An Analysis of Narrative as Part of the English Language and Literature Learning Process: classroom practice with Ian McEwan’s Enduring Love

การวิเคราะห์การเล่าเรื่องในกระบวนการการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ:
การปฏิบัติในชั้นเรียนโดยใช้วิทยาเรื่องอีนเดียริง ลีฟ ของเยอัน แม็คีวาน

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Abstract

In the classroom where most Thai students’ aim is to improve language competence to meet the demands of their future life, literary texts which require more language and structural analysis serve the purpose. In teaching an introductory course to fiction, literary theories even contrastive ones such as liberal humanism, structuralism, reader response and postmodernism can be integrated as resources to be used in the classroom to encourage students to give text-based interpretations and to guide them so as to avoid misreading. Also, they can, at the same time, realize their role as individual readers of an enriching plural text instead of forfeiting it and being complacent as passive participants in a lecture. The novel Enduring Love by Ian McEwan has been chosen as the case study of this paper since it has proved to be most usefully problematic in the course Introduction to Fiction at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

บทคัดย่อ

ในชั้นเรียนที่ผู้เรียนมุ่งพัฒนานสมรรถนะทางภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อประโยชน์ในการประกอบอาชีพในอนาคตนั้น การเรียนการสอนที่เหมาะสมเพื่อประกอบการสอนช่วยให้ผู้เรียนบรรลุถึงคุณลักษณะดังกล่าว การวิเคราะห์การใช้ภาษาและโครงสร้างที่สำคัญของวรรณกรรม โดยอาศัยการบูรณาการหลักนักการณ์วรรณกรรมวิจารณ์ เช่น เริ่มต้น-มนุษย์มนุษย์ โครงสร้างบุคคล ทฤษฎีที่ให้ความสำคัญแก่ผู้อ่านหรือทฤษฎีการผลิตสังคมใหม่ในวิชาการศึกษาวรรณกรรมหรือทฤษฎีการผลิตสังคมใหม่และเหตุผลที่ผู้เรียนในฐานะนักเรียนได้มีปฏิสัมพันธ์โดยตรงกับบท ได้อ่านและพิจารณาทักษะการตีความจากตัวบทด้วยตนเอง ผู้เรียนได้เลือกนักเรียนเรื่องอีนเดียริง ลีฟ (Enduring Love) โดยเยอัน แม็คีวาน (Ian McEwan) ที่ได้ใช้กระบวนการสอนวิชาการศึกษาวรรณกรรมร่วมกับอังกฤษเบื้องต้นในจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัยเป็นกรณีศึกษา
1. Introduction

This paper aims to support the integration of some seemingly contrastive literary theories as guidance and tools to interpretation for students on basic literature courses. The analysis of the novel chosen includes the subjects of authorial intention, viewpoint and realistic conventions with emphasis on the closure. The approaches taken in the interpretation of the novel are an example of what can be done in class to avoid misreading and of learning to read a text as a "writerly text" for students' own improvement in language and logical thinking. Such an approach to a work together with student-centered learning eventually guides students as readers to realize the rightful place of literature as an effective method of communication in the modern world of perspicuity where human experience is oversimplified and facts glorified.

2. Reading literature with EFL students: past and present

2.1 The Position of literature

When René Wellek and Austin Warren published Theory of Literature in 1949 it was generally believed that literature which was often referred to as fiction was not a proper vehicle in the area of language teaching as they expressed with obvious dissatisfaction below.

"The lingering American popular view, disseminated by pedagogues, that the reading of non-fiction was instructive and meritorious, that of fiction, harmful or at best self-indulgent..." (Wellek and Warren 212)

In teaching EFL students, limited classroom study time definitely affects the choice of texts. The preference for and faith in non-fiction texts as the most beneficial for students who aim to master English for everyday use determine not just the text-types but also teaching approaches such as communicative or situational ones with their dialogues as models for the use of language to be repeated and modified. The time allocated for reading 'books' is comparatively short. In general by the time Thai students reach secondary school, they are expected to know a certain amount of vocabulary and enough grammar for substantial reading. By then they are required to read usually just one simplified novel as external reading to promote fluency.

At the tertiary level, the reading of fiction has been a part of literature courses offered by departments of English for years, but not of the other so-called 'language' courses. However it is a good sign when stylistic linguists and more recently academics in the field of teaching English, especially teaching English as a foreign language, such as Peter Widdowson, Ronald Carter, Geoffrey Leech and many others make their point clear that literature has a rightful place in the language classroom. They all reason that, by nature, literature (often referred to as "literary texts" or "texts with literariness") offers aspects of the language which do not feature as often in non-fiction or even simplified fictional texts.\(^1\) Literature of all genres is, therefore, read for the understanding of life and for exposure to language features rarely found in non-

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\(^1\) "During the 1980s the situation has changed quite radically and literature is undergoing an extensive reconsideration within the language teaching profession." Carter and Long explained the main reasons for the teaching of literature which serve a set of learning objectives for the students of literature which are the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model. (Carter, Ronald and Long 1991)
fiction. In the form of narrative, it also offers models for the structure and organization of writing.

2.2 Fulfilling students' need for language competence

For many reasons, in both language and literature classrooms, most of the Thai students in class are more interested in how they can improve their language skills. When reading literature, it is most beneficial when the means of communication is the focus and the content of a literary text the by-product.

This might sound like a heartless thing to say especially by someone who teaches serious "literature" not "language." However, it is with confidence in the merit of literature and the awareness that the "sound" must be the echo of the "sense" that I dare give priority to how an author writes over what he wants to say. Also the prevalent student-centered approach has prompted me to find the answer to certain questions concerning students' needs to master language skills. How can the teaching of literature make students become more conscious of the process of writing and enjoy a written work as they read, as well as either entertaining or teaching them about life?

I shall also try to steer clear of evaluative questions such as those of reviewers'. It might not be very useful at this learning stage to ponder whether it is the writer or the reader who has failed if the reader skips most parts of the book to find satisfaction in the ending on the last page. It is, on the other hand, productive to think about how the teacher's guidance can make the class aware that a novel is "a process – even though process towards an end."

1 Students who want to improve their language competence need to adopt a positive attitude towards literary or representational texts and understand that their interest in the making of a narrative is crucial in helping them to achieve their goal.

In more ways than one can imagine, writers who observe the use of structure and are capable of working within the framework they have set will certainly give a true presentation of their views to the reader. With a well-written work of a conscious writer, the message will emerge eventually when students understand the means. However for this to materialize the methods of teaching must integrate relevant concepts from the field of literary criticism which give more emphasis to form.

Through a series of student-based activities which cannot be successful without the advantage of the motivating thematic approach, an appreciation in the creative use of language and the art of writing "a story," whether they are figures of speech, other language deviations, structure of

1 Wellek and Warren in The Theory of Literature discuss the structure of a narrative but do not mention the methods to guide inexperienced readers to be literary literate. "To tell a story one has to be concerned about the happening, not merely the outcome. There is or was a kind of reader who must look ahead to see how a story 'come out'; but one who reads only the 'concluding chapter' would be somebody incapable of interest in story, which is process – even though process towards an end." (Wellek and Warren 215)

2 The emphasis of their discussion is on the writing not on the reading.

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narrative, etc., will be realized by the students themselves as readers, not as passive participants in a lecture room.

In this paper, it is not my aim to illustrate my ideas or my practice in the classroom with an analysis of language units such as words or sentences though I realize that an analysis of creative writing cannot be done without it. The emphasis of this paper will be on how crucial the awareness of the structure of narrative and other elements involved are in reading and interpreting a representational text such as a novel or a short story. Such an approach will highlight texts as models of writing and; therefore, in a way serve the students’ need to improve their language skills.

3. Literature as a systematic “language”: reading and analyzing the process of writing

3.1 Reader response and text-based analysis

In the classroom where literary works are read either as means of language teaching or as a part of Literature (with a big L) study, the notion of the Russian Formalists, that literature is a language which can be analyzed to the smallest units as any other language, is beneficial. First and foremost, it determines the teaching methods and the analysis done by each student as a reader in his own right. The diagram below which shows the elements of a discourse, as a result, is not irrelevant to the reading of a literary work by an interpretive community or an individual.

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1 John McRae has argued for the reading of literature in a language classroom and radically expresses his disapproval of limited reading of the so-called ‘high-brow’ literature in certain exclusive circles. (McRae, John Literature with a Small ‘I’ 1991)

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2 The diagram of linguistic communication devised by a Formalist such as Roman Jakobson (from Selden and Widdowson 3), is to be seen as the core if a teacher aims to make the reading of literature a part of the development of language competence and logical thinking.

