century Literature* – Pub. University of Missouri Press, London and Columbia, 2008- pp.55

them in an accessible way. In turn, this approach has helped me to analyse and understand my own novel.

Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1989)[116] is an excellent example of the use of unreliable narrator. I plotted its narrative mechanism into a diagram (Figure 1) to try to capture the flow of information between Author, Narrator and Reader.

The results were more complex than I had expected. Instead of the simple three-tiered relationship I was anticipating (Author > Narrator > Reader), there were several different planes of perception at work, all intertwined and dependent on each other. In this example, I perceive the author as god-like, overseeing and directing everything, including the reader, with exquisite skill. The author works through Stevens, the unreliable narrator, who gives his account of the events of the story, while the reader slowly becomes more aware of his unreliability through the self-conscious prose which stops at regular intervals to interject with phrases such as 'That is to say…'(1989, p.121)[117] or 'I hasten to add...' (1989, p.31)[118] These interjections demonstrate that Stevens is aware of his own fallibility. Though he may not realise it, he is insecure – he is intent on qualifying his point and gaining the reader's understanding and his constant justifications and requests for sympathy and trust make the reader suspicious. Stevens' awareness of his own fallibility is most intense at the end of the novel, but his slow drift to this awareness is slower than the reader's, which creates a strong sense of dramatic irony.[119]

On occasion, he even tries to apologise for himself, for example, the moment in Part Two when he converses with a batman, and denies that he worked for Lord Darlington. It is interesting that although the conversation itself, including the denial –

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[116] Ishiguro K (1989) – *The Remains of the Day* (4th Edition) – Pub. Faber & Faber, London, 1996
[117] ibid, Page 121
[118] ibid, Page 31
[119] Stevens' awareness is a partial awareness. Maisie (James, 1897) and Nora (*Over the Kite Path)* seek knowledge, whereas - at times - Stevens appears to be avoiding it.

'"Oh no, I am employed by a Mr John Farraday"…' (1989, p.120)[120] – is recounted to the reader without hesitation, he revisits this over a page later and is evidently uncomfortable about what took place:

> … That is to say, I may not have thought further why it was that I had given the distinct impression I had never been in the employ of Lord Darlington. For surely, there is no real doubt that is what occurred… It could simply be that a meaningless whim had suddenly overtaken me at that moment – but that is hardly a convincing way to account for such distinctly odd behaviour.
>
> (1989, p.121-122)[121]

Stevens' unreliability as a narrator is somehow enhanced during moments like this. He is obviously aware of his lack of reliability, but he himself dare not account for where these moments of unreliability come from. He is avoiding a truth that he has yet to accept and confront. As reader, I am aware that Stevens is a proud man, and is ashamed of what took place at Darlington Hall. His pride leads him to dwell on incidents such as the one described above, to try and make sense of them.

A sense of dramatic irony grows until – almost at the end of the story, when Stevens explains his beliefs to a complete stranger on the seafront (who may or may not exist) – his state of denial is shattered. This is his epiphany, and the catharsis for the reader is intense:

> [Lord Darlington] chose a certain path in life, it proved to be a misguided one, but there, he chose it, he can say that at least. As for myself, I cannot even claim that … I can't even say I made my own mistakes … what dignity is there in that?
>
> (1989, p.243)[122]

Here, he is admitting that Lord Darlington was wrong, and we sense that he is aware that he was wrong too. The feeling of catharsis is enhanced even further when –

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[120] Ishiguro K (1989) – *The Remains of the Day* (4th Edition) – Pub. Faber & Faber, London, 1996, pp.120
[121] ibid. pp.121-122
[122] ibid. pp.243

just a few moments later in the story – Stevens returns to his state of denial, proving that his epiphany was temporary. He perceived the truth, but only for a moment which he shared with the reader, and then moved back again into a state of denial. Although the reader feels privileged that Stevens chose to share his insight, it is also frustrating that this moment passes. It is as if Stevens' return to his state of denial is him returning to his comfort blanket, as he says to the reader:

> The hard reality is, surely for the likes of you and I, there is little choice other than to leave our fate, ultimately, in the hands of those great gentlemen at the hub of this world who employ our services.
>
> (1989, p244)[123]

He is evading a truth, as he has done throughout the novel, and at this point in the plot, it is also interesting to note how Stevens tries to justify his approach with 'the likes of you and I…' (see above). He is assuming that the reader (or whoever he is relating the story to) empathises with him completely. This is evident throughout the novel, and the language and approach of Stevens' account imply that he sees his audience as less-experienced peers, perhaps fellow employees in need of advice. He sets out to instruct, and strays into a confession. Though this confession is only fleeting, it is moving, not least because he has come to it himself, when Miss Kenton had wished it from him for years. I would argue that throughout all of this, the reader does not empathise with Stevens, but does *sympathise*, and there is a subtle difference.

Stevens is, in his own eyes, an honest narrator. At no point does he set out to deceive the reader. He is always at pains to point out that he acts with integrity. Although dramatic irony is created when the reader becomes aware of his naivety and self-denial, there are still things which remain hidden from the reader as a result of Stevens' failure to acknowledge a changing world as the plot transpires around him, and

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[123] ibid. pp.244

therefore his failure to give a well-informed, balanced account of events. He is a protagonist who – unlike the classical archetype of 'Hero' (Vogler, 2007)[124] - withdraws from the thresholds that he encounters. The warnings from Miss Kenton go unheeded, and he chooses to listen instead to the misguided words of his father, and of his master, Lord Darlington. This results in his unhappiness, and thanks to Ishiguro's masterful handling of the narrative voice, the reader can sense it happening. At the end of the novel, Stevens does not seem unhappy to himself, but to the reader he has returned to what he knows (Bion's 'contained'[125]), and is therefore missing out on the *potential* of future happiness. Stevens' life is a story of lost opportunities, but only because his choices make it so.

Other narrators are not so unwitting, and the result is more sinister. In Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001)[126], the reader is manipulated from start to finish by the narrator, who is also an author. Of course, the manipulation is really engineered by McEwan, but – as a reader – I found the last chapter felt like a betrayal. The diagram for this novel (Figure 2) was especially challenging to create. Instead of the 'downward' flowing diagram I expected to see, it was in fact a tangled matrix, with several retrospective elements.

Rather than a layered narrative – i.e. narrative voices *within* a narrative voices (for example, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) [127], and its portrayal of events through Captain Walton, Victor Frankenstein and the creature), McEwan's novel appears to have dual or parallel narration. The first narrative voice the reader encounters is third-person omniscient, which moves seamlessly from one scene to another as the narrative distance moves slowly in and out from the characters. The reader assumes that - being a third person narrative voice - this is the voice of the reliable author, who can

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[124] Vogler, C (2007) - *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structures for Writers* (3rd Edition) - Pub. Michael Wiese Productions, USA - pp.29-37, pp.127-131, and pp.135-141

[125] Bion, WR (1963) – *Elements of Psychoanalysis* – Pub. London, Karnac Books, (4th Edition) 2005– pp. 27

[126] McEwan, I (2001) - *Atonement* (2nd edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 2002.

[127] Shelley, M (1818) - *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* – Pub. Penguin Popular Classics, London, 1994

be trusted. In Part Two, the voice switches to Third Person Limited, from Robbie Turner's point of view. Part Three is told through a Third Person narrative voice, which is limited to Briony Tallis' perspective. Finally, at the end of the book, it becomes apparent that the *mature* Briony Tallis is the 'true author' of the story, and everything the reader has read – including the portrayal of Briony - has been created and presented by her. The closing section of the novel is written in the First Person, with Briony's voice. The reader is forced to reconsider everything they have read. This final section reveals that these several narrators throughout the novel are, in fact, one. All of these voices have been created as parts of Briony's atonement.

It could be argued that, since McEwan has created everything, the novel cannot be relied upon entirely as 'truth'. Some of its elements – London, the dates and events of the war, the elements taken from the *reality* of our own world – are true. But Briony's concealment of the truth, and her eventual confession, and subsequent conviction that what she has done with her writing is right, are all McEwan's creations within the fictional world of the novel.

As a reader and as a writer, I meditated on the existential qualities of this novel. Who had influenced me as I read? The author? Or was it the narrator who turned out to be a fictional author? And was Briony Tallis an unreliable narrator because she had – initially – deceived the reader, or because she was atoning herself through her novel? Was she deceived in her belief that – despite her acknowledgement of uncomfortable truths - she could make things right? Through her art, she believed she could atone for the selfish or naïve acts of her past. She argues that art can atone for not being life.

At first, I felt that I had been deceived by Briony, but then I realised it was McEwan who had woven the plot so skilfully. As a character, Briony was, after all, attempting to confront painful truths. Perhaps the ending should not have come as such

a surprise, since she had been writing novels and plays – entertaining fantasies – since the start of the novel.

The last chapter of *Atonement* awakened me to the possibility of a new tier in the Author - Narrator - Reader relationship: the unreliable narrator as an unreliable author. Briony Tallis is a different narrator from Stevens, or – as another, possibly more simple example – Huckleberry Finn (Twain, 1884)[128] – because she is narrator as fictional author.

This narrator/author hybrid can cause a great sense of frustration in the reader. Examples such as *Atonement* present a situation where the reader is aware of the narrator's state of denial, but is also reminded that – as reader - they are 'on the outside' and therefore unable to influence the narrator. As the true creator, the author has woven the narrative with skill in order to manipulate the perceptions of the reader – for example, convincing the reader that Briony Tallis is the author of *Atonement*.

But the narrator as fictional author can also provide a sense of comedic irony, and generate humour.

One of the best examples of this is *I Partridge: We Need to Talk About Alan* (Coogan, Iannucci et al, 2012)[129]. In this fictional autobiography, Alan Partridge tells his life story in seemingly badly written prose. The authors create a narrative voice that is true to Partridge's character, while purposefully engineering terrible syntax and bad grammar.

Similarly to Ishiguro's handling of Stevens in *The Remains of the Day,* the prose of *I, Partridge…* is written in an apparently awkward way that is true to the narrator and not the author. Ishiguro uses clichés to illustrate Stevens' character, but Partridge's clichés and uncomfortable syntax are taken further. Partridge generates a similar sense

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[128] Twain, M (1884) – *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* – Pub. Amazon Classics, UK.
[129] Coogan, S, Gibbons, N, Gibbons, R & Iannucci, A (2012) *- I Partridge: We Need to Talk About Ala*n - Pub. Harper, London

of pathos to that of Stevens, but as his story is told, the authors indulge Partridge, and

revel in his tendency to write badly, in order to achieve sharp, satirical comic effect.

Stevens' narrative voice is ironic, but *I, Partridge…* is a pastiche, which is strengthened

by Partridge's qualities showing strongly through the prose. The poor grammar and

eye-watering clichés are evidence of the controlled and eloquent handling of the novel

by its true authors – but this is cleverly hidden by the way they sustain and develop the

pre-established illusion that Partridge is real. [130]

　　During the novel, the reader is given a 'first hand' account of various events,

some of which may already be familiar to Partridge fans from his television shows; for

example, his recollection of the day when he met BBC Executive Tony Hayers[131]. In the

television series[132], this was a highly uncomfortable scene, and the viewer witnesses

Partridge losing his temper over a lunch meeting, and pushing some 'very smelly

cheese' into Hayers' face before running from BBC Television Centre brandishing the

cheese and muttering to himself. Yet in his 'autobiography,' Partridge gives a

completely different account of his departure:

> A noise snapped behind me, like the sound of a piece of
> flesh hitting a nearby piece of flesh. It was a handclap. It
> was followed by another from the far corner of the room.
> Then another: And another. And as I turned to face them,
> the diners broke into rich applause. It was as if they were
> saying: 'So long, Alan. The bigwigs might not appreciate
> you, but by God, we do' ... Then I very calmly, very slowly,
> very proudly walked through the lunch-time diners and into
> the night. It felt good.
>
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(2012, p.166-167)[133]

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[130] i.e. The very fact that *I Partridge…* is presented as an autobiography gives the reader the expectation that Partridge himself is the author.

[131] Tony Hayers is also fictional, but the book is structured in such a way that he seems real to the reader. In other words, a fictional world is created to capture the perceived realities of life at the BBC. Because of the choice of narrator, it is difficult to for the reader to tell whether this is Alan Partridge's point of view, or that of Coogan/Iannucci et al.

[132] *I'm Alan Partridge* [TV Programme], Episode 1 - BBC/TalkBack Productions, London - First broadcast November 1997.

[133] Coogan, S, Gibbons, N, Gibbons, R & Iannucci, A (2012) - *I Partridge: We Need to Talk About Alan* - Pub. Harper, London – p.166-167

At first, I thought that Coogan, Iannucci et al. had intended this to illustrate Partridge's ability to lie to his audience, in full knowledge that this would hide the truth. I also considered the possibility that Partridge may not have remembered what happened clearly, and – in much the same way as Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* – he presents the version that his memory has retained.

But on closer inspection of this passage, and of many others in the book, I realised that this actually could be Partridge's true perception of events. True to the Partridge that audiences had come to know from the television series[134], he was completely oblivious of what had really happened, and lived in his own fantasy world where he is a hero and everyone else is a villain. As the reader, I sensed comedy and pathos being generated simultaneously. Perhaps this could be established by reading the book in isolation and without humour, but for the reader who has seen the television series, there is an additional dramatic irony.[135]

In *I, Partridge…*, this fictional narrator is also a fictional autobiographer, which contrasts with Briony Tallis as fictional author in *Atonement*. The fictional autobiographer creates a tangible sense of reality where - in fact - there is none. But to add an extra dimension, his self-deception results in the unreliability of his account. This can be seen when the narrative mechanism is shown as a diagram (Figure 3).

The authors frequently puncture Partridge's self-deceit and self-regard as the novel goes along – a technique that Ishiguro uses with Stevens in *The Remains of the Day*. But unlike *The Remains of the Day,* the reader is in on the joke of *I, Partridge…* from the start, especially if they are familiar with Partridge already.

The narrators of the three novels explored so far in this section are all unreliable, and they demonstrate just how deceiving a first person narrative voice can be. Though

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[134] Perhaps even the television series puncture Partridge's 'reality' – for example, the cut-aways to his strange and comically inappropriate dream sequences.
[135] This in turn gives a notion of differing readers. The novel has been written by authors who know their character, but it should be borne in mind that Partridge's audience will have discovered him in different ways, via different series and even different media, and this has potential to generate differing perceptions of the novel and the narrative voice itself.

none of these narrators are similar to mine, they do show how a novel can be characterised by the perspective and language of a character. Stevens, Briony Tallis and Alan Partridge are all strong, believable characters, and their respective novels are convincing as a result of this.

The above examples - and the associated diagrams - show a range of narrative structures, and they show how complex the layers of a novel can be. Studying these gave me close knowledge of different techniques.

However, in order to nourish my approach to my own novel, I needed to study the work of authors who had created narrators similar to my own. I never wanted Nora to be unreliable because of naivety or misguided philosophy. It was important to me that Nora's lack of reliability came simply from her being a child. Even her tendency to read too much into situations, or put others onto pedestals they don't deserve, comes from her being a child, rather than any dishonesty, denial or self-deception.

In addition, Stevens, Tallis and Partridge are all in their later years, and ultimately telling their stories with a degree of hindsight. My narrator is a child, and we observe her story without any hindsight or retrospective element.

Throughout literature, child narrators have been used and portrayed in many different ways, and this is something I explore in detail in the next section of this thesis[136]. Two of the examples I will consider in detail are Kaye Gibbons' *Ellen Foster* (1987)[137] and Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding* (1946)[138]. For the purposes of this section, I have compared and contrasted these two novels, and considered their structures in terms of narrative distance. It can be seen in the diagrams I have constructed for these novels that they are very similar, but I have paid particular attention to the immediacy of the narrative voice, how it is achieved in each example,

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[136] *see 'Point of View, Voice, and Character: Writing the Child vs. Writing as a Child'*
[137] Gibbons, K (1987) – *Ellen Foster (First Algonquin paperback edition)* – Pub. Algoquin Books, New York, 2012)
[138] McCullers, C (1946) – *The Member of the Wedding (5th edition)* – Pub. Penguin Classics, London, 2008

and how this affects the relationship between the author, the narrator and the reader. This has been especially helpful, as – unlike the other three examples that I have discussed so far – these novels are aspiring to achieve the same effect as my own.

It is interesting to note that, although they have different styles of narrative voice (Gibbons' work is in a very close first person narrative voice, while McCullers uses third person, with free indirect style), their point of view is very similar.

In *Ellen Foster,* the first person narrative voice is conversational and immediate. Gibbons does not use speech-marks, and speech is reported. This is a similar technique to free indirect style, but when used in the first person, it enhances the conversational elements in the narrative voice. In addition, the narrator, Ellen, occasionally switches from past tense into present tense, which serves as another device to convince the reader that she is talking to us:

> I will give you a dollar is what I told Starletta's mama when
> she let me in the door. I do not care for extras like food or
> the toilet. I know this is not a hotel.
> > She wanted to know what was wrong at my house.
> > That is funny to me.
> > > (1987, p.39)[139]

The narrative voice also articulates many child-like observations, which enhance the point of view and make it convincing – but this is done subtly and is not intrusive. Observations such as 'You see when she was my size she had romantic fever I think it is called…' (1987, p.3)[140] show us her lack of knowledge in some areas, and demonstrate that although she is an honest narrator, she is not necessarily a reliable one. Descriptions such as 'She stands between his mean highness and the television set looking at him make words at her…' (1987, p.3)[141] show us that this is definitely a young narrator, but she is observant enough to notice the power struggle between her parents.

