

## Inner Speech of the Villain in Detective Fiction

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### ABSTRACT

*The article discusses the notion of inner speech of anti-hero in detective fiction from literary and linguistic perspective. The multi-domain analysis of antagonist's evil voice from different angles offers clear function of inner monologue, self-communication and inner voice in detective story. The paper attempts to articulate the true nature and hidden features of inner speech by examining negative fictional character from the novel Mr. Mercedes. Article discusses inner narrative styles found above-mentioned novel, explores aspects of the inner world of the outlaw, emotional state, personality traits and motive hidden behind inner voice as well. Moreover, it touches upon authentic portrayal of other fictional characters from antagonist's standpoint. The paper highlights the crucial role and influence of inner speech in crafting vivid and impactful plot for detective story. The article concludes with impact of the inner voice on readers' perception and emotional state.*

**Keywords:** Detective fiction, character, inner speech, monologue, plot, antagonist, evil voice

### INTRODUCTION

Recent findings show that detective fiction has become the object of study for different fields and subjects. The main reason behind this notion accounts for colorful and lively story and thrilling narrative style of this genre. Moreover, plot of the detective fiction highlights common social and economic challenges faced by every member of society from literary focus. Writers of

detective stories exploits various linguistic resources and poetic tools to make the story more and more readable, inspiring, and attractive. Fictional characters of the detective story are utilized for numerous real-life tasks that cannot be implemented through any components of the story. Furthermore, in good narrative characters act as real human being even though they are fictionally crafted. Additionally, the interpersonal communication and dialogues of fictional figures is believed to be indispensable in creating background of vividness and authenticity for the text. Although plot, characters, and setting are essential for creating authenticity in a narrative, it is the element of voice that gives the story its realism and credibility within the author's fictional world (Mallon 2015: 1). Another subtle detail of the plot that provides interiority of the literary figure is inner speech or monologue. It provides emotional state, inner mind intentions and decisions of the characters. In general, plot of the detective fiction predominantly portrays opposition between protagonist (hero: detective or private investigator) and antagonist (anti-hero: villain/evildoer/criminal). The study analyzes inner speech and interior monologue of the villain in detective fiction *Mr. Mercedes* by examining narrator's and character's point of view from different perspectives.

#### METHOD

The paper employs descriptive, analytical research and contextual analysis as the main research methodologies by close examining and analyzing examples of inner monologue, speech patterns as well as their open and hidden roles in selected novel from literary and linguistic viewpoint. Article utilizes multiple techniques to properly interpret reasons behind use of internal monologue of anti-hero. *Mr. Mercedes* is one of the prominent detective fictions written by American author Stephen King. It offers description of fictional mass murder and efforts to reveal murderer by former detective Bill Hodges. Narrative of the novel presents modern social and economic issues of USA from different angles and offers complex story rich in psychological depth. From author's point of view antagonist of the novel Brady

Hartsfield is referred to as usual teenager and nonviolent member of the society. Yet, author proposes completely different inner thoughts, intentions, and stance through villain's inner speech and internal monologues. "As characters engage in solitary dialogue, they unveil the recursive nature of thought, revealing how meaning is formed through reflection, doubt, association, and memory. Ultimately, internal monologue serves not merely to disclose consciousness but to constitute it, making literature a privileged site of philosophical and psychological self-exploration" (Castro 2024: 174).

Brady's inner voice reflects deep emotional urges towards all members of society especially novels other fictional figures. He secretly reveals sense of disgust, revenge, irritation and disdain later motive for murder by his inner monologues. For effective implication of self-communication in the narrative writer utilizes informal and colloquial lexicon that matches social class and educational level of the villain.

Friedman (2012) states "Internal dialogue is the manifestation of inner mind of the character in fiction. And because it presents the most intimate thoughts and realities of your characters, it is beyond elemental: Internal dialogue is the marrow of your story." King put forward compelling antihero whose identity kept concealed in narrative setting. In Mr. Mercedes, this statement "She gives him chapter and verse, because Brady is a *good listener*." hides true personality of the villain (King 2014: 45). This notion canonically adopted by most authors of crime fiction and hard-boiled detectives. Even though the antihero's true nature is hidden, they interact with other characters of the story, including the protagonist, in ways that are influenced by their psychological makeup (Altair n.d.: 3). Author formulates interior monologue in two different explicit and implicit forms of perception. Former is shaped based on narrator's stance and the latter is from villain's inner thoughts in the form of direct speech. Inner voice-first person point of view (further in text POV) explicitly portrays the act of thought, perception, or feeling experienced by the villain that contradicts with reader's real perception, anticipation and reflects the criminal's true nature. According to Oyun, Dyunerovna, &

Artinovna, (2020) “It is anticipated by an assumption contained in statement that contradicts to what is true from the narrator’s point of view and, therefore, from the reader’s too” (p. 5).

#### FINDINGS

At the beginning of the story main medium of interaction between fictional hero Hodges and antihero Brady is written letters and later it is expected to use internet website called “Blue umbrella” offered by villain. Readers cannot be aware of psychological and emotional state of the murderer, his concealed sense of antipathy as well as hidden childhood family abuses without reading his private letters to the owner of the stolen car “Mercedes” Olivia Trelawney. The letter is depicted in first-person POV or figural voice as a form of biography and presents hidden feelings of the antagonist aftermath of the murder crime. His internal thoughts expose deep sense of resentment, revenge, disdain, irritation and psychological impact he experienced throughout his lifespan. These very inner feelings led him to commit inhuman criminal act without thinking its consequence.