3 “Literature must always be interesting; it must always have a structure and an aesthetic purpose a total coherence and effect. It must, of course, stand in recognizable relation to life…” (Wellek and Warren 212)
to make sense of it.\footnote{The idea that reading (and in my case - in an introductory course) should be text-based is presented clearly by Wimsatt and Beardsley in their essay 'The Intentional Fallacy' (1946, in Lodge 1972) "In most cases it is not possible to find out what the poet intended. We are primarily interested in how a poem works, not what was intended." They are in fact interested in the author's intention, but rather than trying to answer questions about intention by looking in diaries, journals or biographies, etc., they think the author's intentions are successfully embodied in the text itself.}

According to Wolfgang Iser in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978) "the text is a potential structure which is "concretised" by the reader in relation to his or her extra-literary norms, values and experience" (qtd. in Selden and Widdowson 55) and "literary texts always contain "blanks which only the reader can fill." (qtd. in Selden and Widdowson 49) It is true, especially in the language classroom, that a text is a meaningful form and a shared property between the author and the reader whose varied responses count. Without the reader to reconstruct a text and without his sense of the whole meaning, there is no reading. Iser's emphasis on what he calls "phenomenology" of reading literature in *The Implied Reader* (1978 qtd. in Stibbs 11) gives a clearer picture of the reading process than that which I. A. Richards started when discussing naive students' responses to texts in *Practical Criticism*(1929).

However, I believe that any reading cannot be text-based and fully benefit a "naive" reader unless the reader acknowledges that it is the author, who creates the system of language or codes to communicate with his reader (called "narratee" by Gerald Prince and "implied reader" by Iser). He controls the interpretation to a certain extent, if not all. The existence of "structural irony" (Montgomery et al.235) and the so-called "implied author" (Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 1961) which is the main effect of a text are examples of such authority. Stanley Fish who, like Iser, focuses on the role of the reader, still sees that readers will develop responses in relation to the author's use of language. This is what he calls "affective stylistics." (Selden and Widdowson 58)

3.2 Authorial Intention vs. The Death of the Author

I am sure that it is the wish of every teacher to see her EFL students engrossed in what Roland Barthes calls "readably (lisible) texts" (qtd. in Montgomery et al. 243) just for the sake of the joy of reading, starting from getting caught up in the pleasure of narrative to not being aware of the fact that he or she is reading. On the other hand, to teach literature and to see it as a "writery (scriptible) text,"\footnote{"With writery texts, attention is drawn to the process of writing; we are unable to sink into a process of reading in the same unthinking way as with readerly texts." (Montgomery et al. 243)} one has to be aware of and accept that there is such thing as authorial intention.

The postmodernist notion that there is room to believe that authors, like all human beings, sometimes say something they are not consciously aware of having meaning other than that they intend to convey is undeniable. However, it is of greater benefit to the teaching of an introduction to literature and EFL to focus on what an author is conscious of doing in his use of language and craft to communicate. As for the claim that texts do not and cannot reach
out for personal or social message\(^1\), this is irrelevant to a teaching aim which is based on the formalist diagram above. Nonetheless, to help students of English as a foreign language or those who have just been introduced to English literature to acquire literary competence, the postmodernist analysis concerning how texts play on the conventions of texts and their contexts should be incorporated into the lesson.

3.3 Application of integrated theories to Enduring Love

In the course Introduction to the Study of English Fiction which is a required course for students who major in English, as well as short-stories, students are required to read a novel as they familiarize themselves with some basic elements of fiction. The effect of the novel, Enduring Love on the students was interesting. The novelist’s art and craft results in a work which reflects the notion of “the happening” and the “process” rather than the gathering of narrative momentum towards “the concluding chapter” that Wellek and Warren mention in their work.

However, after my students’ first reading prior to class discussion, I found that with this structurally challenging novel, relatively few students saw beyond the simple plot. For these students to reach some interpretation of this multi-layered and subtle novel, they needed to pay special attention to the use of different text-types, viewpoint and most of all to how the writer manoeuvres the realist convention to fulfil his authorial intention. Of course, first of all, a basic analysis of characterization is a must. Students must be aware that, in a convincing and realistic piece of writing, characters’ actions are motivated by their characteristics determined by a writer and that actions or incidents indirectly present the characters.

For Thai students who have been first initiated to unsimplified literary works, the analysis of Ian McEwan’s attempt to tell a story of love and relationships through narration gives them a very clear example of the creative use of language for communication. The author’s apparent use of the literary conventions of realist novels (chronological order, “realist operators,” shared “cultural code” between the implied reader and the author, narrative “closure,” coincidence, etc.) can be deceivingly simple. Simultaneous juxtaposition of different views of varied reflectors and of language registers, and character parallelism result in parody and satire of not just realist convention but also the seemingly shared cultural code.

This, of course, as I have already experienced, presents reading problems to readers who cannot meet the demands without some guidance. In a positive light, such stumbling blocks help sharpen the students’ awareness of the creative use of language and ‘literariness’ features in many text-types of the English language they try to master.

In Ways of Reading, Montgomery et al. could not underline more clearly how important the awareness of genre and literary conventions are in reading.

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\(^1\) Even if Roland Barthes proclaims his rejection of the view that the author is the source of meaning of a text in his short essay “The Death of The Author” (1968) and advocates the reader to read “the plural text,” one cannot help but see the contradiction when the texts he preferred to work with are texts in which authors manifest most of all their creativity. Read Eagleton, Terry The Illusions of Postmodernism (1996) for such view on ambivalences and contradictions in Postmodernism.
“One view of these questions is that genres create expectations that govern how a text is likely to be understood or construed. In this respect, genre is a major dimension of the tacit knowledge, or body of interpretative assumptions and techniques, we draw on in reading. The genre of a novel, for example, determines the degree of realism to be expected from it, ...” (172)

4. A Plural Text

If the purpose of education in general is humanistic, what students learn in all courses including literature and language should include the notion that there is no one reality in the world where each individual’s view counts. It is possible that texts, even realist ones, present plural meanings. Even if the terms and the concept of The Jamesian “central consciousness” or “stream of consciousness” are usually associated with one reality from one viewpoint, (Stibbs 91) many prominent writers including James himself, present self-reflexive expression through different viewpoints of different characters. Of course, one cannot deny the dominant reading in such novels; nevertheless, there is room for readers’ individual responses as well as a text present through one voice: that of the author.

The postmodernist claim that human experience is too complex and, therefore, too problematic to describe, I feel, is not an alienated and despairing claim, but a celebration of diversity. For novels such as Enduring Love, in which the author refuses to play the role of a godlike omniscient narrator, ways of enjoying and finding a new agenda for creative and interpretative activities are more available to readers. It is up to students and teachers to explore the conventions¹, genres, points of view, etc. exploited by the author to first make us see ‘his’ reality and then, later, to examine each of our individual responses.

5. The Structure of Plot

Among many elements of the realistic conventions, I would like to lay more emphasis on closures in my discussion. It is my aim to point out how important the analysis of the genres² and the structure of a narrative are to readers who prefer not to listen passively to a lecture on somebody else’s interpretation of a work but to learn to interpret a “representational text” (McRae vii) while engaging in the process of acquiring “the thinking skill.” (McRae 5) However, other elements of realist convention must be taken into account in order to make a step-by-step analysis towards the understanding of authorial intention.

1 “Roland Barthes (1986) and David Lodge (1977) have helped to shift attention to the textual qualities of realism and they have stressed that the notion of literary convention is very important in the construction of realist novels...” Moreover, the term Realism is not equated with being realistic or reality. Montgomery has added that conventions, in which a work is based on, govern our initial way of reading it. (Montgomery et al.212)

2 “… the idea of genre as part of a skill of critical reading, involves seeing conventions in a text instead of assuming the text to be a kind of unmediated human expression or way of getting at social meaning or truth. Creativity and the particular meanings texts create are built by exploiting already-existing resources or patterns. … It is true in terms of ideas: comparisons, themes, and topics form stock resources within a society’s repertoire of symbolic conventions. (Montgomery et al. 174)
5.1 Mythic plot
Broadly speaking, any plot falls into two types of mythic plot: the plot of the journey and the plot of pursuit. ¹ The plot of Enduring Love which is no more complicated than any of Charles Dickens’ can fall into many critics’ diagrams of narrative. The single incident of the balloon accident pervades the narrative. In terms of the frequency of action, Joe’s holding and letting go of the rope from the balloon can be seen as the main motif. Joe’s letting go of the rope reflects man’s natural tendency to fail in a quest or a journey to prove human inner strength. The plot of pursuit is also integrated. The main pursuits are those of the estranged beautiful young wife by her husband, of a middle-aged bald man by a male religious-fanatic-stalker in search of a soul-mate and most importantly of self-knowledge and the knowledge of human life by a seemingly complacent middle-aged man.