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[139] Gibbons, K (1987) – *Ellen Foster (First Algonquin paperback edition)* – Pub. Algoquin Books, New York, 2012) – pp.39.
[140] ibid. pp.3
[141] ibid. pp.3

Because of the conversational tone of the narrative voice, Ellen's frequent switching between the present tense and the past tense is subtly done. It also makes it difficult to gauge the overarching 'narrative distance', and this prevents the narrative point of view from being placed at a fixed point in time. The Ellen who is in the story is the Ellen telling it to us. There are only occasional references that give an impression of a retrospective voice, for example, when she refers to her 'new Mama' (1987, p.42)[142]. But again, this description does not seem out of place when it occurs.

When I came to construct a diagram for *Ellen Foster,* I was surprised by its simplicity. But perhaps the simplicity is the strength of the novel. There are no plot-twists or deceptive devices in the novel, except perhaps for the misunderstandings of the narrator. The origin of her name – Ellen Foster – was a revelation to me, but it brought me closer to the narrator. I realised that she sees herself as belonging not to one family, but to whichever family could make her happy. This simple desire for happiness is the driving force behind the novel, and it would not be so powerful if it were not for the simplicity of the narrative voice.

The diagram for *Ellen Foster* (Figure 4) shows a straight, linear link between author, narrator and reader, but the narrator acts as a filter. The author creates the story world, including its harrowing events, and these are filtered through to the reader via the narrator. It is assumed that the reader has sufficient 'adult' knowledge to understand much of the plot better than the narrator, but, equally, the narrator's determined and optimistic perspective on everything is what engages the reader and holds them in the story world. Ellen Foster is convincing as a character and as a narrator, even if we know she is often mistaken. Ellen is a direct narrator, and the novel gives the impression that she is sitting before the reader, telling her story like she owns it.

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[142] ibid. pp.42 (one of many examples throughout the text)

In contrast, Carson McCullers's *The Member of the Wedding* (1946)[143] uses a third person narrator. At first, I would have thought that this would make it very different from Ellen Foster's first person voice; but thanks to McCullers's skilful handling of the free indirect style, she demonstrates that the third person can be just as close. But the most intriguing thing about this narrative voice is its three-tiered layering through the novel's timescale. This was particularly difficult to capture in a diagram, but – as Figure 5 shows – it was possible.

Part One is written from the point of view of 'Frankie'. She is young, headstrong, and often misled and foolish. But she is also full of resolve, and this gives an energy to the narrative, which convinces the reader that – despite the plot appearing to move slowly – it is heading towards an unknown but important conclusion. It is evident that the protagonist is not a character to give up on her dreams and intentions without a fight:

> She wanted to be a boy and go to the war as a marine. She thought about flying aeroplanes and winning gold medals for bravery. But she could not join the war, and this made her sometimes feel restless and blue. She decided to donate blood to the Red Cross… She could hear the army doctors saying that the blood of Frankie Addams was the reddest and strongest blood they had ever known.
>
> (1946, p.30-31)[144]

This also demonstrates a fearlessness in Frankie, which is eroded as the novel progresses. As readers, we are acutely aware of this fearlessness because McCullers chooses to show us Frankie's innermost thoughts. In the story's time, these are not actions – they are Frankie's thoughts, which we can share in detail. This is similar to the effect achieved by many first person narrators. As I read Part One, I considered the reasons why a third person narrative might have been chosen; but as I moved into later

[143] McCullers, C (1946) – *The Member of the Wedding (5th edition)* – Pub. Penguin Classics, London, 2008
[144] ibid. pp.30-31

sections of the novel, I realised McCullers used certain devices which would not have

been as effective – perhaps not even possible – with a first person narrator.

In Part Two, we are introduced to 'F. Jasmine' as our protagonist. It becomes

apparent very quickly that F. Jasmine is, in fact, Frankie Addams. But as her character

is changing, she has chosen to be known by a new name, and this is reflected in the

narration.

> From a back yard down the street, F. Jasmine could hear
> children's voices. She heard the calling voices of the
> neighbourhood children who were trying to dig a swimming
> pool. They were all sizes and all ages, members of nothing,
> and in the summers before, the old Frankie had been like a
> leader or president of the swimming-pool diggers in that
> part of town – but now that she was twelve years old, she
> knew in advance that, though they would work and dig in
> various yards, not doubting to the very last the cool clear
> swimming pool of water, it would all end in a big wide
> ditch of shallow mud.
>
> (1946, p.64)[145]

This is an excellent use of free-indirect style. Frankie now sees herself as F.

Jasmine – therefore so must the author and the reader. The above not only demonstrates

that 'F. Jasmine' is maturing, it also has a condescending tone; F. Jasmine is observing

her childhood past from afar and belittling her former friends' resolve – a flawed

resolve not unlike her own when she decides to donate her 'reddest and strongest blood'

(p.30-31).

Despite her perceptions seeming to mature, Frankie's resolve does not diminish

as she changes into F. Jasmine. She remains intent on going away with her brother and

his wife after their wedding, and not returning to her hometown. So strong is this

conviction, that she acknowledges that the beautiful scene with Berenice and John

Henry, in the kitchen at twilight[146], is the last:

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[145] ibid. pp.64
[146] ibid. pp. 132-145

> Already the moths were at the window, flattening their wings against the screen, and the final kitchen afternoon was over at last.
>
> (1946, p.145)[147]

Of course, this is portrayed through the third person narrator, but once again the clever use of free indirect style means we know it is F. Jasmine who experiences this. It is a threshold – in this final afternoon with Berenice and John Henry, F. Jasmine confronts the thought of her own mortality, and considers what happens after death. After coming to terms with these ideas, her world can never be the same. Later in the section, her panicked escape from the soldier's hotel room[148] seems to return to these thoughts. Is he dead? What has she done?

Finally, in Part Three, 'F. Jasmine' becomes 'Frances'. Even though, from the narration, she seems more mature, her actions betray the fact that she is not quite an adult yet. Despite her resolve - for example, holding on to the idea of going away with her brother and his new wife[149] - she is still powerless when events overtake her. Frances perceives herself as having control over her own life, but she does not. Her brother and his wife go away without her, she cannot escape her home town, she will not find out what happened to the soldier, and – most tragically of all – there is nothing she can do to stop John Henry from dying.

Perhaps the greatest irony of this final phase of the novel is that none of the characters are ever in control of their own destiny. Ownership of the novel is something I explore later in this thesis[150]: but for now, I wish to draw attention to it from a structural point of view.

In my diagram of *The Member of the Wedding* (Figure 5) the novel appears at first to be very complex. It begins with the author, but, instead of there just being one narrative point of view, there are three in parallel. The author's 'closeness' passes from

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[147] ibid. pp.145
[148] ibid. pp.159-164
[149] ibid. 167-168
[150] See Section Three

Frankie, to F. Jasmine, to Frances with the passage of time within the story (represented by the large horizontal arrow). One after the other, these narrative 'strands' pass to the reader in sequence, taking them on a journey that witnesses Frances Addams's coming of age *as she experiences it.* This gives the reader a slightly more informed perspective from that of the protagonist, which could not have been achieved so smoothly without the use of third-person, free indirect style. The way in which 'Frankie' changes her name to 'F. Jasmine' and 'Frances' is central to the reader's perception of her changing character, and in the first person, this would have been absent (except perhaps for references in direct speech).

But even with all of its 'horizontal' complexity, the diagram for *The Member of the Wedding* shares a 'vertical' simplicity with the diagram for *Ellen Foster.* In both examples, we see the author as having control, and feeding the story to the reader via a central character and their perceptions. Whether this is via first person, or via third person, the dynamics are very much the same. The reader feels as if they are the central character, and they are convinced of the apparent 'truth' of the novel.

Following all of this analysis, I knew it was also important to capture my novel in diagrammatic form. My narrator is a central character in *Over the Kite Path* and – similarly to Frances Addams and Ellen Foster - her unreliability is vital to the unravelling plot. But as I constructed the story, I wanted to experiment with the notion of dramatic irony. Would it be possible to achieve a situation where the reader is aware of more than the narrator, not just because they are less naïve, but because they have actually *seen* more from the story world? From the outset, I was unsure that this would work, but there was only one way to find out for certain.

As described in earlier sections of this thesis, I created letters and postcards written by the characters, and even a telegram, which could all be viewed by the reader

in their 'original form' – i.e. as fictional primary sources. When I visited the Imperial War Museum, London, I saw several telegrams that were sent during World War Two. Some of them delivered the devastating news that a loved one was missing in action or dead, and the power of seeing these small, sepia documents was a moment I will never forget. They seemed to radiate the pain and distress, surviving through history and allowing me to empathise with their original recipients. In terms of narrative voice, I realised that these objects had their own messages, and had no need for a narrator.

These documents – when created – helped to build my story world and make it convincing to me as the author, but what if my reader had access to them? For certain moments in the story, I wondered whether I would need Nora's perspective through the prose, if the documents themselves would be evocative enough.

One specific example is the moment when Mrs Caddick learns that her son has been killed in action[151] (as described earlier in this thesis[152]). I wrote this scene in the novel over and over, but could not achieve the right dramatic effect. Then I had the idea of creating a telegram for my fictional world (Figure 6). In one draft of this scene, Nora describes the arrival of the telegram delivery boy and Mrs Caddick's reaction as she reads the telegram. Although the reader can guess the news, if the telegram were to be presented to the reader on the page, the news would be confirmed to the reader in precisely the same moment – and the same way - as it is confirmed to Nora. In other words, the news is delivered directly to the reader via the telegram.

Likewise, clues about the sub-plots of the novel could have been delivered via letters and postcards, some of which Nora read and wrote. I experimented with the idea that some fictional artefacts could be discovered by the reader, but not necessarily by Nora. This way, a sense of dramatic irony would not be based on the reader's speculation, but on evidence.

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[151] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 20, pp. 224-225
[152] See Section One, under *Fictional Artefacts*

The diagrammatic representation of the draft of *Over the Kite Path* that *included* the fictional artefacts can be seen in Figure 7. In the early stages of redrafting, this approach seemed like a good idea, but – as described earlier in this thesis – I found that as the novel developed, and these artefacts helped *my* understanding of the story world as author, the value of their inclusion in the novel itself diminished – not least because the quality of my writing improved because the artefacts had helped me. I decided that the fictional artefacts should be removed, and they were highly effective as writing aids, and making my perceptions of the story world more vivid. I hoped that in turn this would translate to the reader through Nora. If Nora's reaction were harnessed in the immediacy of the prose, there would be no need for the artefacts themselves. In addition, their inclusion could mean that the reader is denied the opportunity to speculate, and therefore the suspense could be greatly reduced.

Although I chose not to place my fictional artefacts in the novel itself, they did raise interesting questions about the dynamics of narrative voice. The way in which I interacted with the artefacts as author, and the effect this had on the novel, can be seen in Figure 8, and it is interesting to see the contrast with the diagram of my earlier draft.

The relationships between author, narrator and reader are far more complex than the obvious three-tier mechanism that we often perceive in writing practice and literary criticism. By expressing the complex narrative matrix of each novel in a diagram, I have been able to define various narrative structures, and assess the effectiveness of each narrative voice on the reader. Where the lines between fiction and reality are blurred, the structural reasons behind this have been defined.

As a writer, I have come to the overwhelming conclusion that 'Narrative Voice' is not simply about the layers of reader, narrator and author. It is about existentialist,

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multiple levels of consciousness that manipulate the reader as they construct, and then

dissect, the very purpose of a novel.

Diagram to illustrate the flow of information between
Author, Narrator and Reader in
The Remains of the Day (Kazuo Ishiguro)
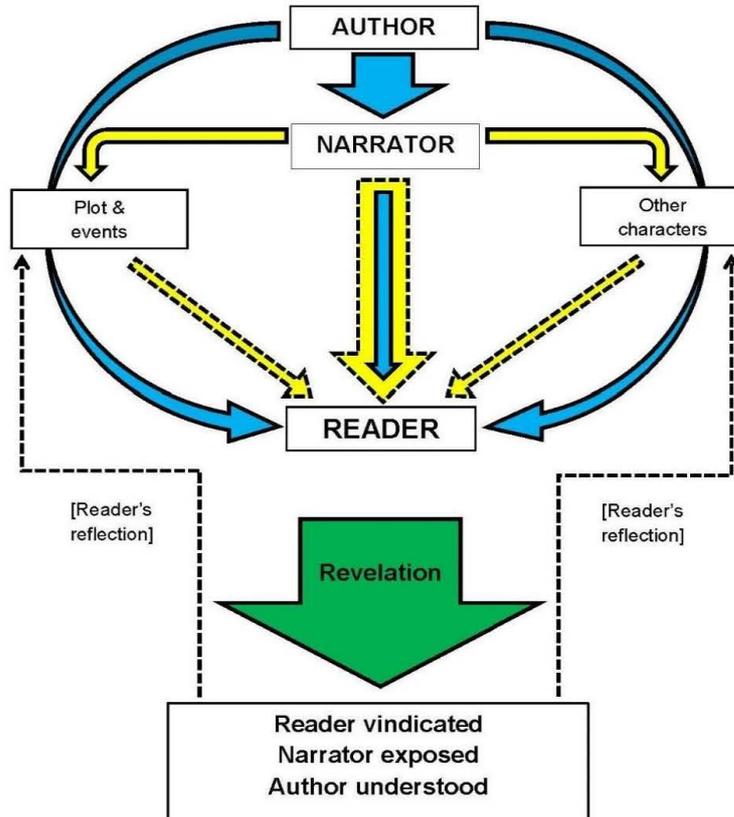

```
                    ┌──────────┐
                    │  AUTHOR  │
                    └──────────┘

                    ┌──────────┐
                    │ NARRATOR │
                    └──────────┘

┌──────────┐                      ┌──────────┐
│  Plot &  │                      │  Other   │
│  events  │                      │characters│
└──────────┘                      └──────────┘

                    ┌──────────┐
                    │  READER  │
                    └──────────┘
```

[Reader's reflection]   [Reader's reflection]

Revelation

**Reader vindicated
Narrator exposed
Author understood**

Key:

= Author's influence

= Author's influence (implicit)

= Narrator's influence

= Narrator's influence (unreliable/untrustworthy)

= Blended/shared understanding reached by reader when author's and narrator's influences combine (this includes green 'shapes' in the diagrams)

= Reflection

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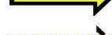
Figure 2:

Diagram to illustrate the flow of information between
Author, Narrator and Reader in
Atonement (Ian McEwan)
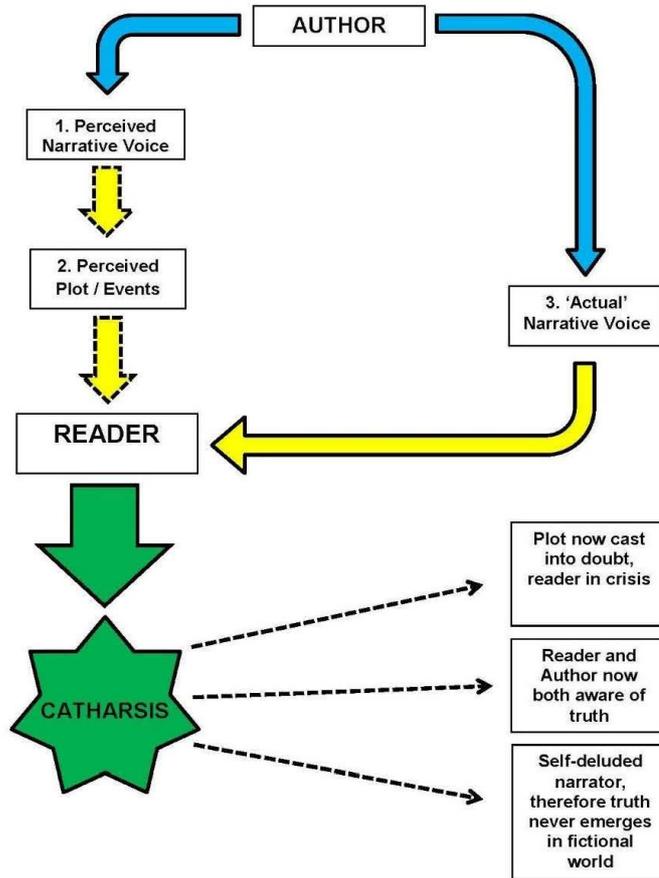
AUTHOR

1. Perceived Narrative Voice

2. Perceived Plot / Events

3. 'Actual' Narrative Voice

READER

CATHARSIS

Plot now cast into doubt, reader in crisis

Reader and Author now both aware of truth

Self-deluded narrator, therefore truth never emerges in fictional world

Key:

= Author's influence

= Author's influence (implicit)

= Narrator's influence

= Narrator's influence (unreliable/untrustworthy)

= Blended/shared understanding reached by reader when author's and narrator's influences combine (this includes green 'shapes' in the diagrams)

= Reflection

Figure 3:

Diagram to illustrate the flow of information between
Author, Narrator and Reader in
I Partridge: We Need to Talk About Alan
(Steve Coogan, Armando Iannucci, et al.)
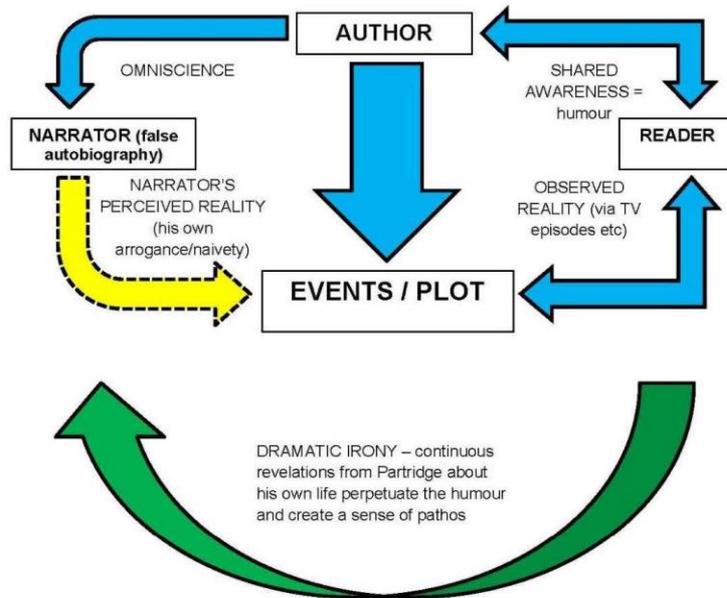
AUTHOR

OMNISCIENCE

SHARED AWARENESS = humour

NARRATOR (false autobiography)

READER

NARRATOR'S PERCEIVED REALITY (his own arrogance/naivety)

OBSERVED REALITY (via TV episodes etc)

EVENTS / PLOT

DRAMATIC IRONY – continuous revelations from Partridge about his own life perpetuate the humour and create a sense of pathos

Key:

= Author's influence

= Narrator's influence

= Narrator's influence (unreliable/untrustworthy)

= Blended/shared understanding reached by reader when author's and narrator's influences combine (this includes green 'shapes' in the diagrams)

Figure 4:

Diagram to illustrate the flow of information
between Author, Narrator and Reader in
Ellen Foster (Kaye Gibbons)

AUTHOR

Reader's reflection on the sense of dramatic irony: reader and author more aware than narrator until the narrator is enlightened

NARRATOR
(Narrator filters and makes sense of events – the 'truth' of the novel is her truth)

Reader's reflection on the evolution of the narrator throughout the novel – this is the author's intention.

