

A Dialogic analysis on Action Thriller: The Endgame by Hussain Zaidi

Ms. Sabitha¹, Dr. Sukanya Saha²

¹Research Scholar, sabithaselvaraj@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor sukanyap@srmist.edu.in

Department of English and Foreign languages

SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Tamilnadu, India

ABSTRACT

Action thriller fictions always have a special place among suspense lovers. This genre falls under the bestselling category worldwide. In the process of crafting an action thriller, it enforces the diligent work of the author. Scripting involves various literary elements like plot, character, theme, setting, and dialogue. However, dialogue in the novel is considered an insignificant element to unfold thrill and suspense. The paper attempt to explore the contribution of dialogue in the thriller novel. The theory proposed by Gloria Kempton is taken as a base to analyse the novel *The Endgame* (2020) by Hussain Zaidi. Primarily, the paper focuses on how the dialogue aids with narrative to pop up the action in the novel?

Moreover, what effects are produced by blending dialogue, action and narrative together? Secondly, dialogue as a powerful acceleration tool raises the narration speed and moves the plot forward. Finally, the paper identified the shadowy and breathless dialogue in the primary source and analysed its function in the thriller novel *The Endgame* (2020).

INTRODUCTION

Dialogue plays vitally when it comes to narration, and heavy emphasis is placed on it comparatively because it provides a first-hand experience to the readers. "Dialogue has a verisimilitude (appearance of reality) but it is not what people actually say to each other: dialogue is concise, and flows to topics rather than stays in one place"(Deardon 189). Dialogue is an uninterrupted expression by the characters themselves where there is no role for the narrator. According to Patricia High smith, "Dialogue is dramatic and should be used sparingly, because the effect will be more dramatic when it is used" (High smith 71). As a powerful tool, it facilitates to know better about the character's mood and the situation of the story, and subsequently, it creates the emotional involvement with the characters. Whether the protagonist or the Antagonist, their dialogues are a valuable source to predict their motive and imminent danger. The well-crafted dialogues can adequately reflect the setting, theme and everything the reader demands from the story. Munier stresses, "Try weaving theme throughout

your dialogue"(Munier 284). The theme of the story undeniably travels along with the dialogues. Once the readers awaken to the characters' true nature, it evokes likes and dislikes. Mood and dialogue go hand in hand because the dialogue sets the mood and permeates the story.

Dialogue cannot be reduced as a mere expression. Instead, even a single dialogue could elicit raising stakes and develop the conflict forward. The conflict between the characters could be presented best using dialogues. Dialogue is an essential tool that sets the story's pace, whether fast or slow, for the purpose. For example, while conveying the information to the readers, it will be a bit slow at the same time. If the author indent to intensify the stakes, it would be fast. The other important aspect is that dialogues are quickly exchanged with characters when compared with the narration, and the dialogues will raise the stakes. From the various functions executed by dialogues, its importance is undeniable pertaining to story narration. According to the view of Will Storr,

should be changeful, it should want something, it should drip with personality and point of view, and it should operate on the two story levels – both conscious and subconscious. It can give us clues about everything we need to know about the character: who they are, what they want, where they're going, where they've been, their social background, their personality, their values, their sense of status, the tension between their true self and the false front they're presenting, their relationships to other characters, the secret torments that will drive the narrative forwards (Storr 95).

Commercial fiction is chiefly plot-driven, which attracts an influx of audience towards it, predominantly written for entertainment purposes. It comprises thriller, horror, science fiction, crime, romance and fantasy. The commercial plot is filled with rip-roaring action scenes which comprises chasing, escaping, killing, kidnapping and rescuing. Commercial fiction attains considerable popularity among the readers out of its dramatic opening, challenging conflicts, unpredictable twists and satisfying closure. The stories of this

kind are highly captivating and raised cliff-hangers among the readers. The paper explores the spectrum of functions executed by the literary tool, dialogue, in commercial thriller novels. Despite multiple literary elements, the focus falls on the dialogue in the thriller story.