5.2 The application of Victor Shklovsky’s diagram of a narrative
Victor Shklovsky’s diagram of typical narrative is a good illustration here. He sees that narratives are typically about change.

Situation A changes to Situation B
lack leads to restoration
(Montgomery et al.178)

Application to Enduring Love

Situation A
Joe’s lack of self-knowledge, knowledge of human life and sense of security

Joe, the main character lacks the knowledge of his major weakness. His adherence to scientific reasoning as the only means to grasp inexplicable human experiences and to solve the unsolvable problems of the human heart is mistaken. His complacency in career and married life is only illusory, his sense of being in control as well as his compatibility with his wife delusional and even romanticized.

The change

Joe’s struggle with acceptance of his faults and the unpredictable law of nature

The balloon accident causes the change. Joe and a few people who come to help a boy and his grandfather in a hot-air balloon fail to anchor it to the ground and let go of the rope. One character, John Logan; however, heroically does not let go and, falling to the ground, dies, as the balloon floats up. Joe’s guilt and disappointment in himself, which is comparable to that of Jim in Lord Jim² (Conrad, 1981), leads him to find new ways to cope with the complexity of the experience not dissimilar to the scientific facts and reasoning he is used to. The sudden realization of his lack of inner strength makes his suppressed sense of inadequacy in terms of career and physical appearance surge. His failure to control the uncontrollable situation of the balloon accident throws him into the deep end. The presence of an obsessive stalker, Jed Parry, in his orderly life denies him even the illusion that “All is well with the world.” ‘All’ is especially not well for him when he and his wife, whom he worships in a courtly

¹ Read Wellek and Warren 210
² “‘I had jumped...’ ” “ ‘... I wish I could die,’ he cried ‘There was no going back. It was as if I had jumped into a well – into an everlasting deep hole...’ ” (71) “ ‘The honour... that is real – that is! And what life may be worth... when honour is gone - ... I can offer no opinion – because – monsieur – I know nothing of it.’ ” (95)
love fashion, become more and more estranged.

Situation B
The restoration

Joe’s safety restored as the villain is put away. His false complacency disperses. His self-knowledge gained. His married life regained.

The most obvious and superficial restoration is when Joe rescues his wife from the demented Jed who is later put in an asylum for life. However what is more important is Joe’s acceptance that scientific reasoning cannot describe nor help him understand his torment. Nor could it help him heal the wound in his relationship with his wife who unconventionally stares “at the gun in [my] hand with an expression of such repulsion and surprise...” (McEwan 232) He resigns himself to the fact that it is not always the case that intellect, which generally enables man to understand his situation and everything else, helps him cope with changes in people and in life. Even with intellect intact, a mere human like Joe can lose control of himself, let alone of people around him or the natural forces. In his Godless world, the protagonist is just like any other postlapsarian human and he can no longer afford any condescension on anyone but himself.¹ His broken relationship with Clarissa, his wife, is later restored as a result of the mutual acceptance of differences on both sides and the appreciation of one another’s love.

The framework of such a typical plot involves mainly the hero saving himself and the girl, getting rid of the mad villain and winning the girl back. As well as the types of plot, closure, the verisimilitude of details and the time sequence are parts of the discussion of realism of a text, in the case of this particular novel, the analysis of these elements, together with reflectors, voices and focalization, help unravel the authorial intention.

6. The sequence of narrative and the use of different reflectors

According to Boris Uspensky’s scheme of four planes of point of view in the plane of ideology (Boris Uspensky, A Poetics of Composition 1973 in Fowler 165), characters are vehicle of ideology. The plane of ideology in a narrative text is the set of values, or belief system, communicated by the language of the text. The choice of Joe Rose, a reformed over-rationalist who, in retrospect, traces his past struggle for self-knowledge, as the main reflector or central consciousness is definitely an indication not just of the narrator’s ideology but also of authorial intention. If, based on such an assumption, the fact that the author gives the story a happy-ending where scientific reasoning and the obvious seem to prevail over complex individual feelings or even what is labeled as ‘madness’ is definitely contrary to the narrator’s ideology and the implied author.

To support such a claim, the analysis of closures in the narrative (with or without the appendices) and the use of the irony especially that pervading in Joe’s monologue as the narrative proceeds is mandatory. As already mentioned, the intradiegetic narrator views the story in retrospect. His ideological development

¹ Joe’s self-knowledge is evident in the use of Joe as the narrator seeing the incident in retrospect. In Gérald Genette’s terms, Joe’s response to the past incidents is narrated in “metadiegesis” with Joe as an “intradiegetic” figure in the narration. (Genette 36)
from faith in scientific reasoning to admittance of human limitation are made known at the onset of the narrative. Therefore, from the momentous incident onwards, the metadiegetic narrator reflects his newly gained self-knowledge and also self-mockery while narrating the story and explaining his own experiences in the academic register of his ‘faith.’ The reader follows Joe’s struggling to solve his problem as a faithful rationalist and at the same time is allowed to understand the narrator’s view of himself before the revelation. The views of other characters such as Clarissa and Jed in different text-types included in the narrative can be seen as a form of collage or pastiche, which affect the way in which the reader sees the dominant reading.

It is possible that in terms of content, the novel is a satire on the dominance of scientific reasoning seen at least by readers who identify themselves with Joe Rose, the rationalist, as the value which sustains the sanity of society.

It is difficult to analyze the structure of *Enduring Love* without adopting Gérald Genette’s notion of focalization and time. Genette’s view of the distinction between diegesis or narrative and mimesis or dialogue (Genette 42) helps the reader in his analysis of the author’s techniques. The inclusion of mimetic text-types such as letters helps promote an important reading skill – making inferences.

Instead of adopting either objective point of view or the omniscient, McEwan chooses the subjective kind. The chapters of *Enduring Love* have different character reflectors. In the analysis, the study of the style of language and register may very well illustrate different viewpoints and characteristics. The author chooses Joe Rose, a scientist-turned-writer as the main narrator. In the form of a diary or an internal monologue of a science writer, he analyzes his private life and his problems in retrospect. The narrative, in some parts, is then a metadiegesis and Joe, an intradiegetic character who, after gaining self-knowledge, narrates the process of his development. He narrates the climactic part of his life, and along the way, shows self-derision and mockery.

The three other reflectors are Clarissa, Jed Parry and Robert Wenn, a psychiatrist, (not which they are narrated; the presumed reading time; and the frequency of repetition in the narration of events.

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1 Collage is used in modernist texts to set up a process of contrastive judgment which results from the juxtaposition of different voices or quoted texts. (Fowler 173)

2 Pastiche undermines the possibility of a central authoritative point of view or speaking voice and can lead to irony. In pastiche tensions between subject matter and the generic conventions followed can indicate satire, directed either towards the form adopted or the topic.

3 Gérald Genette’s study in *Narrative Discourse* (1980) includes the arrangements of the whole text under the headings of the order of events; techniques such as flashback and preview; duration, the time taken by events in relation to the length of text in
unlike a man of the same profession in *Lolita* in terms of objectiveness to the point of being a caricature), who writes an academic paper based on the case of Jed.

The character of Clarissa is also put in the position of a reflector when Joe, the narrator, imagines how she must feel living with him. The reader knows it is not the real Clarissa but the main narrator because he makes it clear at first. This is the only chapter of such nature and it confirms the main narrator’s metadiegetic position of Joe, the narrator who has gained his self-knowledge the hard way.

The character of Jed Perry has his parts as well. There are a few letters he writes. Even if Jed is “I” in the letter, he is not a narrator since his letters are not diegetic but mimesis or a part of his dialogue with Joe. I see the mimesis as a part of the narrative inserted by the narrator to create irony, contrast and insight into Joe, the character. Also, some letters have to be there to make the situation ‘real’ in the realist convention.

Clarissa’s only letter left for Joe when she decides to leave him, I think, has the same function as Jed’s letters. Still, it is a letter written by a more reliable character and, therefore, shows the intention of Joe, the narrator who includes the letter in the narrative, to encourage the reader to be more critical of Joe, the character.

6.1 *The sequence of the narrative regarding the use of different reflectors*

In pointing out the sequence, the teacher identifies the novel as an act of communication, not a mysterious art form only for the eyes of the privileged few. The fact that students are aware of the demands imposed upon them to read the novel as an English ‘narrative’ with a purposeful structure, means they will learn to appreciate the novel as a creative act of language, a craft or an example of limitless possibilities in expressing oneself through writing.