READER

Key:
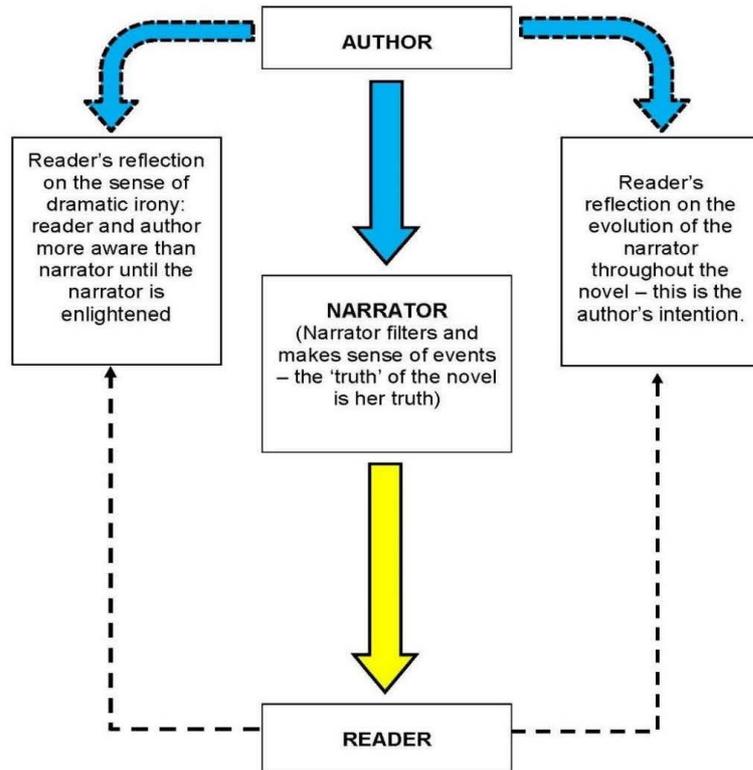
= Author's influence

= Author's influence (implicit)

= Narrator's influence

= Reflection

Figure 5:

Diagram to illustrate the flow of information between
Author, Narrator and Reader in
The Member of the Wedding (Carson McCullers)

AUTHOR

NARRATIVE VOICE 1:
Free indirect Style from POV of 'Frankie' (naive perspective – the end of childhood)

NARRATIVE VOICE 2:
Free indirect style from POV of 'F. Jasmine' (dramatic irony, growing awareness, the end of an era)

NARRATIVE VOICE 3:
Free indirect style from POV of 'Frances' (crossing a threshold, sense of loss, but also of growing maturity)

PROGRESSION OF EMPATHY WITH EACH VOICE

= A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASSING OF TIME

READER
(learns about the events alongside protagonist, but has enhanced awareness because of free indirect style narration)

Key:

= Author's influence

= Narrator's influence

= Blended/shared understanding reached by reader when author's and narrator's influences combine (this includes green 'shapes' in the diagrams)

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.

C. OR B.

Charges to pay

Recd. from 40 W/HJ

268110/DG - 2.9

By

No. of Telegram 55

Office Stamp

Sent...............M.

To.....................

By................

WREXM 1940

Prefix Handed in at.............M

Office of Origin and Service Instructions

Words Received here at

49 2.9 CAI EGPT 40

MRS E CADDICK - TY CIGFRAN FARM - RUTHIN - WALES - LL15

REGRET TO INFORM YOU YOUR SON - GWILYM - HJ268110/DG -

IS MISSING PRESUMED DEAD ON WAR SERVICE.

LETTER FOLLOWS= = =ROYAL AIR FORCE BARRACKS

CAIRO, EGYPT.

Figure 7:

Diagram to illustrate the flow of information between
Author, Narrator and Reader in
Over the Kite Path [My own novel] -
Version with fictional artefacts
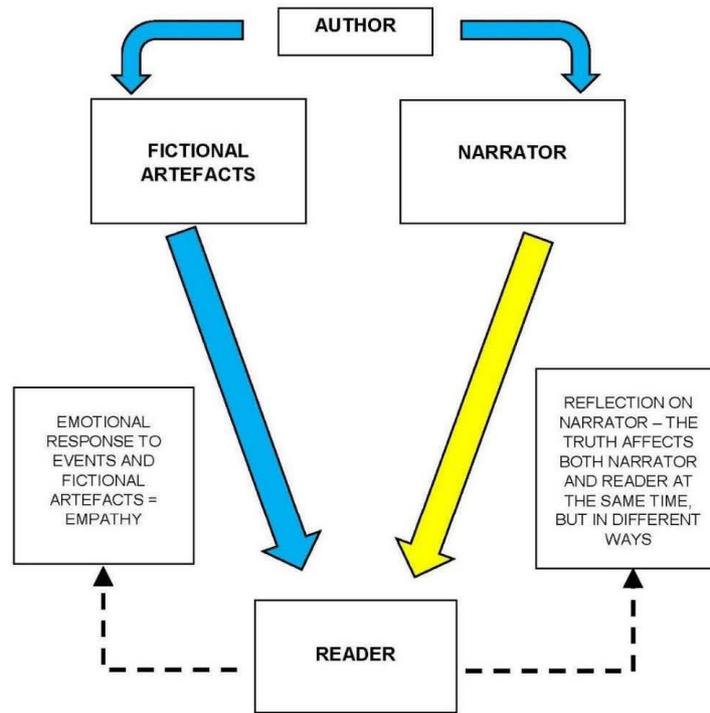
AUTHOR

FICTIONAL ARTEFACTS

NARRATOR

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO EVENTS AND FICTIONAL ARTEFACTS = EMPATHY

REFLECTION ON NARRATOR – THE TRUTH AFFECTS BOTH NARRATOR AND READER AT THE SAME TIME, BUT IN DIFFERENT WAYS

READER

Key:

= Author's influence

= Narrator's influence

= Reflection

Diagram to illustrate the flow of information between
Author, Narrator and Reader in
Over the Kite Path [My own novel] -
Version without fictional artefacts
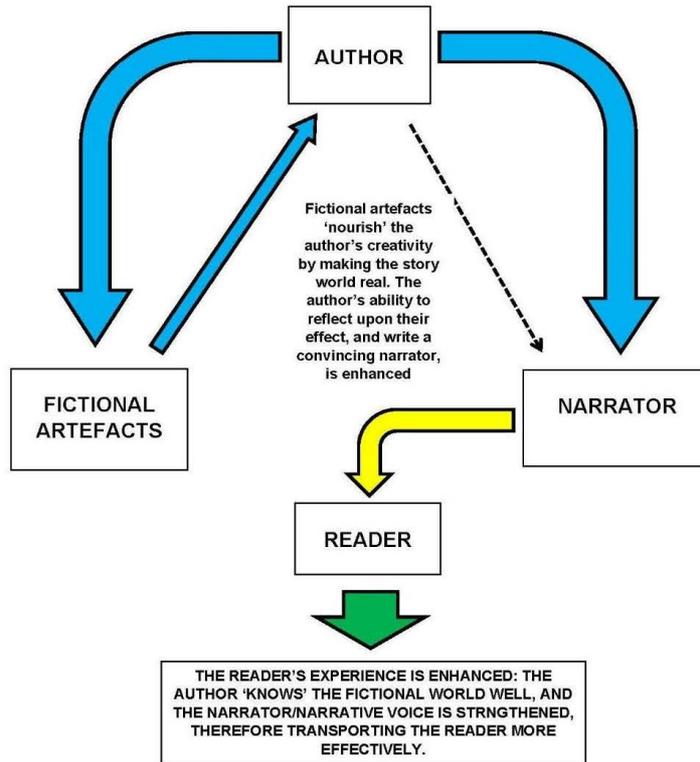
AUTHOR

Fictional artefacts
'nourish' the
author's creativity
by making the story
world real. The
author's ability to
reflect upon their
effect, and write a
convincing narrator,
is enhanced

FICTIONAL
ARTEFACTS

NARRATOR

READER

THE READER'S EXPERIENCE IS ENHANCED: THE
AUTHOR 'KNOWS' THE FICTIONAL WORLD WELL, AND
THE NARRATOR/NARRATIVE VOICE IS STRNGTHENED,
THEREFORE TRANSPORTING THE READER MORE
EFFECTIVELY.

Key:

= Author's influence

= Narrator's influence

= Blended/shared understanding reached by reader when author's and narrator's
  influences combine (this includes green 'shapes' in the diagrams)

------▶ = Reflection

<u>Point of View, Voice, and Character: Writing the Child vs. Writing *as* a Child</u>

In the previous section, I explored the mechanics of Author, Narrator and Reader, but how did this structural analysis relate to my ability to write a convincing narrator? How did my narrator become convincing, and how did I work with her to allow her voice to come to the fore?

Many writers have written novels seen from the point of view of the child in either a first person, or a third person narrative point of view. When reading as a writer, especially while trying to capture Nora's voice and perspective, I observed the various techniques used so that I could not only try to perfect my own style, but also to find how my novel related to them.

When a third person point of view is used, the closeness of the narrator to both the author and the reader depends very much on the style of the narration, and its reliance on the free indirect style. Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* (1897)[153] is a novel that focuses on the child but from a slight distance. At times, for example the opening of Chapter Twelve, the narration seems intimate with the child and her thoughts:

> It may indeed be said that these days brought on a high
> quickening of Maisie's direct perceptions, of her gratified
> sense of arriving by herself at conclusions. This was helped
> by an emotion intrinsically far from sweet - the increase of
> the alarm that had most haunted her meditations...
>
> (1897, p.75)[154]

Here, I emphasise that I used the phrase 'seems' intimate. The narrative voice expresses Maisie's perceptions in great detail, therefore it is informed by her; but it is

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[153] James, H (1897) - *What Maisie Knew* (Penguin Classics Edition*)* - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2010
[154] ibid. pp.75 (Chapter 12)

not her voice, language or syntax. Her perceptions remain the anchor, providing evidence through her observations, which James can then work into prose, with his voice, language and syntax. The very fact that the above emotion is told and not shown (Stein, 1998)[155] puts distance between me as the reader, and the events of the story from Maisie's immediate perspective. It should be remembered that at the time when James was writing, the idea of showing and not telling was not an engrained part of good writing practice, as it is today. James was one of the first writers to construct a novel around the character as a lens, and many of the techniques used in contemporary writing to achieve psychological realism can be traced back to writers like James.

Another example of this, one that I found jarring, was in Chapter 16, when Mrs Beale sparred verbally with Sir Claude. Here, the narration states: 'The child, on her feet, was all emotion...' (1897, p.97)[156]

At first my impression was that, as the reader, I was being told how Maisie felt by the third person narrator, rather than shown. However, on closer examination of the novel – and of James – I realised how important it was to see this novel – and its narrative style – in context.

The narrative style of James's novel witnesses his close allegiance to the protagonists (for example, Maisie (1897[157])) and places them at the centre of the novel. As readers, we are made curious about them. We are not privy to every thought, and what those undisclosed thoughts might be is part of what compels us as readers. What is the effect on this child, Maisie, of the behaviour of these adults who are supposedly trusted with her wellbeing? 'The child, on her feet, was all emotion' (1897, p.97)[158] seems over-written when seen from the point of view of a contemporary reader. But it is a sentence that focuses on the protagonist. She is 'all emotion'. Though this may seem

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[155] Stein, S (1998) - *Solutions for Writers* (4th Edition) - *Pub.* London: Souvenir Press Ltd, 2003. - Chapter 12: How to Show Instead of Tell (pp.122)
[156] James, H (1897)- *What Maisie Knew* - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2010, Chapter 16, pp.97
[157] ibid. – throughout the novel
[158] James, H (1897)- *What Maisie Knew* - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2010, Chapter 16, pp.97

too non-specific a phrase to be useful in itself, it does demonstrate that she is on her feet, and that makes us curious and involved in her; we are tracing the events of the novel in terms of their impact upon the child.

My growing empathy for Maisie, throughout the novel, is created by James's use of lines like this to bring me back to her all the time. She is the consciousness that observes everything, and the centrepiece around which everything happens, yet the adults in her life are too self-absorbed to realise it. James works hard to show Maisie as a durable, intelligent protagonist who *notices* things and thinks deeply about them. This creates an intimacy with her, as if Maisie's thoughts and observations are a secret between the author, narrator and reader, and hidden from – or un-noticed by - other characters in the novel.

It is interesting to compare James's third person narrative voice in *What Maisie Knew* with the third person narrative voice in JG Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* (1984)[159]. Of course, these two novels were separated by nearly a hundred years, in which first person and free indirect style had been honed and developed by numerous writers.

Empire of the Sun shows strong autobiographical elements, and perhaps because this places the author closer to the narrator, the novel's narrative voice is likely to have immediacy and intimacy. This way, it might connect the protagonist more directly to the reader. At times, it seems to be third person narration only in grammatical terms, and in many places, the perspective could not have been made any closer to young Jim. Even in the third person, Ballard adopts the tone and language of Jim in order to convince the reader he is 'real'. Descriptions are not only vivid, but there is a childlike naivety to the observations. One of the most striking moments when this occurs, is the moment when Jim thinks that he has started the war himself, by sending signals out through his bedroom window:

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[159] Ballard, JG (1984) - *Empire of the Sun* (3rd Edition) - Pub. London: Harper Perennial, 2006

> ... But Jim watched sombrely. He realised that he himself
> had probably started the war, with his confused semaphores
> from the window that the Japanese officers in the motor
> launch had misinterpreted. He knew now that he should
> have stayed in the cubs. Perhaps the Reverend Matthews
> would cane him in front of the whole school for being a
> spy...
>
> (1984, p.43)[160]

Here, Ballard is telling us what Jim is thinking, but in a very different way from James narrating Maisie's feelings. Ballard is telling us the details of Jim's thoughts - he is giving us a window to see directly into the depths of Jim's anxieties, rather than just telling us he was anxious and guilty about the start of the war because... Like Maisie, Jim is a filter between author and reader, but the way in which he filters is different. His thoughts are somehow more self-absorbed – and he reports what he experiences with a certain bluntness. This bluntness comes initially from his being a child, but as the book progresses and he grows more mature, his perceptions are also blunted by what he witnesses.

But this isn't the only way in which Ballard's narration in *Empire of the Sun* is childlike and convincing. Throughout the novel, Jim makes many observations that are very much the observations of a boy his age - and they are presented in a fluid and immediate way by the narration. This makes him highly convincing to me as a reader. Take, for example, the way that Jim clings day after day to the constants of the 'Open Air Cinema' in Chapter 13:

> ... And every afternoon there was a shadow film of the
> Shanghai skyline... Jim watched the letters of the Park Hotel
> neon sign blur and fade...
>
> (1984, p.110) [161]

This not only shows us Jim's perspective in an intense and intimate way; it also demonstrates that Jim is so bored, so tired and fatigued by the monotony of his

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[160] ibid. pp.43 (Chapter 4)
[161] ibid. pp. 110 (Chapter 13)

experiences, that he is clinging to the signals of another day passing, in order to mark the time. He is also finding amusement in things that are repetitive and predictable. With a third person narrative voice, Ballard could have told us what a bored, tired child Jim was, but instead, through free indirect narration, the voice of the author merges frequently with the voice of the narrator, and Ballard takes us straight to the protagonist, generating empathy, and also a sense of dramatic irony. After all, the reader is aware that the silhouette of the Shanghai skyline is not a cinema at all, and is not suspending disbelief in the same way that Jim is himself.