THEORIES ON DIALOGUE:

The theories of Gloria Kempton are taken as a frame to analyse the primary text. Gloria Kempton is the author of numerous nonfiction and former magazine and book editor. In her book *Write Great Fiction- Dialogue* (2004), she has discussed the role, function and significance of dialogue. James Scott Bell makes another noteworthy contribution in his book *How to Write Dazzling Dialogue: The Fastest Way to Improve Any Manuscript* (2014). Scott Bell is renowned for his thrillers and several popular writings. Gloria spotlights the significance of literary elements: Dialogue, Action and Narrative. An amalgamation of these three elements in a plot provides "three-dimensional feel" (Kempton 108) to the readers as it is a demand of a successful novel.

S.NO	ELEMENTS	FUNCTIONS
1.	DIALOGUE	Brings the story and the characters to life
2.	ACTION	Creates momentum in the plot
3.	NARRATIVE	Reflects thoughts, setting and situation

Kempton accentuates to weave together all the three elements to produce the impeccable fictional work. Action, words and thoughts typically exist in everyday life. In order to imitate the real-life scenario, it should be incorporated into the story. In the action scene, dialogue plays a predominant role in exhibiting and promoting forceful action. Paul Munier has stressed, "Be sure to keep your story moving on the page with action and dialogue" (Munier 378). when the author spins the dialogue with the narrative will make the scene live and set in motion, in case of complete absence of dialogue would lead to a mere boring narration of an

action scene. The narrative is an integral part of story narration "narrative tells, dialogue shows" (Kempton 79), which provides the space to convey the necessary information to the audience, like the situation and the character's action. The thriving scene should encapsulate all three elements: dialogue, narrative and action to make the story highly engaging. If a scene is overstuffed with any one of these would end up in superfluous narration and lack reality, and ultimately balancing all the three elements would engage the readers emotionally with the text. According to Peter Brooks (1992), "Narrative plots may be no more-but of course

also no less-than a variety of syntax which allows the verbal game-the dialogue, really-to go on” (brooks 305). Both narrative and dialogue gain parallel attention while crafting a plot to move further.

Dialogue as a tool of plot accelerator. The genre of any kind has its own pace of the narration. Dialogue acts as a tool to raise and lower the plot's narration speed. Action thriller falls within,

Genre stories generally move quickly, employing more dialogue and action and less slow-paced narrative, because they are generally plot-driven rather than character-driven, like literary and mainstream stories. The emphasis is on the action that keeps the plot moving rather than the narrative that keeps the character growing (Kempton 126)

S.NO	DIALOGUES	FUNCTIONS
1.	Magical	Maintains lyrical rhythm and emotion in science and fantasy fiction
2.	Cryptic	Maintains subtlety and ambiguity
3.	Descriptive	Describes the setting and situation of the scene in the literary and historical story
4.	Shadowy	Informs the imminent danger, especially to the protagonist
5.	Breathless	It creates suspense by leaving the protagonist in fatal danger with no clue of escape from the situation.
6.	Provocative	It delivers universal truth literary fiction. For Eg: racism is injustice
7.	Uncensored	Not much refined and holds reality and honesty in young adult novels

The paper adopts Shadowy and breathless dialogue from the above list to explore the commercial thriller novel *The Endgame* (2020). Shadowy dialogue intensifies the tension in the fiction, and it is very pertinent to be employed in thriller, mystery and horror novels. The shadowy dialogue is further enhanced by the characters' tone, which reflects the mysterious mood of the situation. In the words of Gloria Kempton,

In shadowy dialogue, your character's role is to keep your reader in a suspended state of suspense and a kind of terror, although you periodically tighten and loosen the tension. This is generally achieved with an ominous tone of suspense or foreshadowing of things to come (Kempton 48).

Breathless Dialogue arouses the spine-tingling suspense and holds the readers to the

Story building involves both slow and fast-paced scenes. Rhythm in the plot is attained by balancing and controlling the story's pace, thrillers are predominantly filled with fast-paced scenes, and it is made possible through the technique of “fast-paced dialogue” (Kempton 126). It propels the plot forward, moving the scene quickly to hook the readers with thrilling grip and suspense until the last page.