As for the time sequence to be discussed hand in hand with the focalization or point of view in *Enduring Love*, the story starts in medias res. It begins at the moment right before Joe sees the balloon. However the reader is given clues when he reads about the balloon accident for the first time in chapter one that this first and most significant incident will be seen and presented over and over again by the narrator as well as by other main reflectors with different outlooks as it is the central and controlling motif of the story. (Genette’s frequency of the event or “internal iteration” 39)

There are parts when Clarissa’s and Jed’s thoughts and the feelings towards the same incident are expressed in speech and in the form of letters. These writings are equally subjective and sincere as the text-types allow. Also there is one important chapter in which the metadiegetic character clearly shows his self-reproach by imagining how Clarissa must feel living with a very confused man like him.

Is the use of different voices (reflector characters) to make the novel polemical and argumentative? Instead of having one overall world-view, it is perhaps more poignant to have alternative and interacting views of life from different reflectors. In the classroom, to point out the difference to students, who put more emphasis on the happenings in the story, is a way to guide them towards an interest in the use of language and the techniques of communication for different purposes and in different circumstances. Generally the
writing of a “self-reflexively” organized literary work is carried out to make the reader understand the innermost thoughts of the reflector and to sense with immediacy any conflicts or the process of acceptance the character may have.

In the modern world with non-believers like Joe who are materially successful, it might be very unconvincing to say directly that science is not the answer to everything and is definitely not to be embraced with stronger faith like a new religion. If the dominant reading does not advocate over-rationalization of the situation, which can be considered as the “cultural code” of the realist convention, the author has to rely on many factors to help contribute to the total effect of parody or satire rather than stating his view directly. In his attempt to challenge Joe’s overuse of reasoning and analytical ability, likely to be shared by many readers, the author refuses to present his own viewpoint directly and doesn’t play the role of the omniscient author. He chooses, among other things, to have many reflectors.

Joe, the character, has a certain dissatisfaction and inferiority complex about his well-paid job when he compares it to the creative and ground-breaking works of scientists whose discoveries he can only try to comprehend and simplify for his layman-readers. Even so he still feels cocksure and superior to many people especially to his wife, who is preoccupied with her literature teaching job and her obsession with a particular letter that John Keats (a proper choice of a poet at that) might have written and her faith in discovering it. Without considering the time sequence and the use of metadiegetic narrator, the use of Joe, the intellectual and practical character as the main narrator seems to support the ideology adverse to that of the implied author. The dominant reading which makes a coherent whole seems to be that of reason and facts over intuition and feelings. The inability of some students to distinguish Joe, the narrator and Joe, the character led to misreading and wild interpretations.

Generally a monologue which is often put in the fashion of a journal or a soliloquy reveals the innermost thoughts of the character. If the reflector character is not in touch with his feelings or has some hidden flaws, his tell-tale chain of thoughts will gradually reveal them. Joe’s attempt to analyze his feelings and do research into his stalker’s mental disorder to ostracize his

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1 The term Wellek and Warren use when referring to Ulysses and Mrs Dalloway as a time-art which “has sought to organize itself poetically, i.e. ‘self-reflexively’” (Wellek and Warren 215)

2 “In my bad moments the thought returns that I’m a parasite and I probably would not feel this way if I did not have a good physics degree and a doctorate in quantum electrodynamics. I should have been out there myself, carrying my own atomic increment to the mountain of human knowledge. (Chap. 8, 80) “My sense of failure in science, of being parasitic and marginal, did not quite leave me.” (Chap. 12, 107)

3 Joe’s sense of guilt and his attempt to deny it. “I worked without a break for two and a half hours. What bothered me was that morning as I typed up my piece was a disquiet, a physical sensation I could not quite identify. There are certain mistakes that no quantity of astronauts can right. Like mine, yesterday. But what has I done, or not done? If it was guilt, where exactly did it begin? At the ropes under the balloon, letting go, ... It was like the sensation of not having washed. But when I paused from my typing and thought the events through, guilt wasn’t it at all. I shook my head and typed faster. ... I suppose I was still in shock, I was trying to soothe myself by remaining busy.” (Chap. 4, 42)
fear, disappointment in himself and his guilt seems to lead him nowhere.¹

The functions of the other two main reflector characters: Jed and Clarissa should be taken into account. In seeing the same incident from different viewpoints, which sometimes sound more sensible than Joe’s, the readers can infer by themselves the shortcomings and irrelevance of scientific or objective reasoning when one has to deal with real life problems. Joe’s blind struggle against his endless misery and confusion is also a very good testimony of it. The reader sees Joe and other ‘lost souls’ like the readers of his articles, desperately trying to make sense of the Godless world they are living in.

6.2 Defamiliarization through the juxtaposition of views

For a writer, to state directly that human feelings, positive or negative, need not and cannot be described or explained to have the right to exist is only a banal version of Romanticism. To avoid such an effect on the readers and in fact to create emotional response as literature should do, a character who is alienated from his inner-self must be put on the scaffold for all to witness his sufferings. As the character experiences the defamiliarization through the accident and comes to understand the true meaning of his existence which is love, the reader through defamiliarization, becomes as a result, more introspective. The reading becomes not passive but interactive. As a reader, I think, there is no fictitious accident which has more profound effects and which can defamiliarize the characters from their blind living than the fall of the Bridge of San Luis Rey. (Thornton Wilder, The Bridge of San Luis Rey 1927) The change of heart in the characters in Enduring Love is exactly of the same nature as their counterparts in The Bridge. The words of the Abbess in comforting herself and the other survivors of the accident who regret not having done better: “But the love will have been enough; all those impulses of love return to the love that made them.” (Wilder, 123) are echoed in Jed’s letters, Joan’s revelation and later in Joe’s thoughts.

Character parallelism also highlights the effect of juxtaposition. In juxtaposing characters with different views and characteristics, Joe’s positive and negative traits are brought to the reader’s attention. Each major character has his or her infatuation. Joe is no exception. His obsession with reasoning is surprisingly comparable to Jed’s fanaticism and much worse than Clarissa’s obsession with a dead poet. Joe’s other shortcomings such as an inferiority complex, a false sense of superiority, a tendency to over-rationalize to the point of making wrong decisions, etc., are brought to light when compared to other characters, even minor ones, in similar circumstances.

Joe tells the reader in a confessional fashion that he can’t recognize his “lack” and can’t accept it at first when reminded that it exists. It is so easy for the reader to identify himself with Joe. The affinity with the main reflector usually comes naturally. From my teaching experience, such a response may change or linger on depending, I think, not on how positively or

¹ “I was back with de Clerambault. De Clerambault’s syndrome. The name was like a fanfare, a clear trumpet sound recalling me to my own obsessions. There was a research follow through now, and I know exactly where to start. A syndrome was a framework of prediction, and it offered a kind of comfort. I was almost happy as she opened the front door for me…” (Chap. 14, 132-134)
negatively the self-reflexive character exposes himself but on the students’ reading ability and good observation of language usage. (I am trying to avoid the term ‘literary competence’ here as the lacks mentioned can be a reading obstacle to any text.) Surely certain texts such as the novel discussed here demand reading between the lines and so on. However the ability to see irony, to make deductions or inferences from data given (the same incident from different viewpoints, in this case) are no strangers to, for example, reading for EFL.

First of all we learn about the accident through Joe’s eyes. I dare say that in the first chapter when the reader thinks that Joe’s prompt action and his analytical thinking is admirable, the reader may prefer to see himself as an “implied reader” of an author who advocates the use of reasoning to explain and solve problems of all kinds. The trapped “implied reader,” who agrees with Joe’s opinion of Clarissa’s emotional excess, is not unlike Marlow in Heart of Darkness, who thinks that women such as Kurtz’s fiancée are out of touch with truth while ironically not realizing that he himself has lost touch with common sense.

In the first chapters, it is Joe who prides himself for his masculine better judgment and strength of character. Even in his love for Clarissa he makes sexist judgments about her. The reader of McEwan first follows the chain of thought of the male protagonist who loves and adores his common-law wife for her beauty and femininity in a medievally chivalric way. Despite the love and adoration, resistant female readers can see clearly from the beginning that even if the Joe thinks they are a good match and are both academically active, her field is trivial and irrational, and as a result, inferior to science. Joe seems to regard Clarissa’s academic work on John Keats as nothing more than an infatuation. To make it worse, there is nothing in the ‘affair’ to be jealous about since the object of her obsession is a long deceased poet. Her reaction to the accident, also, (not as quick as his) is slow indicating a character not capable of sacrifice or heroism; her work does not belong to the present world nor does it contribute to society; her naïveté in dealing with Jed whom Joe considers a real threat to their safety and her feminine physical weakness needs his protection and rescue.