Ballard drew inspiration for the novel from his own experiences, but it is not his experiences that make the events of the novel immediate and 'close' to the central character. This is achieved only through Ballard's skill and carefully crafted technique, so that the central character seems tangible and alive to the reader, and their connection is unshakable.

The above examples are both from novels that use third person narrative voices, but there are also many first person narrative voices that depict child protagonists who prove, to some degree, to be unreliable. The examples I studied while writing my own novel were varied. My own narrator, Nora, is unreliable, not least because of the very fact that she is a child. The conclusions she jumps to, and the things that she misinterprets, are partly because of her own naivety, but also because the adults around her do not explain things fully, and are not always honest.

In contrast, the child narrator's perception could be seen implicitly to carry a different kind of authority – an honesty that is receptive to different kinds of 'truths', which are not always noticed by more 'knowing' adults in the story.

Another example of a well-meaning but misguided child narrator is *The Go Between* by LP Hartley (1953)[162]. This story is told from the point of view true to the

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[162] Hartley, LP (1953) - *The Go Between* (4th Edition) - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2000

child protagonist, Leo, but - interestingly - it is a narrative voice, which zooms in and out of the story. Because of the opening of the novel, the reader knows that the events of the story will ruin this child, but once we join Child Leo, the perspective through which we observe the plot remains with him until the closing section.

The novel opens with the adult observations of an adult Leo, writing long after the events of the story have taken place. It even goes as far as purposefully distancing the reader from the past, with its opening line: 'The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.' (1953, p.5)[163]

It struck me as I read that the opening of *The Go-between* is not unlike the opening of Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*. Both novels begin with their protagonists in later life and alone, trapped by a world that they have allowed to descend around them. To the reader, it appears that both Stevens and Leo have a chance, as they recount their stories, to escape. However, the techniques used to achieve this are different in each book.

Stevens' journey to the West Country runs in parallel and is interspersed with the unravelling of his past. The reader jumps with Stevens' wandering memories, backwards and forwards in time. Leo's recollections are given to the reader from a static point of view as he writes his memoirs, before he finishes telling his story and tries to take charge of his own fate.

But *The Go-Between* was especially interesting for me, because of its layers and the way it zoomed seamlessly in and out of the main story. It is clear to the reader from the outset that the first person narrator is an adult; but he slips from this adult, retrospective point of view at the end of the Prologue –'Under those cliffs, I thought, I have been buried' (1953, p.18)[164] - straight into a childhood perspective, at the start of

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[163] ibid. pp. 5 (Prologue)
[164] ibid. pp.18 (Prologue)

Chapter 1 – 'Between bouts of stomach-turning trepidation, I looked forward wildly to the visit.' (1953, p.19)[165]

The second statement is reminiscent of Henry James's 'The child, on her feet, was all emotion' (1897, p.97)[166]. But in this case, as a reader, it is in the first person, and it helps to make the transition into the child's world – the narrator's past. Here, and throughout the novel, we are presented with an adult vocabulary describing childlike feelings, but from an internal perspective. We are presented with memories, and the novel is a beautifully articulated flashback. This immerses us in the child's world whilst not allowing us to forget that the whole story is being recounted from the future. The story never stops being told in hindsight, but the reader gains and loses focus on the 'Older Leo' as the narrative lens zooms in and out. For me, in this novel, the protagonist is not the narrator - the protagonist is the narrator's past self, separated by the vocabulary of the narrative voice. Throughout the novel, the immediacy of the child's point of view is interspersed with the narrator's observations of himself as the protagonist.

Take, for example, the passage where Leo discovers magic tricks:

> For the first time, I felt I was someone. But when I tried to explain my improved status to my mother she was puzzled. Success in work she would have understood (and happily I was able to report this also) or success in games (of this I could not boast, but I had hopes of the cricket season). But to be revered as a magician! She gave me a soft, indulgent smile and almost shook her head.
>
> (1953, p.21-22)[167]

For me, this way of narrating the story presents the child vividly, but creates a sense of dramatic irony between the reader and the protagonist. The reader and the narrator are sharing this irony, yet the child's wild enthusiasm for being a magician is

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165 ibid. pp.19 (Chapter 1)
166 James, H (1897)- *What Maisie Knew - *Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2010, Chapter 16, pp.97
167 ibid. pp.21-22 (Chapter 1)

not diminished. In addition, this is laying the foundations for the reader's experience at the end of the novel. The dramatic irony that appears here is one that grows stronger as the novel progresses, and is experienced fully by the reader towards the end, as they reflect on the effect that Child Leo's experiences have had – they have built Older Leo.

This technique seems to work especially well, as the plot of the novel is unravelled through the memory of a child's observations. The narrator knows what is happening, but does not labour this, and so the reader's perceptions stay with the child. The reader perceives that they are piecing together a puzzle with their own awareness, but, in fact, they are simply putting pieces together as they are handed out by the narrator - who has already seen the finished puzzle.

In this sense it could be argued that although Child Leo is an unreliable witness, it is not he who is the unreliable narrator. Adult Leo is telling the story retrospectively, and although he is in full knowledge of the conclusion of the story as he looks backwards, he chooses to tell the story as it unravelled to him, and lets the truth fall gradually to the reader.

For me, this was one of many reasons for not wanting Nora to be a retrospective narrator. I did not want the 'narrator' version of Nora to be telling the story with hindsight. Like Leo[168], I wanted her to be unreliable because of her limited perspective, and her tendency to idolise and put people on pedestals they did not deserve. But I wanted the narrative perspective – the point in time from which she tells the story – to be in parallel with the story itself. I wanted Nora to begin with a limited point of view, but one that was forced wider by the events of the plot.

It is probable that the overarching plot of *Over the Kite Path* would not change greatly if the narrative voice had hindsight. What Nora learns is not life-thwarting, as it is with Leo, and so a retrospective narrator would not be a greatly changed person

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[168] Hartley, LP (1953) - *The Go Between* (4th Edition) - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2000

(though she would be more mature, and the events would be traced with a degree of nostalgia, rather than the effect of an immediacy of experience that the present novel desires). The events of the plot simply bring Nora to a threshold (as with Maisie at the end of James's novel[169]) where readers feel they can leave her. Writing with more of an immediate perspective brings the reader to the threshold *alongside* Nora. I wanted to achieve a narrative voice that did not seem more knowledgeable than the reader. This way, the reader and narrator discover the plot together, as it unravels, and find themselves at the ending – and the threshold - together.

Writing a first person narrative voice that was immediate and – from the narrator's point of view - honest, but *also* written in the past tense, was a constant challenge.

In earlier drafts, I had taken a similar approach to novels such as *The Go-Between* and *The Remains of the Day*, but when I tried to write a retrospective first person account of events, I found this distanced me from Nora. Minimising the distance between narrator and author was as important as minimising the distance between narrator and reader.

But how would I write a past tense, first person narrative voice that gave the illusion of being present and immediate? I set about finding narrative voices that might achieve this. One obvious example was Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003)[170]. In earlier sections of this thesis, I have discussed various techniques Haddon uses to make the novel itself immediate to the reader (such as presenting 'fictional artefacts') but one of the most powerful elements of this is his choice of narrative voice.

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[169] James, H (1897)- *What Maisie Knew* - Pub. London: Penguin Classics, 2010,
[170] Haddon, M (2003) - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* - Pub. London: Vintage, 2003.

The first person narrative voice is that of a fifteen-year-old boy – Christopher – who is autistic. It is written in the past tense, but it avoids creating a sense of distance in the retrospection. There is an immediacy to every part of the novel, and the reader's closeness to the narrator means they are also close to the present moment. There is little in the narration to make us think back or think very far into the future - except when we are trying to solve puzzles alongside the narrator. As I read, I followed the plot at Christopher's pace, and the way in which the past tense was constructed, reminded me of a diary.

The past tense is often used for diary entries, but because the next day is not known at the time of writing, its narrative voice feels in 'real time'.

Because Haddon uses this technique in the formation of his past tense, Christopher's observations carry me along, and present things directly to me. This is especially strong in moments such as his observations of the station in Chapter 222. His description of everything, given from his hidden viewpoint in the photo booth, shows us not only what is happening around him, but also how he notices it all:

> And I did detecting by watching and I saw that people were
> putting tickets into grey gates and walking through. And
> some of the people were buying tickets at big black
> machines on the wall.
> And I watched 47 people do this and I memorised
> what to do.
>
> (2003, p.212)[171]

This is not simply a description. It is a child with autism, giving us *his* view, with his voice. The use of 'And...' at the start of each sentence makes the prose seem breathless, re-enforcing the reader's awareness of the anxiety that Christopher is experiencing - and even passing the anxiety itself to the reader.

Throughout the novel, Haddon uses clever techniques to ensure that Christopher tells the story by breaking down what he observes into logical pieces of a puzzle. It is

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[171] ibid. pp.212 (Chapter 222)

characteristic of autism, but it also allows the reader to break things down at the same pace (sometimes more quickly than the narrator, because we have more awareness than him of some things), sharing the narrator's consciousness. An example of this is where Christopher realises that there is no way that he can make himself safe. He makes a picture of a flow diagram in his head, which he shares with the reader, and he shows each of the options for safety that are ruled out, by striking them through on the chart (p.162-163)[172]. In another example, Christopher even helps the reader to share his perception of his own place in the universe – a universe that is full of uncertainty - by presenting a diagram of space and time (p.194)[173] [174]

Other examples of how Haddon makes the narrative voice convincing, are Christopher's lists and statements of fact (such as his description of his dislike of yellow things and brown things[175]) and the language with which he relates dialogue (for example, his use of 'And she said... And I said...' when he describes conversations with people around him (p.51-52)[176]). Unlike Henry James, who gifts us with Maisie's perceptions in skilful language that she could not possess as a child, Haddon presents a childlike understanding of the world via childlike language and methods.

Matthew Kneale uses similar techniques to this in his novel, *When We Were Romans* (2007)[177], which is narrated by a nine-year-old boy called Lawrence. I was interested by this text because the narrator was the same age as mine, and in similar circumstances (i.e. removed from his 'usual' life by circumstances).

But I personally found Lawrence's narrative voice slightly less convincing than Christopher's. Without doubt, Kneale uses some innovative strategies to convince the

[172] ibid. pp.162-63 (Chapter 179)
[173] Ibid. pp. 194 (Chapter 197)
[174] I will explore the concepts of space and time in relation to the novel later in this section (see *'The Bildungsroman and Minkowski Space-Time.'*)
[175] Haddon, M (2003) - *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* - Pub. London: Vintage, 2003. pp.105-107 (Chapter 131)
[176] ibid. pp.51-52 (Chapter 67)
[177] Kneale, M (2007) - *When We Were Romans* (2nd Edition) - Pub. London: Picador, 2008

reader that the story is being told by a nine-year old, such as the narrator's poor spelling. This appears not just in speech, but in the actual exposition as well. Lawrence's mother's nickname for him – *'les enfants'* - is misspelt as 'lesonfon' (p.4)[178]. This is in direct speech, but it is direct speech that has been heard by the narrator, and then 'written' by him. This technique makes us intensely aware of the narrative voice, and also of the fact that the narrator is a child, and therefore likely to be unreliable. Other examples are putting two 'l's on words that end in 'ful' (e.g. *'beautifull'* (p.8)[179] and *'wonderfull'* (p.154)[180]) and also misspelt names (such as *'Franseen'* (p.39)[181] (Francine) and the *'Romens'* (p.82)[182] (Romans).

This seems an original idea[183], and is used to help convince the reader that the narrator is a child, who is naive and inexperienced, and who therefore cannot spell some words he encounters by ear.

While it serves as evidence of the narrator's identity, it is inconsistent. If Lawrence cannot spell 'Francine' correctly throughout the novel, why can he spell *'Caesar'* (p.55)[184] correctly in Chapter Two? And why is *'Caligula'* spelled correctly at first (p.54)[185], and then spelled as *'Caligulla'* later in the same chapter (p.77)[186]?

It could be argued that such inconsistencies serve to convince the reader that the narrator is a child, therefore less well informed than the adults around him and more prone to misinterpret situations. But my personal experience as a reader is that I found myself constantly distracted by the bad spelling - it broke the fictional 'dream' (Gardner, 1984)[187].

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[178] ibid. pp.4 (and throughout the novel)
[179] ibid. pp.8
[180] ibid. pp.154
[181] ibid. pp. 39 (and throughout the novel)
[182] ibid. pp.82
[183] Though there are examples of a *child author telling a story with childlike language and spelling* - see my comments on Daisy Ashford, and *The Young Visiters* below.
[184] Kneale, M (2007) - *When We Were Romans* (2nd Edition) - Pub. London: Picador, 2008. pp.55
[185] ibid. pp.54
[186] ibid. pp.77
[187] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 1991 - Chapter 2, pp. 17-38

There are also moments when the bad spelling becomes confusing. In Chapter Five, when Lawrence's mother is showing clear signs of delusion, she grows suspicious about a cake:

> ... she looked sort of sad now, she was holding the cake and she was looking at the floor. She said 'smell it, Lawrence love, its poisson.'
>
> <div align="right">(2007, p.198)[188]</div>

Because this part of the story is set in a foreign country, with characters of various nationalities leading unusual lives, I completely misinterpreted this line. I took 'poisson' to be the French word for 'fish' and - for a moment at least - thought his mother is saying the cake smelled of fish. After all, if she is delusional, she might.

It was only when I instantly questioned this, and re-read the sentence, that I realised she is saying it smelled of *poison*, which gives this moment a completely different emphasis. Of course, it could be that it is intended as a joke – either between the mother and Lawrence (she is genuinely saying the cake smells of fish and is therefore inedible) or between the author and the reader (highlighting how Lawrence has misspelled poison and ended up writing an actual French word). But in the moment when I first read this extract, I was not sure how the author intended it to be interpreted.

The most important point about the bad spelling in the text is not that it is inconsistent or jarring, or even that through my own error, it was misinterpreted; the point is that *it was noticed*, and when the reader notices that a technique is being used, the 'illusion' of the narrator falls away to expose the writer.

For me, the narrative voice must be seamless, to be convincing. The reader must empathise with and believe in the narrator without a moment's break (unless, of course, it is genuinely the writer's intention that a break should come – as discussed by

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[188] Kneale, M (2007) - *When We Were Romans* (2nd Edition) - Pub. London: Picador, 2008 - Chapter Five, pp.198

Gardner[189] in *The Art of Fiction* (1984) and practised by McEwan[190] in the closing chapter of *Atonement* (2001)). So if techniques are being used, the reader should not consciously observe them unless they are really, *really* looking for them. I am reminded again of Sol Stein's warning that 'several slips can be fatal.' (1998, p.129)[191]

Errors in spelling, or clumsy phrasing, can also be found in an *authentic* child's voice. An example of this was *The Young Visiters* by Daisy Ashford (1919)[192]. Ashford wrote this novel when she was nine years old, and – especially given the narrator of my novel - I found it especially interesting to note not only the style of this child's novel, but also what she chose to focus on as she told her story.

Ashford is articulate, but evidently struggles to harness her advanced vocabulary in the written form. Punctuation is often absent or used incorrectly, and speech is not written using speech marks:

> One can not gamble on anything really said Procurio
> returning to the hot water pipes though of course I know a
> lot more than most people about the inmates here.
>   (1919, p.51)[193]

This extract shows that Ashford is quite capable of expressing her imagination and ideas, but she is not yet a practised writer. Authors such as Haddon and Kneale are aspiring to create the illusion that a child is telling the story by attempting to imitate the way in which a child might write.

The Young Visiters was also useful to me as the writer is the same age as my narrator. I found it interesting to note what is emphasised in Ashford's prose, and how things are emphasised. Personally, I found Ashford's depiction of romance to be one of

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[189] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 1991 – Chapter 2, pp. 87
[190] McEwan, I (2001) - *Atonement* (2nd Edition) - Pub. London: Vintage.
[191] Stein, S (1998) - *Solutions for Writers* (4th Edition) - *Pub.* London: Souvenir Press Ltd, 2003 - pp. 129 (Choosing a Point of View)
[192] Ashford, D (1919) – *The Young Visiters or Mr Salteenas Plan (re-published edition)* – Pub. Forgotten Books, London, 2012
[193] Ibid. pp.51

the most charming things in the book. The moment when Ethel falls in love with

Bernard is delightful:

> Oh Bernard she sighed fervently I certainly love you madly
> you are to me like a Heathen god she cried looking at his
> manly form and handsome flashing face I will indeed marry
> you.
> How soon gasped Bernard gazing at her intensely.
> As soon as possible said Ethel gently closing her
> eyes.
> My Darling whispered Bernard and he seized her in
> his arms we will be marrid next week.
> (1919, p.192)[194]

If this had been written by an adult, it would surely be considered clichéd and

stereotypical. But this is a nine-year-old author, flexing her muscles and trying to

capture romantic love. It is also particularly interesting to note that Bernard is described

as 'a Heathen god' with manly form and a 'handsome flashing face' (see above). I had

not read this novel when I wrote most of my own, yet the above description is

comparable with Nora's obsession with the Archangel Gabriel, and her habit of likening

Lewis Owen to him. Take this extract from Chapter 8 of *Over the Kite Path:*

> Mr Owen turned and light flashed across his face. I thought
> of Archangel Gabriel again, with fire and ice in his eyes.[195]

Some authors are skilful at capturing an *imaginary* child's point of view, by

making good choices about what to observe and emphasise from the narrator's

perspective.