I grew up in a physically and sexually abusive household. My stepfather was the first, and do you know what happened when my mother found out? She joined the fun! Have you stopped reading yet? I wouldn’t blame you, it’s disgusting, but I hope you have not, because I have to get this off my chest. (King 2014: 109)

This script depicts childhood memory of the Brady from his own viewpoint. Murderer also reveals his abusive childhood to justify his resentment toward the people around him and to show unfair destiny. By doing so writer lets the reader to guess and visualize antihero’s abnormal desires and future expectations. Despite being antagonist Brady is anti-hero in his own right, as he fights against injustices that arise within modern society. His inner monologue suggests cynicism and distrust of government and state institutions due to his social and economic challenges. “With that said, the experiences of an antihero can be cathartic and enjoyable to those audiences or readers who relate to the

struggles and obstacles that the anti-heroes must face” (Ásgrímsdóttir 2022: 21). \

Writer presents inner speech of the villain in the form of first-person narration (I and Me) and figural point of view (third person Brady or He). In Mr. Mercedes interior speech and inner voice of the masked murderer break monotonous textual narrative and provides with high realism. Writer does not emphasize the inner monologue of the Brady by quotes and uses verbal indicators such as “think,” “wonder,” “in his mind” or “self-questioning.” “If I was her liver, Brady thinks, I’d jump out of her mouth some night while she’s snoring and run the fuck away” (King 2014: 98). Author makes his antihero Brady cunning, smarter, and cleverer than other figures and fits him with strong psychological manipulation to keep his crime and intentions hidden. This technique makes others doubt their perceptions towards evildoer and disarm those around them by showing superficial sincere figure. The psychology behind these techniques is rooted in a deep understanding of human nature and an ability to exploit others’ weaknesses and insecurities (Altair n.d.: 3). “From behind the wheel of his little Mr. Tastey truck, which is covered with *happy kid decals* and *jingles with happy recorded bells*, Brady waves. The niggerkid waves back and smiles. Sure, he does. Everybody likes the ice cream man” (King, 2014: 80). As it is seen from example above Brady is portrayed as a helpful and warmhearted figure that share happiness and joy with kids and coworkers. There are several cases in the novel where author portrays malicious desires of the villain by means of direct and indirect inner monologue. These patterns also illustrate his relationship and attitude towards protagonist and his accomplices (Jerome Robinson, Holly Gibney).

Also, Odell. Don’t forget Odell. Jerome and his little sister love that dog. It would really break them up if something happened to it. Probably nothing will, but maybe he’ll research some more poisons on the Net when he gets home tonight. *Such thoughts are always flitting through Brady’s mind*; they are the bats in his belfry. (King 2014: 135)

The script presents that Brady intends to break the bond between retired detective Hodges and his close friend computer savvy Jerome and to harm them in any possible way. Even he ponders to hurt him by poisoning Jerome's lovely dog Odell.

Another script here also demonstrates inner voice and self-talk of the villain related to future actions to be implemented.

He thinks about the immediate *road ahead*, and that calms him even more. *First, Odell*. The mutt will die a miserable death, and the fat ex-cop will know it's his own fault, even if the Robinsons do not. (From a purely scientific standpoint, Brady will be interested to see if the Det-Ret owns up. He thinks Hodges won't.) *Second, the man himself*. Brady will give him a few days to marinate in his guilt, and who knows? *He may opt for suicide after all*. Probably not, though. So, Brady will kill him, method yet to be determined. And third ...” (King 2014: 204)

His imaginary roadmap is described to anticipate his upcoming actions in the plot and arouse in reader's eagerness to know approaching events. Furthermore, all occasions regarding villain's internal speech and conversation reveal his hidden emotional disorder and true personality.

#### DISCUSSION

Enthusiasts of detective fiction eager to get a glimpse into the mind of the villain, to see what they are thinking in reality and how they approach the world. In crime fiction it is offered by means of villain's inner voice, internal monologue, interior speech or self-talk, as well as verbal stream of consciousness. Readers are attracted to villain's point of view as it is contrasting with theirs.

Occasional glimpses into a villain's world can build a novel's suspense and mystery: we see what they are up to and understand the gravity of the situation in a way that the other characters may not. It is a great way to increase the sense of threat: being inside a villain's mind shows the reader how evil they truly are, which makes the threat real. (Lansdale 2023: para 6)

## CONCLUSION

Internal monologue or inner voice of the villain donot merely express antihero's interior thought or mental state but it shapes the context and setting to apply hidden evil experience to be implemented. Moreover, self-talk of the fictional evildoer opens true personality and hidden traits that mostly concealed for other characters of the detective story. It is essential for authors to apply proper inner monologue to the plot in order to craft genuine and authentic criminal figure with hidden behavior and dark personality. Internal monologue of the outlaw also provides valuable intuition regarding motivations and emotions of the villain and reveals antihero's inner life and psychological complexity to the reader. This can help students to fully grasp the character's prearranged actions and decisions, and to empathize with figural background experiences. Additionally, inner voice can be used to create close bond and sense of intimacy that allows the reader to enter into the villain's inner world ("Number analytics" 2024: para 3). King fosters a sense of connection and understanding between the reader and the fictional villain Brady by presenting his inner thoughts and feelings from first-person POV. Writer uses interior monologue to generate sense of tension and suspense as well. This setting creates sense of anticipation and uncertainty in readers and makes them anticipate how the villain's thoughts and feelings will be applied into fictional reality. Close reading and pragmatic analysis of the novel reveals that villain's point of view is used to build suspense, create a sense of danger, and deepen the mystery for avid readers. In addition, it provides the textual narrative with sensory details, vivid emotional and psychological layers, as well as different fictional depth.

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