The antithesis of Joe’s analysis and descriptive facts, is Jed’s letters’ outpourings of his love for Joe and God. Jed’s world has no reasons, no cause and no effect. People do not know and do not care why they feel the way they do. Jed, like the main character in “A Tell-Tale Heart” makes a confession characterizing himself in a way that the reader would not want to identify himself with. Compared to Jed’s letters, Joe’s monologue which values substantial facts and tangibility easily gains approval from the reader who probably misses the metadiegesis narrator self-derision and ridicule. The character of Jed, as mentioned, is more likely to make most readers side with Joe and prefer his way of reasoning and problem solving.

1 “I know I owe you an apology — and that word is too small. I stand before you naked, defenseless, dependent on your mercy, begging your forgiveness. For you knew our love from the very beginning.” (Chap. 11, 101-102)
“ I’ll never forget that time at the bottom of the hill, the way you turned away from me, rejected, stunned by my refusal to recognize in that first instance our love. I’ll never stop saying I’m sorry. Joe, will you ever forgive me?” (106)
Jed, in his madness, knows from the start that love and forgiveness go hand in hand.
So with a character as unreliable as Jed as an alternative voice, the author might be mistaken for a loyal advocate of scientific reasoning and the idea that it is the answer to all problems. In other words, juxtaposition can undermine the implied author instead of supplementing him/her. The ambivalence in ideology or dominant reading can put the author at risk of being misunderstood.¹ In the classroom, it takes an open-mind and time to guide students to see the functions of each element and eventually the whole picture. No need to say that this is more easily said than done.

Simple questions may be asked as the starting point of a discussion with an aim already set. Why does the author bother to allocate more than half of the pages to Clarissa and Jed? Is it an intention to counter-balance the scientific reasoning in Joe with Jed’s complete acceptance of human feelings without resistance? It is most unlikely any reader would go for Jed, though I feel, there are certain parts where the character is a mouthpiece of the author².

However, Clarissa with her common sense and compassion seems to represent the middle path. The dramatic shooting scene in the restaurant and at the couple’s apartment might have been avoided had Joe listened to her.

Resistant readers, feminist³ or non-feminist, are likely to see Clarissa as a reliable character and may identify themselves with her even from the very first chapter once the character of Joe reveals his shortcomings and poor judgment. They see Joe differently from the way he sees himself. Instead of agreeing with him about his reaction to the stalker, the resistant reader can see it as a useless overreaction and even a senseless way to deal with one’s own fear and guilt. If chapter 9, in which Joe puts himself in Clarissa’s position, is not enough to make the reader see his self-criticism, Clarissa’s letter to Joe, written when she feels the communication between them is impossible, makes sure that the reader does see Joe

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¹ Fowler thinks that the use of different viewpoints is to make a novel argumentative. Instead of having one overall world-view, it is perhaps more poignant to have alternative and interacting views of life from different reflectors. (Fowler 166)

² Jed also understands Joe’s weakness and “lacks” after he read all of Joe’s articles. “I told myself whenever I came close to giving up, he needs me to set him free from his little cage of reason. ... You’ve probably forgotten the article you wrote four years ago for the New Scientist about the latest technological aids to biblical scholarship. Well, who cares about the carbon dating of the Turin Shroud... Do you think faith could depend on a length of rotting cloth?” (Chap. 16, 143-144)

³ “Can you blame me for hating you for the things you allow to fill your mind—... genetic engineering, biocomputer, ... It’s all shopping. You buy it all, you’re a cheerleader for it, an

ad man hired to talk up other people’s stuff. In four years’ journalism, not a word about the real things, like love and faith.” (Chap. 16, 147)

³ Usually they are women readers who read about themselves in works written by male writers. They see themselves differently from the images of women or femininity in the works. They refuse to share the idea and the viewpoint and may even feel angry if the view is condescending or patronizing. (Montgomery et al. 228)
critically. His way of solving the problems of the heart which wears the readers out in early chapters is pointed out clearly by Clarissa in chapter 23. She puts it in words and in writing. (158-159,233-236)

What Joe doesn’t see is Clarissa’s better common sense and acceptance of life as an uncontrollable process of living. As the narrative progresses the reader has more chances to view the same incidents especially the balloon accident from three different viewpoints. The reader, of course, has various responses to the way each character reacts to the accident. In forming his own response to the fictional event, the reader may begin to perceive the indirect address of the author. This is how interactive reading improves not just reading skill but also thinking skills. Interactive reading of literary texts can be considered a response to the plea and hope that higher education in Thailand can put an end to passive learning. To be receptive to ideas of other people no matter how different they are to one’s preconception or formulated ideas is as important as perceiving them critically. An analysis of narrative texts can be considered a means towards language and literary competence, while undeniably viewed as a microscopic model of how teaching and learning of other subjects should be conducted in higher education.

7. The analysis of irony and registers

It is hard to say how one can analyze a text with duality and irony, and ignore or overlook the use of language. The use of different registers in the speech and thoughts of a particular character, or of different characters, is undeniably the key to stylistic analysis. Irony among other elements accounts for the interpretation that the author does not really share Joe’s view before his self-realization. Irony in the narrative does not permit the reader to slide into the delusion Joe is deeply drowned in: the delusion that reasoning can solve all the problems including ones of the heart. (Joe, the narrator, has discovered otherwise.)

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1 “... I watched you go deeper into yourself and further and further away from me.... You did the research, you made the logical inferences, and you got a lot of things right, but in the process you forgot to take me along with you, you forgot to confide.... You’re right; you acted decisively and you’re right to take pride in that. But what about the rest? Why it happened, how it changed you.... I think we need some time apart.’ ” (Chap.23, 233-236)

2 “‘It’s the new fundamentalism.’ she said one evening. “ Twenty years ago you and your friends were all socialists and you blamed the environment for everyone’s hard luck. Now you’ve got us trapped in our genes, and there’s a reason for everything!’ She was perturbed ..... Everything was being stripped down, she said, and in the process some larger meaning was lost. What a zoologist had to say about a baby’s smile was in the eye and the heart of the parent, and in the unfolding love that only had meaning through time.” (Chap. 8, 75)

3 According to Roger Fowler, all texts, even the most simple and explicit, assume some degree of shared knowledge between the reader and the producer of the text. Sometimes, these knowledges or ideas are presented as if the reader is bound to agree with them, or are based upon implicit assumptions which prove difficult to object to. (Fowler 224)
In many works aiming at criticism, as well as in Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal,” basically, the reader has to distinguish the author from the narrator. For one reason we may be presented with a narrator who is subject to authorial irony or structural irony\(^1\) by being shown to be unreliable at some level—perhaps in terms of her or his ability to understand events or in terms of her or his moral position.

However, *Enduring Love* is ‘a story within a story’, very much like *Heart of Darkness* or even *Lolita*. As already mentioned, Joe is an intradiegetic narrator who views the ‘story’ in retrospect and is, therefore, bound to be metadiegetic. To understand the irony and see how it contributes to the understanding of the authorial intention, first the reader has to see the difference between Joe, the narrator and Joe, the character.

The repetition of the sentence “I didn’t know it then.” or the like of it pervades the narrative from chapter 1. The narrator’s regret which comes with self-knowledge is more evident and expressed more often as the narrative progresses.\(^2\) The author also juxtaposes Joe’s view of the past with his view after the revelation. The reader has to pay close attention to the use of registers and certain sentences or phrases which indicate metadiegesis in order to see that the dominant reading is against, not for, over-rationalization.

Joe might be like Huck Finn, a figure used by Fowler as an example of a character without the resources to understand his situation from the beginning. Joe’s interior monologue can be seen as both comic and tragic in its limited viewpoint. His flawed logic which glorifies science and the descriptive nature of science as the solution for every problem is clearly exaggerated with academic register to the point of absurdity. Joe cannot see the irony of his own reasoning at first. The more he tries intellectually to understand and describe the accident and the people who are involved in its details, the further he is from understanding his feelings of guilt, disappointment and fear. More importantly, he is further from the acceptance of the nature of life and death.

The subjects of verisimilitude and realism have their place in the narrative. First, details of places and actions are included. The reality of the work – i.e. its illusion of reality is primarily a reality of circumstance or details and commonplace routine. This self-reflexive narrative belongs to a body of novels which rely on realist conventions. Joe, the character, tries to recount the incident in his mind with all the details accompanied by his knowledge, for example, about the law of gravity, and other contributing factors such as the changing wind, etc. Second, the exaggeration of realist convention through details could be a satire on both the convention and the reader who prefers referential texts or realist novels, and is curious about the minute details of any account.