A writer who seems an expert at creating a convincing child's narrative

perspective is Frank Cottrell Boyce. In his short novel, *The Unforgotten Coat* (2011)[196]*,*

Cottrell Boyce creates the story world through his child narrator, Julie. Her style (one

which is given to her by Boyce) is loose and colloquial, and the book is peppered with

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[194] Ibid. pp.192
[195] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 8, pp.96
[196] Cottrell Boyce, F (2011) - *The Unforgotten Coat* (Promotional edition, Our Read 2011) - Pub. London: The Reader Organisation.

words in large font, and photographs, giving it the appearance of a school exercise book.

Even though it seems that the story is told from the point of view of Julie as a child, the narrative voice occasionally veers into of the adult Julie, remembering childhood moments. As with Hartley's *The Go-Between,* this is deliberate and seamless, but the language and tone of the narrative voice is different. It often happens at the opening of a new section, reminding us (as Hartley did) that the story has an inevitable end - the children in it will depart and leave behind remnants of the past:

> That's not Nergui's coat in the picture. That's Chingis's coat. I saw that coat today for the first time since we all left. I'd heard that they were going to knock the school down in the summer. As it was the last day of term and my last chance to take a look, I went over on my way back to work.
>
> (2011, p.17)[197]

Perhaps one of the reasons that these recollections ease us in and out of Julie's childhood is that the language used in these sections of the text, is almost as child-like as the sections where we return to the child's point of view. Instead of recounting the retrospective story of childhood by using adult language, Cottrell-Boyce is staying with the child-like tone when he brings us forward to the 'present day'.

This is the opposite of the perpetually adult voice of *What Maisie Knew* (James, 1897) but it is equally effective. It's also different from *The Go-Between* (Hartley, 1953) and other novels with a retrospective element such as – for example - Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)[198]. In novels such as these, the retrospective free indirect style makes it clear to the reader that the child lives on, and becomes part of an adult world. To the reader, there is a constant awareness that the experiences described in these novels are formative. They make the overarching, adult narrator who they are.

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[197] ibid. pp.17
[198] Lee, H (1960) – *To Kill a Mockingbird* – Pub. Arrow Books, London, 1997.

Many novels that are written from a child's perspective touch on the notion of lost innocence, or some kind of transition. In many examples, such as Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* or Hartley's *The Go Between,* the story starts in a child's 'paradise,' which is subsequently lost. This is even the case in Donoghue's *Room* (2010)[199], where the child initially perceives his existence in the beginning of the novel as the norm, and this is disrupted when he escapes into the real world with his mother. The narrator finds this confusing and the source of great anxiety (while other characters, and the reader, know it is an escape), and through this, a sense of loss is generated.

The narrative voice and point of view in *The Unforgotten Coat* does not require the reader to switch from one point of view (i.e. the overarching, adult narrator) to the other (i.e. the child, in the moment, as things happen), and the use of free indirect style here is more consistent. From this consistency, it is clear and believable that the adult who is remembering is the same individual as the child they describe.

The Unforgotten Coat uses many devices to convince the reader that the story world is real - not least a series of photos, and the use of handwritten words, or large type. Unlike Proulx's postcards (*Postcards, 1992)*[200], these actually help to tell the story. Some of the most important moments of the novel - not least the final twist - are delivered solely via photographs, leaving the reader to piece things together which are not in the body of the text. The constant references to real places in Liverpool give the story credence – which, in turn, increases its verisimilitude, and allows the reader place the story within their own world.

But convincing, immediate narrative can come from the most traditional of narrative forms. One of the greatest influences on my novel's narrative voice was Judith Kerr's *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* (1971)[201]. Although this is a third person narrative

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[199] Donoghue, E (2010) - *Room* – Pub. Picador, London, 2011 – pp.3
[200] Proulx, EA (1992) - *Postcards* (5th Edition) - Pub. London: Fourth Estate, 2009.
[201] Kerr, J (1971) – *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* (Part of the omnibus edition, *Out of the Hitler Time*) – Pub. Harper College Children's Books, New edition, 2002

voice, it is very similar in style to Nora's first person. This is largely because of Kerr's fluent and seamless use of the free indirect style. The tone and syntax in the narration are more adult than they would have been if the protagonist, Anna, had written it herself, but the point of view is flawless. Like Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* (1984)[202], Kerr's novel is greatly influenced by her experiences as a child – this time in Germany - and this comes through in the text. But the protagonist – and what is reported to the reader – seems more sheltered. Anna's awareness is less than Jim's, and throughout her ordeal her parents protect her. Both Anna's Germany and Jim's Singapore, are torn apart by war (or in Anna's case, the build-up to it), but Anna's perspective is more of a sheltered one.

This could also be compared to Maisie's sheltered perspective in *What Maisie Knew* (James, 1897), but Henry James tells Maisie's story in sophisticated prose, with a child's perspective. Judith Kerr tells Anna's story using a child-like (though not child*ish*) tone. There are beautiful sections of the text when this is blended with a perfect child perspective, to deliver moments such as the family's arrival at their destination on the train:

> 'Where are we?' asked Mama.
> Anna spelled out the name of an illuminated sign.
> 'Bovril,' she said.
> 'It can't be,' said Max. 'The last place we stopped at
> was called Bovril.'[203]
>
> (1971, p.236)

The childhood perspective gives irony to the ending of the novel when Anna reflects on her prospects of becoming famous, because she might have had a difficult childhood:

> She remembered the long, weary journey from Berlin with
> Mama, how it had rained, and how she had read Gunther's
> book and wished for a difficult childhood so that she might
> one day become famous. Had her wish then come true?

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[202] Ballard, JG (1984) - *Empire of the Sun* (3rd Edition) - Pub. London: Harper Perennial, 2006
[203] ibid. pp.236 (Chapter Twenty-four)

> Could her life since she had left Germany really be
> described as a difficult childhood? She thought of the flat in
> Paris and the Gasthof Zwirn. No, it was absurd. Some
> things had been difficult, but it had always been interesting
> and often funny – and she and Max and Mama and Papa had
> nearly always been together. As long as they were together
> she could never have a difficult childhood. She sighed a
> little as she abandoned her hopes.
>
> (1971, p.239)[204]

This may demonstrate that Anna is growing in maturity and self-awareness, but it is still childlike. The free indirect style allows a fluent switch between the closeness of 'No, it was absurd' (see above) and the slightly more distant, but no less intense 'She sighed a little as she abandoned her hopes' (see above) Through all of this, the tone is much more childlike than the opening of the next novel in the *Out of the Hitler Time* trilogy, *Bombs on Aunt Dainty* (1975)[205]:

> Anna was standing in her room at the top of the
> Bartholomews' London House. She had finally remembered
> to stitch up the hem of her skirt which had been hanging
> down and she was wearing new lisle stockings – not black
> ones from Woolworth's but the more expensive beige kind
> from Marks and Spencer's.
>
> (1975, p.7)[206]

Here, Kerr adopts a more adult tone for Anna. As it is still free indirect style, the third person narrative voice seems to have grown with Anna into her teens. We know within the first few lines that the second novel follows the perceptions and experiences of a slightly older protagonist, just from the slight alteration in the narrative tone. The reference to how expensive the stockings are, however, shows us that she is still not quite grown up.

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[204] ibid. pp.239 (Chapter Twenty-four)
[205] Kerr, J (1975) – *Bombs on Aunt Dainty (Formerly 'The Other Way Round)* - (Part of the omnibus edition, *Out of the Hitler Time*) – Pub. Harper College Children's Books, New edition, 2002
[206] ibid. pp.7

This demonstrates the subtlety of Kerr's portrayal of a young girl maturing. In order to achieve this, she has placed the free indirect style closely to Anna, and although the progression in tone from one novel to the next is noticeable, it is not jarring.

Kerr's ability to articulate complex events and emotions through the lens of a child, using an immediate tone and a tense that is *just about* in the past, creates the perfect illusion that this is Anna's story to tell. This is very much what I was trying to achieve with *Over the Kite Path* (although I chose to do this with a first person narrator, rather than one in the third person).

While reading so many of the novels referred to above, I contemplated the notion that as the reader progresses through the text, they are piecing together the past, the present and the future all at once, in order to remove uncertainty about the back-story, plot and projected outcomes of the novel's conclusion.

The Bildungsroman and Minkowski Space-Time

> The two views of time that dominate The Theory of The Novel - hope and, above all, memory - are only superficially connected to the past or to the future. In fact, they confer on the novelistic time a particular focusing, a curvature that continually has past and future coverage on the present. On a present that is 'individualised' and is the constant work of reorganisation of what has taken place, as well as a projection of what is to come.

(Moretti, F, 1987, - pp.44)[207]

The flavour and drive of the 'Bildungsroman' comes from the fact that it centres on its protagonist. The defining feature of the genre is the young protagonist's emotional journey through a series of events to maturity. By the end of the story, they have reached the threshold of the rest of their life.

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[207] Moretti, F (1987) - *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (New Edition) - Pub. London, Virago , 2000 (New Edition) - pp.44

In *The Way of the World* (1987)[208], Franco Moretti gives many examples of stories and novels that display this pattern, but is careful not to confuse this notion with the subtly different 'initiation' (p.44)[209] that is often found in modern literature. Moretti also states that the 'individualised' (p.44)[210] present of a protagonist is an 'elastic, elusive' (p.44)[211] one, and calls it the 'exact opposite of the definitive "here and now" of tragedy...' (p.44)[212]

This suggests something existential is at work. When considering Moretti's analysis, I pictured the protagonist in the universe. I imagined my own protagonist - Nora - in a state of 'fluidity' for the *reader*; but as narrator and author, we were working together to capture the events of the present, whilst allowing the reader to learn more and more about the past and the future. With effort and artistic skill, the author articulates fragments of their ideas and imagination, using the narrator to deliver the seamless 'dream' (Gardner, 1984)[213] to the reader.

At first this seemed very abstract, and almost impossible for me to articulate, but then I considered Nora's existence in a more logical, or scientific, way. Moretti's description of an 'elastic and elusive' present was reminiscent of Minkowski's theories on space-time (1908).[214]

Figure 9 shows my interpretation of Minkowski's model of space and time[215]. Minkowski's theory is usually more at home in Physics than the critical theory of creative writing. However, as writers, we are creating worlds, and surely the space-time

[208] ibid.
[209] ibid.
[210] Ibid.
[211] ibid.
[212] ibid.
[213] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 1991 – Chapter 2, pp. 17-38
[214] Minkowski, H (1908) - *Raum und Ziet, Physikalische Zeitschrift,* 10: 75-88
[215] This is my own drawing, based on what I have read and seen about Minkowski, and other diagrams I have found in Physics books and papers (for example: Petkov, V (ed.) (2012) - *Space and Time - Minkowski's papers on relativity* - Pub. Minkowski Institute Press, USA, 2012). It is difficult to determine the original source for this particular form of the diagram, but it is widely used.

continuum might be considered to be as present in each fictional world as it is in the real world.

In Figure 9, the Minkowski diagram, the past is defined because it has already happened, and the uncertain future is yet to be dictated by the present.

When I considered Nora's 'present' in the centre of this diagram as a reader would see it, it did indeed seem 'elastic and elusive' (Moretti, 1987)[216]. The uncertainty in a reader's mind when they begin a novel is very much like the uncertainty they feel in real life - there are no absolutes, and there are so many unanswered questions. In some ways, a reader doesn't know a character's past either, and is uncertain how the character got to this present point (though they do learn a lot about a protagonist's past from the present in which they are depicted).

For this reason, I drew my own interpretation of the Minkowski diagram - a 'Mock Minkowski Diagram' (Figure 10) for a novel from the point of view of the reader and – to some extent – the writer. The protagonist's 'present' is at the centre, but for the reader, both the past and future of the protagonist are undefined and uncertain. This is also, a little, what I experienced as author when the writing process began.

But then I drew a second diagram that illustrated my effect on my novel (Figure 11). This could be viewed as the reader's perceptions changing as they progress through the novel, but it could also represent my writer's perceptions as I pieced together the reality around my protagonist. In essence, I was 'zipping together' the uncertainty. The past ('How did we get here?') became more defined, and the future (the narrative projection and trajectory at the end of the novel) was forecast; though not fully defined, it was made less uncertain.

Of course, this theory could not apply comfortably to novels with completely open endings, or those that sustain the uncertainty of the opening into the rest of the

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[216] Moretti, F (1987) - *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (New Edition) - Pub. London, Virago , 2000 (New Edition) - pp.44

narrative. Novels with non-linear or more abstract structures (such as, for example, Italo Calvino's *'If on a Winter's Night A Traveller'* (1980)[217]) would be difficult to define in this way in a diagram. But for my novel at least, I felt this way of capturing the space-time in diagrams helped me to understand my relationship with my own narrator and her universe. They also helped me to understand how the reader perceives the universe of the story.

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[217] Calvino, I (1980) (first translated to English 1981) - *If on a Winters Night A Traveller (2nd edition in English)* - Pub. London: Vintage,1998.

Figure 9:

Diagram showing my interpretation of the
Minkowski Space-Time Diagram

Possibility

Impossibility   Impossibility

THE PAST:
Defined and certain
because it has happened
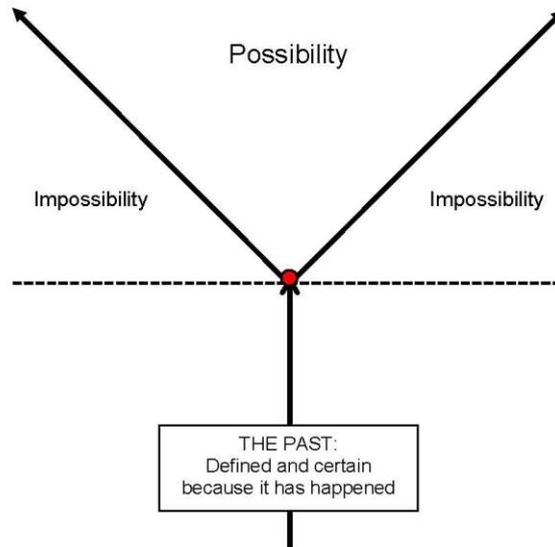
Key:

🔴 = The present moment in spacetime

↗ = The passage of time and the trajectory of events

----- = The threshold of the 'present' time

NB – As stated in Section 2 above, this is my interpretation of the Space-Time diagrams which are often used in physics to illustrate Minkowski's theory of Space and Time (Minkowski, H (1908) - Raum und Ziet, Physikalische Zeitschrift). A useful source for a simplified diagram is the Wikipedia page on the Minkowski diagram: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minkowski_diagram

Figure 10:

Diagram showing my interpretation of the Minkowski Space-Time Diagram, adapted for the reader's (and possibly the writer's) perceptions at the start of reading (and writing?) a novel
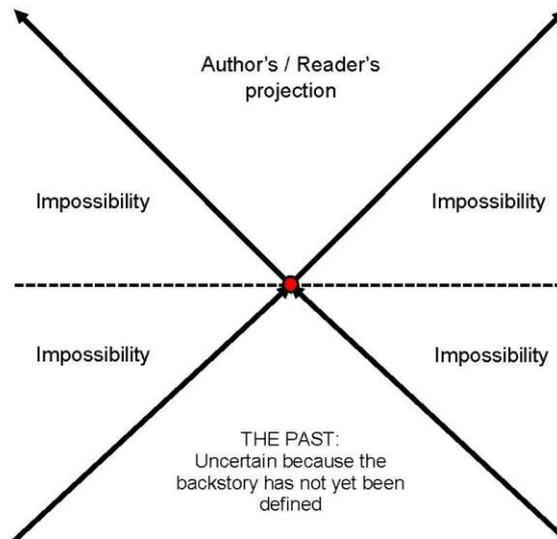
Author's / Reader's projection

Impossibility   Impossibility

Impossibility   Impossibility

THE PAST:
Uncertain because the backstory has not yet been defined

Key:

● = The start of the novel (within the fictional version of spacetime)

➚ = The passage of time and the trajectory of events

----- = The threshold of the 'present' time

NB – The past is undefined, but at the same time, the reader/writer can identify some of what is impossible because of the starting point of the novel. The reader/writer also project where they think the novel is going, but can't be certain.

Figure 11:

Diagram showing my interpretation of the Minkowski
Space-Time Diagram, adapted to show the effect of the writing /
reading process as they progress
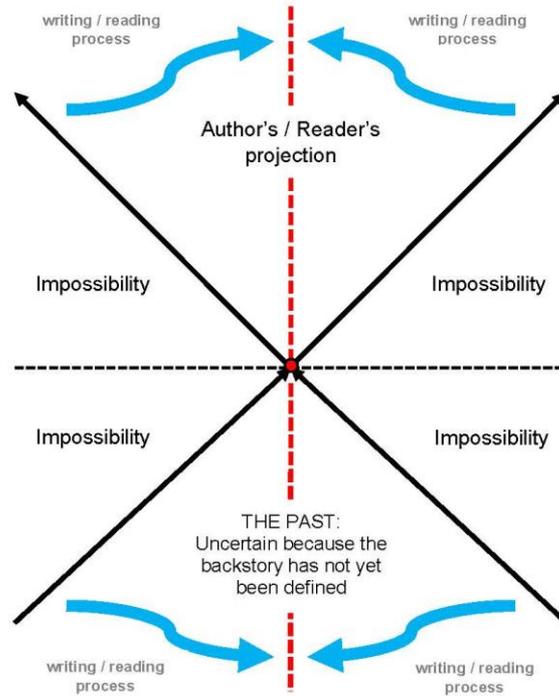
writing / reading
process

writing / reading
process

Author's / Reader's
projection

Impossibility

Impossibility

Impossibility

Impossibility

THE PAST:
Uncertain because the
backstory has not yet
been defined

writing / reading
process

writing / reading
process

Key:

⬤ = The start of the novel (within the fictional version of spacetime)

↗ = The passage of time and the trajectory of events

----- = The threshold of the 'present' time

❗ = The Author's / Reader's projection of the past and future, influenced by what they read

NB – The past is undefined, but at the same time, the reader/writer can identify some of what is impossible because of the starting point of the novel. As the reader/writer progress through the reading/writing process, the uncertainty about the future – and the backstory – is reduced.

Space-Time Beyond Reality

It is not only perceptions of the story world in isolation that can be thought through in terms of space-time. Meditating on the space-time continuum has enhanced my perceptions as a writer, and given me the ability to see the fictional world of my novel, and my own reality, in parallel.

In his book, *On Roads* (2010)[218], Joe Moran explores idea of a space belonging to the past, even when the world around it had changed beyond recognition.

Moran describes a piece of what he calls 'invisible artwork' (p.236)[219] by Graeme Miller, called *Linked* (2003)[220], which involved audio recordings which were broadcast short range around the site of the M11, where a housing estate used to be. In these recordings, the residents of the estate talk about their homes and lives. The transmitters will keep going as long as they have a power supply. Moran writes:

> You can look through one of those gaps at the whooshing traffic and hear someone say through your headphones: 'I know that if my house was still there, it would be hanging in space above the outside northbound lane. I can still feel myself in that place, that bit of air, the place where I lay down to go to bed.' ...
>   ... The history of the M11 Link may remain hidden, but the curious will be able to recreate it in sound.

> (2010, p.237)[221]

I experienced something similar myself when I went to a Christingle service in Liverpool. The church was a modern building, because the original Victorian church had been bombed in World War Two. The church had been rebuilt as a modern, featureless structure, yet when I went inside and saw the lighted candles and the Christmas tree, and heard Christmas carols, my eyes filled with tears. I was struck by

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[218] Moran, J (2010) - *On Roads* - Pub. London: Profile Books Ltd.
[219] ibid. pp.236
[220] Miller, G (2003) - *Linked* [Website] – Available at: http://www.linkedm11.net/index2.html
[221] Moran, J (2010) - *On Roads* - Pub. London: Profile Books Ltd, pp. 237

the realisation that the space, here and now, was exactly the same space as had been here when the old church existed.

Earlier in this thesis[222], I described the thunderstorm that spanned Shropshire, Cheshire, Merseyside and the Vale of Clwyd, and changed the way I saw the hills - and the 'Kite Path'. The concept of 'home' and 'not home' being there at the same time, but not being in the same place, was something that bubbled up all the time in Nora - and in me. I wanted to capture Nora's awareness of this co-existence in space-time - one example is her awareness of the moon on Christmas Night:

> When I'd gone up to my room and Mrs Caddick had said goodnight, I peeled the curtains back from the window. Ice chipped off the inside of the glass and scattered around my toes. They smarted but I didn't care. The moon was out. It would be able to see home from up there, I knew it. I blew it a kiss and whispered 'Send them that, Moon. Don't let them forget me.' [223]

Equally, when Nora lies in bed on her first night at Ty Cigfran, picturing the railway, she is trying to make a physical connection with the home she missed:

> Where was I? This very morning I'd been tucked up in my own bed at home, and here I was, just a few hours later, in someone else's bed in someone else's home. I screwed my eyes tight shut and tried to draw a map in my head, of here, the mountains, and the railway. A bright red line traced back from this house to the town and then back along the tracks, but I got stuck just North of Ruthin and I didn't know which way to send my line. [224]

Long after I had written this, I realised that Flaubert employs a similar technique in Madame Bovary (1856), when Emma obsesses about Paris, and longs for it with passion:

> She bought a plan of Paris, and with the tip of her finger on the map she walked about the capital. She went up the boulevards, stopping at every turning, between the lines of the streets, in front of the white squares that represented the

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[222] Section One of this thesis, under *The Kite Path as a Threshold*
[223] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 13, pp.152
[224] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 3, pp. 34

houses. At last she would close the lids of her weary eyes,
and see in the darkness the gas-jets flaring in the wind and
the steps of carriages lowered with much clatter before the
peristyles of theatres.

(1856)[225]

What is it that makes maps so evocative when they are used to illustrate homesickness? Perhaps it is the notion that – through the power of our imagination – we can be transported into them. The space we long for (or to refer back to Bion (1963),[226] the thing we wish to 'contain') is tangible, in our possession, and set out before us. We can dream that it is our space to explore or traverse, even when reality prevents us from actually doing this.

This idea of imagined travel is also echoed when Nora walks to school for the first time and sees steam from a departing train:

A train was leaving the station. Wheels screeched and the
engine sent puffs of white cloud up from behind a row of
red brick cottages. It was heading north. Maybe some of the
passengers were going back to Liverpool. [227]

I have always been fascinated by the idea that railways connect places - between the start and finish of a journey, there is no break in the metal along which the wheels of the train roll. In both of the above extracts, I have tried to capture Nora's conviction that a physical connection with her home is there, even if it can't transport her from one location to the other.

This process of observing how a moment can be shared by infinite places, and a place can be shared by infinite moments, brought me to the idea that - just as physics

[225] Flaubert, G (1856) – *Madame Bovary* – Pub. Wordsworth Classics, 2001 – pp.44 (Chapter 9)
[226] See Section One of this Thesis: *'The Kite Path as a Threshold'* – references to Bion's work on the 'container' and the 'contained' [chiefly: Bion, WR (1963) – *Elements of Psychoanalysis* – Pub. London, Karnac Books, (**4th Edition**) 2005– pp. 27]
[227] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 4, pp. 44

can span space and time - it could also span fact and fiction. In other words, can a fictional existence be seen as a third plane of existence?

Take, for example, my observations in the church at Christingle. This experience then translated into Nora's visit to St Peter's Church on Christmas Eve:

> I knew I was welcome here, even without Mrs Caddick. I was so many miles away from my church at home, but here I was, somehow in the same space, just with a different building around it. I sat on the back pew and bowed my head. [228]

As I developed this scene, I was struck by how the idea of adapting my existential experience in the Liverpool church had presented a new dimension to space-time. In the Liverpool church, I had been sharing the space, but not the moment in time, with the church from the past. When I then transposed this into my fictional world, there was a third plane of existence - a plane of fiction. The Ruthin church layered 'home' and 'not home' for Nora, but it also layered 'fiction' for me (as my perspective is from the real world).

The next time I visited Ruthin, I was acutely aware of this. Just as a historian might walk through the town and 'feel' its past, I could 'feel' its fiction. But to me the fiction was no longer fiction - it had become another plane of existence. Nora seemed to be at my side, or running across the road, or breaking the window in the school. She was right before my eyes, telling me what happened next.

This experience was especially strong when I went inside St Peter's Church for the first time. This happened particularly late in the writing process, and – once again – a church had provided me with a transcendental experience. I had written a lot about St Peter's Church in my novel, but it occurred to me that I had not actually been inside it myself. Whilst many of my settings (such as the school and the church hall) were

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[228] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 13, pp.143

fictional, loose versions of places I knew existed, there were some settings that I wanted to capture more accurately. The church was one of them.

This was partially because, whenever I wrote a scene that was set in the church, it always felt vague and generic. I needed to visit this particular church, to see what specific things stood out, and were likely to make the setting more convincing for the reader.

As I entered the church, I sensed I was close to my narrator. I soaked in what I observed, and recorded my experience in my journal[229].

The first thing I noticed was that – once I was inside – the church didn't seem as old as I knew it was. I think, in retrospect, that this could have been because there was an art exhibition on, and the atmosphere was a busy one. There were teas and coffees being served, and everyone in the church was welcoming and friendly, but it was not particularly restful. At first, I was disappointed, but slowly I came to the conclusion that this was an opportunity. I sat at the back of the church and tried to imagine what this would have been like in 1939, perhaps during a fundraising event for the war effort.

Suddenly Nora was there, sitting beside me. We sat and listened as the town went about its business. People chatted away in Welsh, and I wished I could understand them. Nora wished this too, and I thought hard about what we were actually experiencing. Despite the best efforts of those around me, with their welcoming smiles and offers of tea and coffee, I felt alienated. I wanted to be part of this community, and yet I knew I couldn't be because I didn't live here. This instantly gave me more empathy with Nora. I had already established that she would feel alienated when she arrived in Ruthin, but I hadn't experienced it myself until now – the experience of a community welcoming whoever came in through the door, but also the knowledge that I was different.

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[229] My working journal – 'Visit to St Peter's Church and the post office' – Saturday 15th August 2015

I could still sense Nora next to me, and I wondered what would catch her attention in this large, stone building. I thought about the fact that a child of her age would probably not comply with convention and look at the front all the time. She would look all around, including upwards, to find something more interesting than what was going on in the church. Where – as an adult – would I not normally look? And so I looked up at the ceiling, where I saw there were beautiful carvings of flowers in the wooden beams. I wondered how old they were. This taught me that perhaps children see details that adults often miss, and while redrafting and improving *Over the Kite Path,* I tried to bear this in mind.

I put a donation in the charity box and lit a candle for Nora, and all those children like her, who must have sat in this church during the war. I stared at the flame, and wondered how many Noras had been here – how many of them had noticed the carved flowers?

As I left the church, Nora was there with me. It was almost like I had a familiar from my own fictional world. Or was it that Nora had come from a fictional world and found me, and had chosen me to tell her story to the real world?

Of course, one way of looking at this experience is simply to concede that it is the result of an active imagination. But I like to think of the writer's awareness of their fictional world, and how it sits with their real one, as a sensitivity. Just as those who experience synaesthesia might see colours in things that the average person does not, perhaps writers see their worlds in this way - overlaid on the reality of the world around them.

When visiting historical sites, I have always been uneasy standing on barrows and burial mounds. This is not because I actually believe the dead will be unhappy with me for doing so; it is because, to me, it's treading on someone's space. The past seems to resonate through to the present moment, through the space we share.

This is how I have come to understand the characters and places from my writing. Just as things resonate from the past, it is conceivable that they could resonate from fiction to reality. So, for the writer, it is as if an additional layer of fiction and reality is laid upon the diagram of Minkowski's Space-Time.

III.

<u>Author and Narrator – the Interaction of</u>

<u>Two Creative Forces</u>

Inter-dependency

With the development of free indirect style in the 19th Century, novelists sought to narrow the distance between author, narrator and reader, and to make the story world more convincing and captivating, their narrative voice placing the reader in the thoughts of the characters. The likes of Jane Austen, Gustave Flaubert, and Henry James wrote to share their characters' perspectives and experiences with their readers.

In my own creative journey, writing *Over the Kite Path* I wanted to create an apparent immediacy in the narrative voice, but I did not want to tell the story by mimicking exactly the voice of a nine-year-old girl. It was clear to me that a balance had to be maintained between my voice and my narrator's - a parallel voice, seamless and convincing. I needed not just to capture Nora, but also to enact and interact with her. She was a manifestation in my imagination, yet it was important that she was real to me as I wrote.

Defining my relationship with Nora precisely has been an elusive task. However, close analysis of the creative process (including the ideas already explored in Section Two of this thesis), the psychological explorations of both my narrator and myself, and completing my novel, have helped me to achieve this aim.

For me, there is no doubt that Nora and I have been inter-dependent throughout the creative process, but in order to articulate this clearly, this complex, symbiotic relationship needs to be broken down and examined.

The Call

Writing could be compared to a maternal, mother/child relationship. Earlier in this thesis, I discussed the supposedly God-like qualities of the writer as they create worlds and characters. Although I think my creation of my own narrator could fall into this category, I think the conception of Nora, and the seeming presence of *her* desire to be written, could be compared to my own experiences of the maternal instinct.

Before I had my own child, I could feel him there as a presence that had not yet come to be. I had no idea whether this presence would actually come to be realised – before he was born, he may or may not have inhabited my future. But the *potential* for his existence was strong enough to make me want to meet him – I desired his existence.

The driving force for my novel felt similar. Nora, and other characters around her, were voices that needed to be heard. In the early stages of writing *Over the Kite Path,* I had no idea whether it would work as a novel, but these characters drove me to start writing. Their voices would come to me in quiet moments, filling my consciousness and demanding to be created.

While writing, and bringing them to life, I was addressing the problem of their absence while, at the same time, quietening something deep within my consciousness.

I have already discussed[230] how desire could be described as the absence of something, and the need of a 'container' to 'contain' (Bion, 1963)[231]. Perhaps the author's desire to create can also be viewed in this way. As a writer, I have found that the desire to create characters and a world for them to inhabit, comes from my conviction that they are real, but will not be realised without action from me.

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[230] See Section One, *The Kite Path as a Threshold*
[231] Bion, WR (1963) – *Elements of Psychoanalysis* – Pub. London, Karnac Books, (**4th Edition**) 2005– pp. 27

A Binary Consciousness

Did the novel - and the narrator – infuse themselves into my consciousness? I have noticed that this is something that happens to me whenever I obsess about something, and for the time that I have been working on the novel, it has filled my mind.

But this has not just been a conscious thing. I remember an incident mid-way through writing the novel, when an almost paranormal event led me to a source of inspiration.

At the time, I was struggling with the language of the time – how did people speak? How did they write in letters? My prose was capturing a reasonably authentic narrative voice, but the speech and letters were not quite so resonant of the era in which they were set. I tried listening to news broadcasts and reading primary sources such as letters and diaries from archives such as Mass Observation Online[232], but these all seemed too formal. In particular, Gwilym's letters from Africa were difficult to write, so much so that I considered removing them completely from the novel.

But then one night, I dreamt I was in my Grandparents' house. In reality, the house was now empty – my grandad had passed away and my grandma was in a care home. But in the dream, they still lived there. I was in the back bedroom, when there was a knock on the door. The door opened, I saw my grandad, back from the 'other side'. He opened his mouth, and sound came out, but no words. It was his voice. I wasn't scared – I was elated that he had come back. He was excited and agitated, eager to tell me something that he couldn't articulate. He just kept pointing down the hall to the box room. He shuffled off in that direction, but when I turned the corner to follow him, he had gone. In the box room, there was nothing but junk.

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[232] Mass Observation Online [Website] – Available at: http://www.massobservation.amdigital.co.uk/

This dream seemed nothing more than a recollection of my grandad, but for what happened a week or so afterwards. When I next visited the house, my recollection of the dream made me go up to the box room. On the shelves by the window was a brown envelope containing all of my grandad's letters home from RAF service in Africa, between 1942 and 1944. They were filled with his philosophy, anecdotes, reviews of the books he'd read, insights into our family, and various bits of news – his wit and wisdom. I learned new things about my grandfather, watched him change from an inexperienced youth into a young man who wanted to become a teacher when the fighting stopped. It was as if he led me to the letters himself.

So how were these events relevant to the idea of 'infused consciousness'? The novel was such a part of me that my subconscious mind steered me towards answers, driving the novel's creation all the time.

Another way in which Nora was 'infused' with my own consciousness during the writing process, was my tendency to draw on my own childhood memories in order to capture the emotions and experiences that Nora went through as vividly as I could.

I use the term 'memories' rather than 'recollections' because – rather than merely remembering things as an adult, in retrospect - I tried to get myself into the mind-set of my past self. Previously in this thesis[233], I described the role that recollections (my own and those of other people) have played in my research, and how – if they are recounted in hindsight – they can be slightly less reliable in terms of feelings and giving a 'true' account of experience. I needed to find a way of temporarily regressing my consciousness to that of my childhood self.

The idea of the childhood self as being a truer version than the adult self is not new. In his 1963 work, *'Memories, Dreams, Reflections',* CG Jung wrote:

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[233] See Section One

> … a characteristic of childhood is that, thanks to its naiveté and unconsciousness, it sketches a more complete picture of the self, of the whole man in his pure individuality, than adulthood. Consequently, the sight of a child or a primitive will arouse certain longings in adult, civilised persons – longings which relate to the unfulfilled desires and needs of those parts of the personality which have been blotted out of the total picture in favour of the adopted persona.
>
> (1963, p.272-273)[234]

As she narrated, Nora was a child. I was an adult, and I would only be able to embed Nora's true self in the narrative voice, if I tried to remember my own childhood. By meditating on moments in my memory, really taking myself back to childhood and thinking long and hard about how I actually experienced things (not how I recall them as an adult), I was able to capture Nora's experiences more accurately.

One example of this is the scene where Nora throws the stone at Rhiannon and smashes the window in the front of the school, on her first day there.[235] In the original draft, the scene was described as if from a distance. I was too present as author, and Nora was too distant:

> …I gasped, feeling as if my head would implode with fear. The tinkling sound of broken glass made everyone in the yard turn and stare, and the air turned eerily silent. The wind rustled in the trees over the road, and birdsong pierced the air.
>   Almost immediately, Miss Hughes came bustling out of the door, stopping to examine the damage, before addressing us with a fearsome tone. 'Well then? Who is responsible?' … [236]

While redrafting this pivotal moment, I thought back to moments in school when things happened that got me into trouble. I gave special attention to the split

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[234] Jung, CG (1963) – *Memories, Dreams, Reflections (8th Edition)* – Pub. London, Fontana Press, 1995 – pp.272-273
[235] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 4, pp.46
[236] Draft 1 of *Over the Kite Path*, Chapter 4 - October 2010

second when I knew what had happened, and the 'point of no return' had been reached.