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1. “In *structural irony* the text as a whole, or a large part of the text, is unreliable if taken literally. Instead, an alternative interpretation, which is not made explicit (but is implied), is true. Often a text is structurally ironic because it is told by an unreliable narrator...” (Montgomery et al. 139)

2. “I had let go of the rope. I had helped kill John Logan. But even as I felt the nausea of guilt return, I was trying to convince myself that I was right to let go. If I hadn’t, Logan and I might have dropped together, and Clarissa would have been sitting here alone tonight.” (Chap.3,35)
In terms of form and convention, the novel is a parody of realist texts – of their simple plot, sentimentalism, the obsession with details for verisimilitude and the referential language attached to it. The verisimilitude, therefore, could have the third function as a decoy to lure the reader into the realization of the author’s message “deeper than a circumstantial sense” (Wellek and Warren 213) underneath the suspenseful and simple plot. For example, Joe’s obsession with the details and information which he thinks can help him cope with changes that take place in his life as a result of a coincidence accentuates how misguided he is. It seems to the reader that the more details or ‘knowledgeable’ comments are included in the narrative, the more ironic the situation is Joe, who has a very high opinion of himself, is presented as a person who understands himself even less than the characters he looks down upon.

The irony makes us see the second narrative as the narrator’s self-derision and mockery. In addition, the uselessness of the details and the knowledge of scientific facts in the self-searching process probably leads the reader to ponder whether facts and science are overrated or not. Moreover, the language register more appropriate to referential texts, when used in the monologue of the soul-searching man, emphasizes not just the inadequacy of the line of thought in dealing one’s personal problems but also that of the referential language itself.

The language in Joe’s internal monologue is, especially in the first half of the book, ‘overregistered’ and shows his wish for detachment. Joe’s description of the accident with abnormal detachment shows his dread of the “aftermath” of the accident which he later knows will not change the way he looks at life. It is interesting to note that even if Joe is a scientist, the “field” is not science but his personal problems.

2 Lolita and Enduring Love have have some similarities in terms of form and, I think, authorial intention. Instead of having appendices as in Enduring Love, Lolita has a Foreword which, in both content and language register, contrary to the journal which makes up the body of the novel. Vladimir Nabokov makes it clear in “On a Book Entitled Lolita” that he, unlike his impersonation of John Ray, Jr., Ph.D. who ‘pens the Foreword’ thinks ‘Lolita has no moral in tow.’ And to the rejecting questions such as ‘ ‘Why did he have to write it?’ or ‘Why should I read about maniacs?’”, the author has the answer. Even if he, in the Foreword, includes more than enough details to create the verisimilitude to the journal which follows, Nabokov just says that: “a work of fiction exists only in ...‘aesthetic bliss’ ... connected with other states of being where art ... is the norm.” He proclaims, “That my novel does contain various allusions to the physiological urges of a pervert is quite true... It is childish to study a work of fiction in order to gain information about a country or about a social class or about the author.” (Nabokov 309-315)

3 “...some texts seem to be deliberately ‘overregistered’ absolutely full to the brim with signals which make it clear what kind of text we are faced with. Typically, these are formal and official documents such as legal contracts, prayers and other religious set texts, instruction manuals, scientific and bureaucratic prose. (Fowler 191)
arising from a fateful accident. The ‘tenor’ is either Joe himself in the monologue or Clarissa, his wife, not the readers of his scientific articles. ‘The mode’ is not an academic journal but probably his diary or his dialogue with an intimate person. In the following passage, the metadiegetic narrator switches to the present tense in the first narrative. Even in retrospect, the incident and his reaction is still fresh in his memory. “I’m holding back, delaying the information. I’m lingering in the prior moment because it was a time when other outcomes were still possible; the convergence of six figures in a flat green space has a comforting geometry from the buzzard’s perspective, .... I think that while we were in a state of mathematical grace. I linger on our dispositions, the relative distances and the compass point – because as far as these occurrences were concerned, this was the last time I understood anything clearly at all.” (3)

That Joe insists on using such register is an indication of his feeling of loss or losing control and his desperate attempt to hold on to the way he successfully used to make sense of life before the accident.1 It would be interesting to compare the change in Joe’s language and the narrator’s which indicate his ideological development and the implicit ideology the author may have in mind.2

When compared to Jed who is mentally deranged, the worldview of Joe and his reasoning is believable and convincing to readers who can’t help but identify themselves with this intellectual character. However, it is not just the deranged Jed who is different from Joe in terms of worldview and reasoning. Clarissa, who is also an intellectual, doesn’t just disagree with how Joe deals with real life and its emotional side with scientific objectivity but also can’t go on sharing a life with him and as a couple.

The author might assume that his intended readers are aware that making sense of human experiences through scientific ways of thinking has shortcomings and is irrelevant to some aspects of life. The ignorance to the assumed awareness of Joe, the character, is exposed by the intradiegetic narrator. The lack of awareness of my students was exposed when eventually they distinguished the narrator from the character within the second narrative.

Dramatic irony is one of the methods used very often by writers whether to create pity and fear in the case of Oedipus or to pass judgement in the case of the narrator of “Mr Know-All” a short story by Somerset Maugham and Nick Carraway in The Great Gatsby. When a man who assumes that he knows better, is socially or racially superior and capable of handling problems in life tells the story in his own voice and at the same time reveals to the reader how unsound his ideas about himself and about the world and life are, the reader ceases to identify himself with them. A brief

were running toward a catastrophe, which itself was a kind of furnace in whose heat identities and fates would buckle into new shapes.” (Chap. 1, 3)
discussion of the similarities between the two narratives: those of Joe and Nick, I feel, would illustrate my point on dramatic irony in the second narrative.

John Fowler makes an excellent choice of Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby* as an example of such a seemingly reliable character who reveals himself through his speech. Fowler calls this type of narrative "internal Type A." (Fowler 171) When Nick Carraway introduces himself in the first page after he has gained the knowledge of himself and the society—meaning the ‘East’—by quoting his wise father’s advice.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, 'just remember that all the people in this world haven’t had the advantages that you’ve had.'" Of course, his father understands Nick more than he understands himself. Nick thinks that he is usually "inclined to reserve all judgements, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores." (Fitzgerald 7)

This self-image contrasts with his use of "verba sentiendi" (Uspeisky in Fowler 172)—words denoting feelings, thoughts, and perceptions, primary signals of a subjective point of view while denying doing so. Such dramatic irony recurs in the narrative even when the narrator makes it clear in the few first paragraphs that he has already got back from the east and the experience with Gatsby has changed his worldview. It seems that the author who lived during the Roaring Twenties among the members of the upper-class intended to present an idea which he knew would challenge the social norms. In letting the reader follow the thoughts of Nick who gradually changes and finally shares the author’s view in the second narrative, the author can realize his intentions.

Joe, the narrator is the same as Nick in the exposition of *The Great Gatsby*. Both view the story in retrospect. Both authors, I think, intend to show the slow but convincing development of the characters as a process. In his pride in his analytical mind, Joe is not unlike the snobbish Nick. Both ironically reveal their inability to understand themselves and human nature. Both have the same flaw—pride. In the ironic context which Fitzgerald and McEwan have created, the reader is bound to suspect the objectivity of someone who is so self-conscious, so confident in his pronouncements. The natural identification of the character which is the same person as the first-person narrator will eventually be replaced by a critical analysis of the character and the situation.

However, the character of Joe as well as Nick has what it takes to gain self-knowledge. Nick’s view of himself as an outsider of the decadent society of the east and ironically his being judgmental enable him to see beyond Gatsby’s vulgar tastes and the glamour of old money. Joe, even as a scientist, has a streak of the humanist in him. He whines about the replacement of pure science for the narratives or anecdotes of observation by a ‘scientist’ like Charles Darwin and his predecessors. (Chap. 51-52) It seems that he misses the contact or impact on ordinary human lives that the old schools of science used to have. He may also feel that pure scientific discoveries and modern scientists have lost touch with ‘the people.’ Either way, clearly, Joe feels that his work, explaining pure scientific discovery to laymen is justified and may even be an indispensible link between the geniuses and civilization. The inferiority complex is obvious. Still, the fact that Joe can connect with the public and is able to make contact with his readers makes his journey to self-knowledge plausible. His sensitivity and
communicative skill to his readers make him a popular science writer. They also help him appreciate his wife and virtues belonging to some other characters. Ultimately, with such sensitivity and good sense, Joe gradually gets himself out of the labyrinth of over-rationalization. At the end, Joe finds himself not just talking to children, whom he might not imagine as a worthy audience before the moment, but also telling them what Clarissa has told him before. The analysis of parts does not matter if one has lost the picture of the whole. Joe ironically accepts the inexplicable force he used to scorn and admit that it does not matter if one does not care or understand what something is made of. Love and the river are the same. The qualities of love or different expressions of love do not matter as much as how one feels it’s power and extends oneself towards other people.