What exactly did I feel and experience in that moment? The final draft reads:

> …I emptied my lungs until there was nothing left but my aching ribs. The tinkling sound of broken glass made everyone in the yard turn and stare. The wind rustled in the trees over the road.
> Within seconds, Miss Hughes came out, chuffing like the train we'd all arrived on. She stopped to inspect the damage. 'Well then?' she barked. 'Who is responsible?' She spoke in English – she must have known it was one of us…[237]

The difference between the two versions is only subtle, but I believe the second one captures Nora much more effectively. In particular, that first description of her perceptions became much closer to the true narrative voice. 'I gasped, feeling as if my head would implode with fear' (see above) does not sound like a nine-year-old girl. 'I emptied my lungs until there was nothing left but my aching ribs' (see above) is much more of an immediate, physical description – and one closer to free indirect style. Nora has no need to state that she was afraid because the reader can gather this from her physical reaction.

Although this may simply seem like a representation of what Stein referred to as 'Show, don't tell' (2003, p.123)[238], I believe there is something deeper at work. For me, this was not purely about editing my own prose (though admittedly, keeping a watch on my own technique was important). My first person narration drew much from free indirect style, and its success was therefore dependent on truly inhabiting my narrator, and using meditative techniques to revisit memories from my own life, to connect with Nora on an existential level.

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[237] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 4, pp. 46
[238] Stein, S (1998) - *Solutions for Writers* (4th Edition) - Pub. London: Souvenir Press Ltd, 2003 - Ch 12, pp. 123

Creative Nourishment from the Narrator

But even if my own memories were important, and there were autobiographical elements in the novel, Nora was always very much her own person. The third strand of the Author-Narrator symbiosis is Nora having some autonomy as a 'living' part of the novel.

I knew that if this novel was going to live, Nora should not simply be a representation of me. She often felt as if she was her own person, and, although I knew this could never be possible, it was as if she were reminding me that I may be author, but I was not she, and I was not the protagonist of this novel. It was necessary for her to convince the reader that she was real, even though I knew she was not.

An example of Nora helping me by writing herself is a scene in *Over the Kite Path* just before bedtime on Christmas Eve[239]. I had been unable to write Christmas Eve. I could picture it, and I could imagine what took place - especially the scene where Nora and Mrs Caddick thought there was a paratrooper in the farmyard[240] - but I really struggled to *write* it.

After weeks of effort, trying different approaches and finding none of them worked, it suddenly occurred to me to stop 'writing' and let Nora tell me what happened. That way I would be capturing the things that she noticed and experienced, not the things that I - as writer - wanted to capture. I used various methods to relax into letting Nora take the helm, some of which I will discuss in more detail later in this part of the thesis.

It was as if I were asking Nora what happened on Christmas Eve. Once I settled into this frame of mind, Christmas Eve flowed freely onto the page. Something needed

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[239] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 13, pp.143-144
[240] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 13, pp.144-149

to bring her and Mrs Caddick closer together, and that came from Nora's core. She was

lonely - something needed to bond them on that night, and I asked myself - and Nora -

what would achieve this. Her answer came in the form of old photographs. Mrs Caddick

shows them to Nora before she goes to bed, and with this scene, the following dialogue

came to me:

> ...She stopped at a picture of a beautiful woman, with a fat belly. 'This is Gwilym,' she said, pointing at the bulge in her dress.
>
> 'That means – is the lady you?'
>
> 'Indeed.' She sighed. 'Mr Caddick was away for the rest of that year. I didn't know it then, but he'd had his last Christmas at Ty Cigfran.' She put her arm around me and gave me a squeeze. 'To be parted at Christmas… It's so very painful.'
>
> 'Do you think Gwilym feels lonely?'
>
> 'No,' she said quickly. 'He has his friends all around him. He's not alone.'
>
> I rested my head on her shoulder and settled. 'Nor are we,' I said.
>
> Her whole chest shuddered, before letting out a long sigh. [241]

Throughout the rest of Christmas Eve, Nora is understandably anxious and

homesick, but as I wrote and perfected the scene, I identified that it was the small

moments that made it convincing - and these came from letting Nora tell me about it all.

Considering the Narrator's Personality

In much of what has been discussed above, the driving force behind my creativity has

been what I experienced, put simply, as Nora's desire to be. In order to give Nora the

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[241] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 13, pp.143-144

life force she craved, I needed to understand her psychology. I literally asked myself – perhaps I was even asking her: Who was she?

While researching these highly psychological aspects of character development, I came across Costa and McRae's theory of the 'Big Five' personality traits (Costa and McRae, 1985).[242]

The Big Five model consists of five basic personality traits by which people's personalities can be measured. It is often used by psychotherapists and counsellors to determine what kind of personality their patients have, but I also thought it might be useful for me to use when trying to understand Nora and hear her voice. Perhaps just as a counsellor would draw out and identify a particular psychological issue by talking to the patient and allowing them to tell their story, I allowed Nora to tell her story. But in order to understand the root of certain thoughts and emotions and - in order gain a deep understanding of my narrator's *personality* - I wondered if I could apply the Big Five model to Nora.

The model uses five key personality traits: extroversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism (Costa and McRae, 1985)[243]. These are then broken down into a series of questions that help to identify different aspects of each trait in the individual. I sat down and worked through them twice. The first time, I answered the questions as myself. The second time, I alternated between asking the questions, and then allowing Nora to answer them.

I found the outcome rewarding and exciting. My own results were similar to Nora's, demonstrating that she was, perhaps, a projection of myself. As discussed earlier, I used my own past feelings and experiences to make certain moments in the

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[242]Costa, P and McRae, RR (1985) - *Manual for the Neo Personality Inventory* - Pub. Odessa, FL. USA, Psychological Assessment Resources.
[243] ibid.

novel live, and my empathy with Nora as I wrote was strong. However, Nora's answers sometimes differed from mine in places so that, although I shared a great deal with my narrator, and she was - in practical ways - my vehicle for delivering my novel, she was still very much different from me. Some of her answers came as a complete surprise to me. This didn't mean that they were *hers*, but they appeared so. This would not have happened if she had felt completely like my own voice and projection – and yet she was still my creation.

An example of this was when I considered the characteristics of 'conscientiousness'. Personally, the traits of conscientiousness (for example, being prepared, paying attention to details, being exacting in my work (Costa and McRae, 1985)[244]) are all things that I aspire to, even if I'm not naturally this way. From my own response to these ideas, I think I follow these traits because I'm aware of my true nature and I am trying to tame it. However, when I considered how Nora would respond about these traits, I found that she did not aspire to them. She would be placed closer to the 'reversed' traits in this category (for example, leaving belongings around, making a mess of things etc.). Nora often bears the consequences of this, and regrets her actions deeply, but – perhaps because she is only nine years old – she is not often able to suppress her nature.

For me at least, this was perhaps the first evidence that Nora was not completely mine. This revelation changed how I perceived my narrator, but also how I experienced writing - and reading - in general.

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[244] ibid.

The question of 'ownership' - To whom does a novel belong?

I found the question of 'ownership' of the novel fascinating. This, and the notion of 'self', are debated frequently in the writing world (for example David Lodge's *Consciousness and the Novel* (2002)[245], John Killick and Myra Schneider's *Writing Your Self* (2010)[246], or Suzanne Keen's *Narrative Form* (2015)[247]). As writers, we pour so much of ourselves into our work (consciously and unconsciously), but if the reader is also using their imagination as they read, they also have a share in the creative ownership of a novel. None of this could happen without a convincing setting and – more to the point – convincing characters. So to whom does the novel belong?

The abstract nature of this question makes it all the more difficult to capture. Some practitioners and scholars achieve this, and while I do not agree with all of them, it was highly enlightening to compare and contrast their theories.

Take, for example, Suzanne Keen's exploration of these concepts in her book, *Narrative Form* (2015)[248]. In the fourth chapter, she suggests that the reader could have some ownership of the text they are reading, simply through the things that the writer leaves out.

> ... many narratives demand that the reader work to figure out what has happened to a character during a gap, a skip in the discourse in which plot events are implied, though not narrated.
>
> Acknowledging that readers of narrative routinely add and fill in as they reconstruct people on paper into inhabitants of fictional worlds raises challenging questions for formal analysis.
>
> (2015, p.57)[249]

[245] Lodge, D (2002) – *Consciousness and the Novel* – Pub. Penguin Books, London, 2003 – pp.90, pp.143
[246] Killick, J & Schneider, M (2010) – *Writing Your Self* – Pub. Continuum International Publishing Group, London – pp. 14-15, pp.24, pp.237
[247] Keen, S (2015) - *Narrative Form* (Revised and expanded second edition) - Pub. Hampshire, UK, Palgrave Macmillan
[248] ibid.
[249] ibid. pp.57

From this we can see that readers are not passive recipients, but actively create –
or re-create – the text. This idea does, as Keen says, raise challenging questions - but
they are questions that I found central to my own experience as a writer. Throughout the
writing of *Over the Kite Path*, Nora grew to be her own entity. I found this challenging,
but the idea that she might also belong in part to the reader was even more difficult for
me to comprehend.

Indeed, Keen seemed less than comfortable with this concept. I suspect that this
is a discomfort shared by many writers. Perhaps the idea that the reader is a contributor
in the act of creation - the making of Gardner's fictional 'dream' (Gardner, 1984)[250] - is
disconcerting for those writers who like to feel in control of their work. However, in
order to master the creative act of writing, surely every writer needs to acknowledge
that their work is open to some degree of interpretation or, as Keen (2015) puts it,
readers will 'add and fill in' (see above)[251] the gaps. Personally, while I believe it was
very important to consider who my reader was as I wrote, and the effect that various
methods of telling the story would have on them, I admit that at first I was
uncomfortable when I imagined they had a part to play in creating Nora.

In 2014, James Friel appeared on BBC Radio's '*The Forum*' programme[252],
where he discussed authorial control. The ending of his novel, *The Posthumous Affair*
(2012),[253] is addressed directly to the reader, cutting through the usual 'layers' of
Author, Narrator, Reader, and turning the narrative voice from what seemed neutral
third person into what is a direct address by the author to the reader:

> This is the only end to which I can bring them. This is
> where Daniel and Grace were always bound, but it is not
> only Grace and Daniel who reached this conclusion.

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[250] Gardner, J (1984) - *The Art of Fiction: Notes on craft for young writers* (Vintage Books edition) – Pub. Vintage, London, 1991 – Chapter 2, pp. 17-38
[251] Keen, S (2015) - *Narrative Form* (Revised and expanded second edition) - Pub. Hampshire, UK, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 57
[252] *The Forum: 'Unintended Consequences'* [Radio Programme] BBC World Service, First broadcast 19th December 2014. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02d5qfp
[253] Friel, J (2012) - *The Posthumous Affair - Pub.* USA: Tupelo Press.

It is you and I.

$$(2012, p.251)^{254\ 255}$$

The novel ends with the notion that the author – and the narrative voice - is only alive to the reader while they are reading:

> ... Now you will outrace me. You will turn the page. You
> will close this book. You will move on. Life and other
> books will claim you, and I will be the one who is tethered
> here, a ghost...
>
> ... This has been a posthumous affair

$$(2012, p.252)^{256}$$

I found this ending to the novel exciting and moving, not least because it seemed to explore the same dynamics between narrator and reader, as I was exploring between narrator and author. The ending of *The Posthumous Affair enlightened* the reader and made them realise that the narrator did not exist outside the pages of the book - they became a ghost to the reader once the book was finished, because they had only been 'alive' when they were being read. For me, this had existentialist overtones, and - once again - the notion of symbiosis came to mind.

However, when interviewed on *'The Forum',* Friel was careful to point out that, while the reader was important to any piece of writing, he was eager to take back control as author:

> ... The more and more I thought about this, the more I did
> not want to let go of the authority of the writer; because I
> don't quite trust most readers not, at the end of 'Anna
> Karenina,' to put Anna under a train... that Tolstoy takes us
> to places that we would not have gone ourselves.

$$(2014)^{257}$$

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[254] ibid. pp.251

[255] '*It is you and I'* has echoes of Stevens in *The Remains of the Day* ('*The likes of you and I'* – referred to in Section Two of this thesis), except that the author/narrator of *The Posthumous Affair* is addressing the reader directly, whereas Stevens - on closer study – does not address anyone, because there is no-one he can tell. He simply tells. In the end, he does not even tell Miss Kenton.

[256] Friel, J (2012) - *The Posthumous Affair - Pub.* USA: Tupelo Press - pp.252

[257] *The Forum: 'Unintended Consequences'* [Radio Programme] BBC World Service, First broadcast 19th December 2014. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02d5qfp - 00:16:00

In Friel's *The Posthumous Affair,* the realisation at the end that the novel has been gifted to the reader is a gentle one. The narrative voice - and the author - seem like they are drifting away like sad but friendly ghosts.

The ending of the novel also follows the notion that the author is not contactable by the reader – a notion that is no longer fashionable. There is something magical about the idea that the novel is the only means by which the author communicates with the reader, and that this is temporary – this communication only exists while the reader is reading. In the modern world, full of websites and social media, publicity events, and public appearances, it is no longer possible for the author to hide behind the veil of their creative work. The novel itself has become less exclusive as the platform for the author's views, and the reader often makes demands of the novelist that they would not have been able to fifty – or even fifteen – years ago. The writer must now be present beyond and outside of the book, and in a place where the reader has the ability to question them.

The Posthumous Affair is a novel that anticipates the Internet. It is a novel written as its male protagonist, Daniel, would have written it – enclosed and complete in itself (perhaps even 'contained' (Bion, 1963)[258]). Grace's house, at the end of the story, is a giant web, which represents the novel of the future, open and unending, accessible from multiple entrances; a novel that each reader can fashion for themselves. It is like a hypertext novel – as limitless as surfing the Internet.

In contrast to the gentle control of *The Posthumous Affair,* there are some novels that give the reader the illusion that they are in control, but then this illusion is snatched away. Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001)[259] is an excellent example of this.

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[258] Bion, WR (1963) – *Elements of Psychoanalysis* – Pub. London, Karnac Books, (4th Edition) 2005 – pp. 27
[259] McEwan, I (2001) - *Atonement* (2nd Edition) - Pub. London: Vintage.

Parts One and Two and Three of the novel are told through a third person narrative

voice, giving it an apparent neutrality. As reader, I was lulled into a false sense of

security, and read the events of the story with a sense of ownership - these characters

had been gifted to me and my own imagination conjured the events that came from the

narrative. I drew my own conclusions about the plot, and filled in the gaps, just as

Suzanne Keen (2015) describes.

But at the end of the novel, I discovered that this was not just the neutral third

person narrative created by the author - it was, in McEwan's story world, also created

by Briony Tallis. The fates of Cecilia and Robbie had been presented to me by Briony,

and some of what I had read (especially the end of their story) had been Briony's

fiction, rather than it being completely representative of the 'fact' of the narrative world.

In the final section, Briony is a self-declared unreliable narrator. She is giving the gift of

Cecilia and Robbie's happy ending, because she knows the reader wants this, and

because - as a writer - she can indulge her reader while atoning herself for cheating

Cecilia and Robbie of a happy life. As Briony states herself:

> ... I can no longer think what purpose would be served if,
> say, I tried to persuade my reader, by direct or indirect
> means, that Robbie Turner died of septicaemia at Bray
> Dunes on 1 June 1940, or that Cecilia was killed in
> September of the same year by a bomb that destroyed
> Balham Underground Station. That I never saw them that
> year. That my walk across London ended at the Church on
> Clapham Common, and that a cowardly Briony limped back
> to the hospital, unable to confront her recently bereaved
> sister. That the letters the lovers wrote are in the archives of
> the War Museum.
>
> (2001, p.370)[260]

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[260] ibid. pp.370

I read *Atonement* for the first time years ago, whilst studying for my Masters, and when I read this ending, it was one of the most profound moments of my writing life. This ending taught me that - no matter what form the narrative voice takes, or how much control I believe I have as a reader - ultimately it is the author who holds the most power.

But the ending of *Atonement* also taught me that the characters - particularly the narrator - are crucial to the novel's creation, and the author is dependent on them being convincing, and seeming real not just to the reader, but also to the writer. Although Briony was McEwan's creation, she finished the novel with her own voice. To the reader, she was real because she burst the fictional bubble of Cecilia and Robbie's story, but she herself was also McEwan's work of fiction. It was as if she was on two planes of existence at once. This has echoes of my exploration of space and time in the novel[261], but it also raises interesting questions about the relationship between the writer and their narrator.

I considered this in light of my own creative journey with Nora. Perhaps like a possessive parent, I was a little jealous of the reader's involvement in her creation via their imagination. But I was also aware that Nora was influencing me as I wrote - my 'power' over the novel as author was strong, but was it absolute?

Nora was influencing me a little too much in places. In the process of redrafting the earlier parts of the novel, the symbiosis between Nora as narrator and myself as author was almost becoming parasitic. In places, I sensed that the reality of Nora's voice and character threatened to pull the novel out of control.

An example of this was the scene with the letters from Mrs Caddick's husband, which I agonised over before withdrawing them from the final draft. For some reason, I

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[261] see Section Two of this thesis

imagined that - just before the *Airspeed Oxford* crashed into the mountainside, Nora would go downstairs and rifle through Mrs Caddick's bureau, and read private letters[262]. What possessed me to do it? Nora's bad behaviour was getting out of control.

But was this because she was too alive, or because I had lost control of who she was? Of course, as author, I had never lost control of her, but it often seemed this way.

I made the decision to cut the scene from the final version. It seemed out of place, and made some things in the sub-plot too explicit. As writer, I was exercising my authority.

In other places, Nora's apparent influence was a great enabler. I had particular difficulty writing the scene where Nora discovered Mr Owen in the car, at the top of the hill[263], until I let Nora tell me what happened.

After many false starts, I had come to a point where I did not know how to approach the scene. But then it occurred to me that this was Nora's story, in Nora's words, and I should let her voice through. Once again, my own voice had been obstructing what needed to happen.

Before I tried writing again, I sat for a couple of hours and thought hard, not about who Nora was, but about what it was like to be Nora at that moment in the story. Instead of focusing on descriptions of her feelings, I thought about the feelings themselves. What were the *sensations* that she would feel? The scene soon flowed, and before I knew it, we had rolled down the hill in the car and it had crashed. It seemed that Nora had taken me there. Of course, everything was still created by me, but by *imagining* Nora as real, I was able to capture her voice and experiences.

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[262] This plot point originally appeared in an early draft of *Over the Kite Path* in Chapter 10, though it never appeared in the final draft of the novel.
[263] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 21, pp.238-241

Learning to listen to Nora was the most important part of making the novel convincing. In Section Two of this thesis, I discussed how different authors achieved a convincing child narrator. While writing my own novel, I was acutely aware of the importance of Nora's voice, but in earlier drafts, I didn't always let it through.

One example is the moment in Chapter 5, when Nora throws the insects down Rhiannon's back[264]. Originally, this read:

> So transfixed was she that she didn't notice me sneaking up
> behind her, and unscrewing the lid of my precious jam jar.
> Her guard was lowered one precious moment that
> afternoon, and I made sure I was ready… [265]

On the first re-read, I realised that 'So transfixed was she' (see above) was not the voice of a nine-year-old girl. After careful thought about how free indirect style could apply to a first person narrative voice, I 'listened' to Nora - how would she tell me about this moment? I changed the description to:

> She didn't notice me sneaking up behind her, and
> unscrewing the lid of my precious jam jar… *That's for my*
> *pants, you rat-bag!* I pulled open her collar and tipped the
> contents of the jar inside. [266]

In some sections of the novel, I found that the narrative voice had too great a distance from what it was describing - not in terms of time, but in terms of consciousness. The opening few paragraphs of the novel are an example.

My original draft was very distant. The narrative voice - though first person - was not Nora's:

> For six dry, dusty weeks, filled with go-carts and frogs in
> jars, and playing with dolls in the back yard until bed-time,
> I'd completely forgotten that the school existed. Yet it did;

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[264] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 5, pp.73
[265] Early draft of *Over the Kite Path* – Chapter 5.
[266] *Over the Kite Path,* Chapter 5, pp.73

and what was more, it was cutting short my summer holiday
by two whole days. [267]

Through numerous re-drafts, I found a much more convincing opening
(below), but although this voice was closer to Nora's, it still didn't seem close
enough to the moment:

Norman had lost an eye. He sat on my bed, ginger head
lolling, with a gaping hole on the left side of his face. I put
my little finger inside to see if it had popped inwards, but I
felt only sawdust. His remaining eye stared at me and
demanded that I make him better.
I tried to think what could have happened to him. Had
I pulled it off in my sleep? Had my brother, Michael, taken
it off to be cruel to me? That had happened before. And
yesterday I had spilled milk all over his model biplane, so
maybe I deserved this.
Even worse, had the eye fallen off outside? I imagined
it lying in the gutter, or lost in the grass of Stanley Park,
never to be returned. There were no two ways about it –
he'd have to have another one.
It was Sunday morning. Out on the river, ships'
funnels called to each other, their low, lonely song drifting
in echoes across the bay. I could smell the sea through my
open window, and the air was thick and heavy as if a storm
was on the way.
As usual, Mum had pressed my pink gingham dress,
and she'd hung it on my bedroom door with my favourite
cardigan. Freshly washed clothes were my favourite part of
Sundays. I dressed in them, and pulled on long white socks,
loving their crispness as my toes wriggled to open them.
After breakfast, Mum took me to church. [268]

This was a stronger, more immediate and closer opening, but it still lacked
richness and flavour - it didn't quite put the reader in Nora's consciousness. Once again,
focusing on free indirect style, I let Nora tell me what it was like that morning. Below is
the final version:

Norman had lost an eye. He sat on my bed with his
ginger head lolling and a big hole on the left side of his
face. I put my little finger inside to see if it had popped

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[267] First draft of *Over the Kite Path* – original opening to Chapter 1
[268] Another early draft of *Over the Kite Path* – re-written opening.

inwards, but I could only feel sawdust. His other eye stared at me and told me to make him better.

I tried to think what could have happened to him. Had our Michael pulled it off? Yesterday I'd broken his best model bi-plane. It was only an accident, but he'd spent ages making it and he was very cross. What if he'd taken his revenge on Norman?

Maybe the eye had fallen off outside the house? Was it lying in the gutter, or lost in the grass of Stanley Park? He'd have to have another one. I'd brought the button box up to my room so I could go through it. I poured the collection onto the eiderdown, in a clinking, rainbow-coloured waterfall. Was there an eye, or anything like one? These buttons were made to go on coats and cardigans, but none of them were right for Norman. I swirled them round for a bit and then scooped them back into their box.

It was Sunday morning. The sound of ships hooting to each other came through the open window. The air was thick and it smelled of the sea.

Mum had pressed my favourite, pink gingham dress that Daisy next door had given me. It hung it on my bedroom door with my cardigan. I got dressed, and pulled on long white socks, loving their crispness as my toes wriggled to open them. Only three days earlier, I'd worn this outfit for my birthday, we'd had a party tea, with newspaper hats and a lovely cake that Mum had baked herself. She was so clever - she'd made sure the icing was the same colour as my dress.

'Nora, I've done you some bacon!' shouted Dad from downstairs, but by the time I got to the kitchen, my rashers were black and crispy, and they'd filled the room with blue smoke. They made a hard 'plink' as they hit the bottom of the waste bin.

'That's what you get for dilly-dallying,' said Mum, buttering me a jam sandwich and plonking it in front of me. 'Hurry up or we'll be late for Church.'

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The progression in these versions of the novel's opening demonstrates that

Nora's apparent partial ownership of her story had a great effect on my ability to tell it

effectively.

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269 *Over the Kite Path* – Chapter 1, pp.1-2 (the opening of the final version)

Getting into Role

When I was a child, I wanted to go into acting. This was mostly because of my constant desire to pretend to be other people, but it was also because I liked the idea of performing. But as I grew, and took part in various plays and performances, I also took my writing more seriously, and I quickly discovered that writing could achieve the same effect for me in terms of escapism, but I would not have to get up on stage and present *myself.*

Of course, as a practising writer, I am well aware that just as much of myself is presented to my audience in my writing as would have been onstage. In fact, when a novel is published, it is likely to reach far more people as readers, than there are members of the average theatre audience (perhaps a better comparison would be TV or film audiences).

So why does writing seem so much safer to me? I think part of its appeal is that I can still get into the part of my narrator without anyone seeing me do it. I can use all of the same creative discipline, skill and control, but I can be invisible to the reader.

Getting into the part was my favourite part of acting. I didn't like the stage, and often it was only by immersing myself in the role that I managed to avoid stage fright.

In *Year of the King[270],* Anthony Sher (1985) records in his memoirs how he prepared for the role of Richard III for the Royal Shakespeare Company. He captures moments of inspiration, which fed his interpretation of the role, such as:

> Driving home in a slow circle round Lion's Head. I
> suddenly realise why it is so impressive – the brute force,
> the thickness. My acting is often described as ratty or
> rodenty. Richard must be a thicker, heavier animal if there
> is to be a tragic dimension.
>
> (1985) [271]

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[270] Sher, A (1985) – *Year of the King (2nd edition)* – Pub. Methuen Publishing Limited, London, 1986.
[271] ibid. pp.64-66 (Monday 19th December)

Sher didn't create the character of Richard III – Shakespeare created this fictional version as his own interpretation of the historical figure – but Sher created *his version* of Shakespeare's Richard III. He inhabited the part, immersed himself in what it would be like to *be* this character, and as a result, produced a highly successful interpretation of the role.

The extract above demonstrates how an actor's experience finding the role can be similar to the process the writer goes through when trying to capture a narrative voice. But as writers, we can achieve this aim from behind the apparent safety of our novel – to a certain degree. The presence of the writer is not often obvious or explicit, but it is there implicitly, and – contrary to how it may seem to the reader – the writer's innermost thoughts are highly exposed by their prose. Literary interpretation is, in some ways, the dissection and exposure of the novel, and the intentions of the writer. The novel becomes how it is read, rather than how it was written, and therefore the writer's ability to hide behind it is often compromised.

Writers nowadays are increasingly required to present and promote their work, and themselves as personalities. Our ability to hide ourselves away (as Grace does at the end of *The Posthumous Affair* (Friel, 2012)[272]*)* as we send our novel out into the world to fend for itself, is diminishing.

Conclusion: The Final Scene

From the early stages of writing *Over the Kite Path,* I knew what needed to happen by the end of the novel in terms of plot. I knew that Mrs Caddick's son would die, I knew

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[272] Friel, J (2012) - *The Posthumous Affair - Pub.* USA: Tupelo Press – '*The House of Death*'

that Mr Owen and Miss Edgerton would be sacked, and I knew Nora's experience would culminate in what took place at the top of the hill – on the Kite Path.

But how would I actually end the novel? What scene would I finish with? At what point would the reader's relationship with Nora and her world come to an end?

After the momentum of the scene on the top of the hill, I kept on writing, and let the aftermath of these events unravel, and then settle into an ending. Because I had engaged so intensely with my characters and their world throughout the process of writing of the rest of the novel, I was able to create the ending with relative ease. I had agonised for years about exactly how the novel would finish, but, in the end, it seemed to come so easily *because* it was the last thing I created. I knew my characters and their world so well I hardly had to think about it. Nora's world had changed. She had come full circle, the characters around her had crossed thresholds too, and – finally - Norman's eye had been fixed. When the final scene at the station came, it was as if the ending wrote itself. I didn't even know the final scene *was* the final scene until I wrote the handshake between Mrs Caddick and Nora's mother – and there it was. It was as if I was a correspondent; I was recording what happened, not creating it. That was the moment for me – and the reader – to leave.

The intensity of my relationship with my characters – and the novel's setting – is always difficult to articulate fully. Via the device of Nora's narrative voice, I have tried to craft her story into a thing of beauty – it has become a story, when once it was nothing at all. Even though I know this was my doing, it feels as if I am letting go of it all. The end of writing a novel is the completion of an act of creation, but, in many ways, it is a departure. It is my departure from those places I have explored – not just my fictional world, but also all of those the places I have travelled to intellectually in order to achieve my aims. It is also the slow, silent departure of my characters from

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the forefront of my consciousness. Is Nora's voice ceasing (as perhaps Eagleton might argue), or is she on the threshold of the rest of her 'life' (as in the Bildungsroman)? She cannot cease to be, since she never truly *existed* in the first place; but, as author, I often believed that she did, and it was my aim to pass this conviction on to the reader. Just as I felt a departure as I finished writing, it was my aim to make the reader feel this too as they finished reading. If the reader suspends disbelief, even for a single moment, and is convinced that my narrator and those around her had 'lived', I will be content. And with that hope, I let go of my novel.

Appendix 1:

Fictional Artefact – Transcript of Lewis Owen's Tribunal

Transcript: Tribunal of Mr. Lewis R. Owen, C.O. Application.

Tribunal date: 3rd December 1940
Location: London.

Tribunal: *Are you Lewis Robert Owen, of Ruthin, Denbighshire?*

Applicant: I am.

Tribunal: *On what do you base the grounds of your objection?*

Applicant: On the grounds that, as a sophisticated and evolved organism, I've acquired the moral judgment not to kill, or inflict violence on, other beings.

Tribunal: *Don't you realise that many of your old school and work friends are risking their lives to defend you?*

Applicant: Of course I do; I'm eternally grateful – in awe of their courage.

Tribunal: *In awe? You aspire to be like them?*

Applicant: I said I was in awe of their courage – not of their actions. And you surely can't say that awe is the same as envy.

Tribunal: *Won't you be ashamed to look them in the face if you shirk your duty now?*

Applicant: I'm not shirking duty. And why should I be ashamed? They believe it's right for them to fight. Therefore they're right to do so. I believe it would not be right for me to fight; therefore I do not. My moral judgment is such that I don't wish to bear arms myself – that's a choice which has come to my conscience through evolution and sophisticated thought.

Tribunal:	*Are you saying your friends who bear arms have – evolved, as you put it – less than you?*
Applicant:	They have evolved equally. But their evolution of mind and conscience – of complex thought – has differed from mine. Therefore we've come to different conclusions.
Tribunal:	*Do you believe your friends in the army are wrong, or mistaken in their judgment?*
Applicant:	On the contrary. I believe they have come to the right decision for themselves, and I don't judge them for it. We've each acted according to our principles. Shouldn't we, therefore, be able to call ourselves equals? Before conscription, in peacetime, would a soldier view his civilian brother with contempt? It would be wrong for him to do so. However, I believe I'm the maker of my own destiny, and I believe it's wrong to carry a gun, to kill, to bomb, to raid. Therefore I will not do it.
Tribunal:	*Would you not defend yourself from attack?*
Applicant:	First, we must consider the cause of the attack – the underlying issues. I believe this particular threat could have been avoided. Germany was a wounded beast – she was bound to bite.
Tribunal:	*You refer to the Treaty of Versailles?*
Applicant:	I refer to the failure of the international community. Northern Ireland, the Jews and the Moslems, the Catalans and the Basques… these problems are insolvable. Unless of course we all lay down our arms.
Tribunal:	*But Versailles, you claimed, was proof that this could not work.*
Applicant:	Versailles was a mess – a deferral of the inevitable, and not an answer.
Tribunal:	*Are you saying you sympathise with Germany?*
Applicant:	No… But Germany's demise, and her subsequent uprising, are not the results of my

mistakes. This war – Hitler himself – they're the consequence of mistakes made by shortsighted fools, when I was a child of three years old. I will take no responsibility for it. I will take no part in rectifying the problem.

Tribunal: *Would you protect your friends or family from the ruthless invader?*

Applicant: That is a leading question. Since the ruthless invader is not in this hall, brandishing a rifle, I don't see that it's relevant.

Tribunal: *But if he were?*

Applicant: Having never been in such a situation, I'm not sure how I'd react. Would I react according to the human instinct of flight, and self-preservation? Or would I fight – avenge and punish? A snap decision is too complex for us to analyse its morals.

Tribunal: *Do you not think that your pacifism assists the efforts of the invader?*

Applicant: It neither assists him nor thwarts him. I don't wish to be counted in this war. I simply wish to exist as neutrally as if I'd not been born.

Tribunal: *Are you a religious man?*

Applicant: I'm not. My moral judgment has nothing to do with religion. Why should it?

Tribunal: *Then from where does your pacifism come?*

Applicant: As an individual, I have no right to determine the lives or deaths of others. In the classroom, I instruct and teach on matters of learning, but I encourage my pupils to make their own decisions, and consider all things with care. War or no war, I can't end the life of another human being. I can't do it, and I won't.

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Marshall Cavendish in association with the Imperial War Museum – *Images of War 1939-1945: War Diary September 1939-April 1942* – UK: Marshall Cavendish Partworks Ltd, 1994 *(part of their 'Images of War' magazine series)*

Minkowski, H –*Raum und Ziet, Physikalische Zeitschrift,* 10 – Leipzig: Vogel, 1909 - 75-88

Padel, J - 'The Psychoanalytic Theories of Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott and their interaction in the British Society of Psychoanalysts' - Psychoanalytic Review, 78(3), (Fall 1991) pp. 325-345 (NPAP)

Patron, S - 'Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in Benedetti's 'Five Years of Life' - Narrative, 21, 2, pp. 243-262 (May 2013).

Thomson, H – *Making Things Up* – New Scientist, 5 November 2016, pp. 29-32

AUDIO/MUSIC

Ar Hyd y Nos / All Through the Night - traditional.
[English lyrics by Boulton, H, (1884), available at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ar_Hyd_y_Nos]

Rogers, G and Phillips, H (1939) - *'Goodnight Children Everywhere (with a tender thought to all evacuated children)'* [broadcast on 'Children's Hour' by the BBC in 1939]
And:
Lynn, V (1939) (Rogers, Phillips) – *'Goodnight Children Everywhere'* – Cecil Lennox Ltd. (Recorded in London, 29th December 1939)
"GOODNIGHT CHILDREN EVERYWHERE"
WORDS & MUSIC BY: HARRY PHILLIPS/GABY ROGERS
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The Forum: 'Unintended Consequences' [Radio Programme] BBC World Service, First broadcast 19th December 2014. Available at:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02d5qfp

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH EVACUEES:

- Recording A: 7th March 2011 – Anon #1
- Recording B: 7th March 2011 – Anon #2

EMAILS:

1) Personal emails from Evacuees:
   - Personal email from Anon #3 – sent to me 17th June 2011
   - Personal email from Anon #4 – sent to me 29th September 2011

2) Personal email from Ruthin Local History Group – Sent to me 8th April 2010