“I thought for a moment, then I indicated the river ‘Imagine the smallest possible bit of water that can exist. So tiny no one could ever see it...?... It’s almost nothing. Two atoms of hydrogen, or of oxygen, bound together by a mysterious powerful force.... Now think of billions, trillions of them, piled on top of each other in all directions, stretching almost into infinity. ...stretching to the sea.’ ” (Chap.24, 242-243)

In the same way, Nick Carraway’s compassion and traditional values of the Mid-West enables him to see beyond Gatsby’s shortcomings and appreciate his ability to hope and dream. Ironically, Nick comes to admire Gatsby whom he used to scorn for vulgarity and to spurn Daisy and her flock whom he used to think more suitable to associate with.

8. The pastiche of representational and referential texts

Henry James in his *Art of the Novel* in comparing the romance and the novel defines a novel as a type of writing which “develops from the lineage of non-fictitious narrative forms – the letter, the journal, the memoir or the biography, the chronicle or history; it develops, so to speak, out of documents; stylistically, it stresses representative detail, ‘mimesis’ in its narrow sense.” (qtd. in Wellek and Warren 216) *Enduring Love* is then realistic in the James’ sense. However, the work is an embodiment of different “non-fictitious narrative forms” – i.e. letters and a medical report, not a work developed from one form to be the mimesis of one reality. It is possible, as a result of the use of different viewpoints and text of different types, etc., to read the novel as a plural text, not as a realist novel.

Russian Formalists, Shklovsky and Propp believe that in realist novels, closure, a part of the realist convention, often reveals a moral or ideological position. With a closure, the narrative claims that “All is well in the fictional world.” (Montgomery et al. 181) For instance, male and female characters usually get married and the existence or non-existence of the closure carries a message about how the author appreciates or does not appreciate the virtues of marriage. This, of course, is also applicable to the poetic justice done to the villain.

In the case of *Enduring Love* in which reality varies from one point of view to another, the question is whether it is possible or not to give the novel a complete closure. Is it possible to give a closure to a narrative which seem to be mimetic in nature rather than diegetic. Any novelists can give a closure to their works when the
main conflict is solved in one way or another. However if a writer really wants to imitate problematic and incomprehensible life, should he say that all is well in the real world as it could be in the fictional world?

8.1 Closure: the ambiguity of authorial intention

“A narrative closure is a very important aspect of unity and coherence in a realist text; that is, at the end of the narrative, the problems which the text presents are resolved.” It seems that McEwan follows a system of textual conventions or rules. For one thing the novel has an incredibly complete closure, the kind one usually find in a Victorian novel.

As a twentieth-century narrative text, the resolution of the novel, when compared to many others of the same period, is more resolute or complete. Even if in some other novels, writers no longer feel it necessary to employ coincidence to bring their narratives to a close, McEwan does so in Enduring Love.

Still, the use of a metadiegetic narrator who is full of self-criticism contrasts with Appendix I which reports the problems objectively and gives a simple answer or conclusion to them. Nabokov makes it clear in his afterword that he does not agree with the psychiatrist whose professional interest in a person is only whether he is sane or insane. Even if McEwan does not express it in his own voice the way Nabokov has done, both the ideological development in Joe and the overregistered scientific language reflect how the author thinks a person with self-knowledge should be. The portrayal of the character and the language point towards the author’s mockery of the limitation of the referential language used by the protagonist of the second narrative.

The contradiction as seen in content and language register leads the reader to consider the theme of the place of literature and intuition versus invalid scientific facts and objectivity.

8.2 Two closures: with and without the appendices

McEwan has two closures in the narrative. One is obviously a part of the novel, judging from the style of the language; the other is the two appendices: a medical article based on the mental case study of Jed and the letter of Jed to Joe. The two closures present the unsound dichotomy of the unconditional acceptance of human feelings and the reliance on validity of scientific assumption to human life.

After the accident strikes, the gap in Joe and Clarissa’s relationship is widened and their differences become more distinct. The first closure ends with Joe and Clarissa at least together in one place in the natural and beautiful setting of a picnic. The impossible love that Joan has for her dead husband and her family life without John Logan reminds them that despite their differences, they still have each other.

The problems that Joan and her late husband might have had due to their different interests, personalities and lifestyles were all overcome by love which unites them even after his death. The children who are the remains of their lives together are still the testimony of their “enduring love.”

The chapter before the appendices ends with just the prospect of Joe and Clarissa getting back together not just because of love but because Joe finally understands and accepts

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1 Montgomery et al. discuss the role and different aspects of closure in realist narratives. (213)
life the way she does. The last chapter before the appendices does not give a definite ending as traditional realist novels usually do. What fulfils the realist convention by telling exactly how the main characters are reunited and even have children together is Appendix I.

The sudden switch from the subjectivity of the viewpoint to the objectivity of Appendix I and the sharp contrast between the language style of the narrative and the medical article must be drawn to the students' attention. The expressive text with its literariness fashioned to be the medium of the complicated human thoughts and feelings is juxtaposed with the bleak clear-cut report in Appendix I. Language awareness can help the students explain what can account for their satisfaction and credulity in Appendix I. In a similar manner, for the reader of Lolita, the foreword by a very 'sane' and knowledgeable character, which informs the readers of the journal about the past and the future of the paedophile narrator becomes just a blurred background after a few chapters of the self-reflexive narrative which oozes literariness. Nabokov shows as well as tells that to describe human experiences, perverted or not, referential language and factual details associated with it are not just inadequate but are also irrelevant.

However, in my classroom, the objectivity of the medical report rendered credibility and the report was, therefore, authoritative and persuasive. As a referential text, it is clear-cut. It is easy to follow. It is naturally viewed as the most realistic and reliable of all kinds of writing even among non-fictions. It gives the reader a sense of completion and a certainty that the story itself with its intentional ambivalences in certain places does not give. My students who had followed the story through a series of thoughts of different characters with difficulty, but with empathy, tended to have total satisfaction in the end when everything was presented in the form of a psychiatrist's medical report which tells the summary of the lives of 'victims' of this demented character.

The appendix finishes not just the matter of the heart between Joe and Clarissa but also ensures the reader that the so-called villain of the story, Jed, is locked up for good. Appendix II, which is an example of Jed's numerous unposted love letters to Joe, gives the reader, who perceives the novel as a thriller, comfort and satisfaction of a unique poetic justice.

In all the chapters before Appendix I, the balloon accident which starts the crisis in the narrative is presented over and over again as it is the central and controlling motif. Practically the whole book is about how the incident affects the characters' lives and about their different reactions to it. The coincidental meeting of the characters involved towards the end of the plot unravels facts and consequences of the different reactions and so enables Joe to see things from other people's perspectives. In the serene and beautiful setting of a river bank picnic, not unlike the serenity of last scene of The Bridge of San Luis Rey in which the Abbess voices 'her' resolution on love, Joe, in scientific language, gives his. He finally understands that an analysis of parts is not necessarily a way to explain or understand the whole. What matters is that parts all belong to the whole. In this chapter
the author only hints (my emphasis) at the promise that the estranged couple will reunite eventually despite their differences.1

As in other narratives, the work has subplots and parallel actions and there are many lacks and some of which have no resolution. If they all did, the narrative would be realist but not realistic. Joe and Clarissa learn from John’s widow that as long as the loved one is still alive, a love relationship is possible with mutual forgiveness. The couple’s meeting with the widow and their chance to witness Joan’s revelation of her husband’s loyalty and integrity (also the unconditional love of an elderly professor who does not mind losing his job for the love of a student) can be regarded as a coincidence which contribute to the closure, the kind Montgomery et al., mention,

“Coincidence which starts the narrative is a strong motivating factor in the way that most of the loose ends of the plot are finally knitted together so that the reader is left with no unresolved questions about the characters especially the protagonist and the antagonist. (Montgomery et al. 213)

However, even if the author seems to fulfil the realist convention with coincidence, the differences between Joe and Clarissa remain as well as Joe’s sense of inadequacy. As for Jed Perry, who is finally confined in an asylum, his destructive unrequited love for both Joe and God is nonetheless complex and the most enduring of all in the narrative. As if the juxtaposition between the language of the whole novel and in Appendix I is not enough to show the differences between representational language and referential language, the author adds Appendix II which is Jed’s letter right after medical report. Superficially the unposted letter gives the sense of poetic justice to the reader. However, it also shows that, demented or not, Jed, like Humbert Humbert in Lolita, uses the language of the heart which is adequate for one who has to express how he feels about his existence and the meaning of it. The writer of Appendix I does not recognize the merit of the letters, while the writer of the foreword in Lolita as well as the author of Enduring Love do for different reasons.

The seemingly too complete closure such as the two appendices might provide new lacks, if not in the make-believe world of poetic justice, probably in the world of discriminating readers. I would say the author put himself in an uncompromising position by using many character-reflectors with the juxtaposition of views, irony, the contrast in language registers and text types, etc. To me it seems impossible here to give a complete closure such as we usually find in novels written within the realist convention. It is true that both Jed and Humbert are threats to social values and safety and should not be allowed to commit any more crimes of passion. However, labelling them with certain medical terms and forgetting their human side is not what I think either author is happy about. How could the closures of the two novels then provide completion? They are themselves inadequate. Such rejection of the complexity of human life is in a way an indication of a world not refined enough for literariness.

1 Boris Tomashovsky quoted Chekhov in “Thematics” that “if one speaks about a nail beaten into a wall at the beginning of a narrative, then at the end the hero must hang himself on that nail.” (Genette 49) The setting, or to be more specific, the activity of picnicking is repeated at the end to the narrative and seems the help contribute to the unity and the realism of the work. However, the resolution without factual outcomes such as those stated in Appendix I defies a realist convention of giving unquestionable ending.
The subject of how the realist convention controls the closure of a narrative or how it is maneuvered by the author with the different intention from telling a ‘real’ story (as opposed to a ‘true’ one) is important. However, I feel, what is of the utmost importance is the reader’s responses to them. How a piece writing makes the reader reflect upon her view of the world and herself should have the first priority in an introduction to literature course or an EFL class in which students are exposed to texts with literariness.

The two appendices which give a closure to the novel *Enduring Love* pose a literary question to the reader as to what they want from a narrative. The sense of fulfillment from one’s reading might derive from a complete closure which confirms the naive claim that all is well with the world as long as humans use their reasoning. On the other hand, a step by step representation (mentioned before as “the process” not the outcome) of different human responses to life probably with no answer to any questions might satisfy other readers. As students are prompted to analyze the whole and the parts of the narrative, and the advantages and disadvantages of the representational and referential texts and languages, they are defamiliarized from their own experiences. Along the way, their literary competence and thinking skills are improved. On top of everything introspection, naturally derived from a formulated response to a literary text, promotes the reader’s personal growth and individual development.  

The use of literary texts is recognized by many applied linguists as an effective and motivating starting point in the language classroom. This attitude, to my delight, echoes that of ‘the liberal humanists’ such as F. R. Leavis who sees that the ‘purpose [of literature] is to teach us about life, to transmit humane values’ (Barry 16) It is obvious here that scholars who refuse to ‘capitalize the word literature’ see its special values after all. Carter, Long and McRae and many other applied linguists have successfully bridged some of the gap between the loyalty to the referential texts of language teachers and the evaluative approach to literature of the liberal humanist.

9. The different result s of ‘readerly’ reading and ‘writerly’ reading which matter in classroom

In my classroom, the appendices of this novel, especially *Appendix I*, were once taken as a true medical report by the majority of the students in my class many of whom began to have doubts whether the novel was based on a true story or not. It was read as a reliable source of knowledge of the syndrome, ‘de Clerambault’ that both Jed and the love-sick admirer of King George V had. Then suddenly, nothing else mattered but the analysis of the syndrome. The personal expression of the three major characters in more than two hundred pages became the past and what was more important to the students was whether the story of Joe and Jed was real or at least based on a true story or not. The students became detached and lost their emotional involvement which had built up from the first page.

The whole novel which had required imaginative reading and had evoked different or even ambivalent emotional

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1 “The personal growth model is like the language model, more student-centred, the overall aim being to motivate the student to read by relating the themes and topics depicted in a literary text to his or her own experience.” (Carter and Long 9)
responses in the students was not comparable to the direct and conclusive nature of Appendix I. That the characters are reduced to just initials and their complicated lives just a summary with a desirable happy conclusion was not anything that the students minded at all. Appendix I, as a different type of text from the personal expression of the characters all through the novel, is very concrete and simple. However, the contrast between different text-types highlight both their advantages and disadvantages. An ideal reader should see the irony and the parody caused by the juxtaposition. The supposedly concrete and realistic referential texts do not include, for example, the complex human feelings of other characters which play a vital role in the mental case. If any feeling is mentioned at all, as is the case here, it is reduced to a ‘syndrome.’

The real readers’ responses in class leads to the question of the rightful place of literature in the modern world. Quite a few students fell into the trap and realized too late that they favoured plain and humdrum facts over individual expression which is complicated and ambiguous by nature. The author ironically through the risk of being misunderstood, succeeds in pointing out to the reader that literature which is complicated and ambiguous is a more realistic presentation of life – life which has no definite solutions to problems or ‘restorations’ to all ‘lacks.’ Life is not just a summary of actions as presented with the referential language in Appendix I but the existence of a human, surrounded by other equally complicated humans, capable of feeling love and other feelings which cannot be expressed in other forms but personal expression. This truth is so clear as the author makes Appendix I devoid of the feeling parts entirely and labels an individual feeling (Jed’s obsession with Joe) with a name of a syndrome belonging to another individual living in another context of time and place. The attitude echoes Joe’s when he sees Clarissa’s love for children as the nesting instinct or her grief over the death of a friend’s baby as “an extreme example” of her emotional excessiveness. The smugness of the medical report is so obvious when one piece of evidence (the ‘patients’ misinterpretation of the drawing of curtains by their victims as a sign of acceptance or even love) is found to be the grounds of the diagnosis and, therefore, makes it possible for the character of Robert Wenn, who pens the article, to relate the two cases and to label them with the same name. Once the same evidence is found, the case is, as the reader can feel, satisfactorily closed.

Despite all the objective sparseness, the article has the advantage of giving tangible answer to problems of the complicatedly entangled relationships. The paradoxically realistic indeterminate ending which the novel gives in the previous chapter cannot in anyway compete with Appendix I. Joe, even if equipped with the most analytical mind of all the characters, doesn’t give his comments on the situation nor conclude the lesson he has learned from this momentous part of his life. The extradiegetic narrative ends with Joe putting an end to the scientific analysis of parts and symbolically expressing the meaning of enduring love with just an image of the river running to join the sea. It is possible that the character of Joe realizes his human limitation to grasp and analyze the meaning of life; and also realizes the limitation of the referential language of science to describe ambiguous and complex human experience and feelings.

The seeming lack of closure in the chapter before the appendices, as opposed to the
conclusive Appendix I and the gratifying Appendix II, confirms the author’s intention of bringing the reader to a certain kind of thought about many possible ways of writing other than using referential language or writing under the realist convention. However, I do feel that all the elements and techniques put together also lead to the good old question of the place of literature and, to be exact, arts in the world of facts and reason. The structure of the novel conveys a message that literature, like life, is an indescribable experience i.e. moral or emotional and is open to limitless perceptions and interpretations. Details for the sake of verisimilitude and referential language have their own merits but when compared to the personal expression of the reflectors, they seem inadequate and do not necessarily lead the reader and man to a definite answer about life. Thornton Wilder in The Bridge of San Luis Rey shows that it impossible to find such an answer by collecting data and doing so does not make sense. The tragic fate of Brother Juniper is not that he is burnt as a heretic but that, all through the narrative, he is lost in his pride in his methodological means to prove the existence of God. Still, despite the pervading ridicule in the narrative, the author lets the priest come to doubt the certainty of his hypothesis and then lets him die a man of faith redeemed while he burns at the stake. Similarly, Joe understands finally that there are certain things in life which need not be proven. The novel, therefore, confirms the rightful place of literature in the technologically advanced, materialistic and factual world.

Conclusions

To conclude, it is both beneficial to students’ improvement of language competence and “personal growth” that unsimplified literary works are used in a classroom where students’ first language is not English. Fiction such as narrative in the form of a novel is more than a ‘story’ told by someone to be read just with self-indulgence but should be read and analyzed with the help of the practical sides of some relevant literary theories. The plot and its elements together with the details accounted for the verisimilitude of the narrative may be put to students’ attention first. However, for deeper interpretation, the awareness of the authorial intention must be highlighted. Systematic analysis of the structure of the narrative, of the points of view and registers, of the dominant reading and the resistant reading will bear fruit when carried out under the guidance of the teacher in student-based activities. On top of everything, the choice of text is crucial to the success of the language-literature study. Only a text which is artistically crafted and consciously structured to be a very close representation of life such as Enduring Love will yield the desired results in classroom critical reading even in its early stages. The value of literature as a means of communication which subtly conveys multi-layered meanings is gradually unravelled to students in the course of the systematic analysis. The subjective and subtle expression in most parts of the book draw from readers intellectual and emotional responses with which objective means of communication when juxtaposed cannot compare. Such an expression creates in EFL students an awareness of various possible ways of communication and the richness of the English language. To see the plurality of a text is a part of the reading and learning process as a whole; and in the case of this
novel, readers see plurality of life as well. If there is a place for subjectivity in this book to show the complex human experiences and multiplicity of worldviews, there must be a place for literature in this oversimplified world of perspicuous objectivity.

References