Commercial fiction, also known as genre fiction, comprises fantasy, romance, suspense, mystery, horror, action/adventure, thriller and science fiction. Dialogue employed in fiction should be pertinent and logical to the chosen genre to exhibit the unique traits of fiction. Gloria Kempton introduced different types of dialogues for the different types of genres. The dialogues are:

text. According to Kempton, the dialogue should be preferably a short phrase that encloses the action within, which sets the scene in suspenseful momentum, and the other important thing is to hold the adequate information from the readers to offer sustained suspense. “Breathless dialogue is all about creating suspense, which is what readers are looking for when they buy an action/adventure or suspense thriller” (Kempton 50)

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE NOVEL:

The novel, *The End game* (2020) by Hussain Zaidi is an action thriller, the last novel in his trilogy. The novel unfolds with the assassination of Director General Somesh Kumar. In the bomb blast, the protagonist Mirza and Vikrant strive hard to rescue him and end in flutily. The novel proceeds with the

investigation of the crime and ultimately deduces its connection with the planned car accident of the former Prime Minister. The novel has good captivating hooks like chasing, shooting, kidnapping, and killing for the readers. Finally, the case is resolved by identifying the operation's key is a government official National Security Advisor Pradeep Sing.

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Weave: Dialogue, Action and Narrative

In the novel *The Endgame* (2020), author Hussain Zaidi has brought out this action thriller by focusing on these three elements: dialogue, action and narration. The novel is filled with bomb blasts, shootouts, terror attacks, rescue, and necessary gripping actions. The first chapter unveils the dramatic action in which Vikrant and Mirza bring the terrific action scenes alive. Employing any one of these elements would be wholly inadequate. Zaidi has braided the three elements most prolifically. Consequently, the readers are well informed about the cruel setting. For example, in the rescue scene,

‘there could be civilians trapped in those vehicles, lad,’

Mirza said as gun blazed all around them. Vikrant nodded and

Brought his wrist-mic up.

‘Romeo Team, check the vehicles. We’re on civilian rescue.

And keep your head down and guns inside’.

Vikrant had barely issued the command when a barrage of

Bullets took out a large chunk of the ice-cream cart. (Zaidi 6)

According to Alicia Rasley, “Dialogue, just like narrative, can cause things to happen in the story-- and SHOULD”(Rasley 35). The endangering action is conspicuous in every part of the narrative and the dialogues in between. The audience gets a clear mental picture of the characters fighting safely against the terrorist and rescuing the civilians. The narration picturises the horrible setting and the situation to be very dangerous to handle. The ceaseless gunfire permeates and annihilates all the things around, and the pity part is the rescuers are taking a veiling to protect themselves and the

Director-General. The dialogue above enunciates the actions and the characters true to life and efficacy. According to Kempton, “Dialogue can be very effective when woven into action scenes that include a lot of characters, such as a crowd or party scene” (Kempton 76). The action is very swift, and not a micro-moment is available to act to the situation. The other best example is investigating cocaine case,

‘Name! Jaiswal snapped.

‘Roshan Lall,’ the suspect said. His hands were trembling.

‘Who do you work for?’

‘I...I have ... no idea what you’re...’

Lall stopped talking as Jaiswal raised his 90mm pistol. He

Gulped a couple of times before he managed to speak again.

‘Mahmood Fazal,’ he managed to say. [...]

Just then, kadam came out of the bedroom bearing a bag

With a kilo of cocaine in each hand and with a satisfied look on his face.(Zaidi 177,118)

The above quote stands as evidence for the balanced crafting technique of Zaidi's thriller novel. We learn how the narrative and dialogue blend to make the action highly noticeable to the audience through the above line. This idea was supported by Hallie Ephron “dialogue and narrative, these two techniques should enhance each other” (Ephron 253). Jaiswal investigates the suspect Roshan Lall to detect his head, directing the entire smuggling activity. Finally identified the name as Mahmood Fazal and also retrieved the cocaine bag. The readers are made to enjoy the live characters, thrilling actions, thoughts, and situation setting. The careful blend of these three elements moves the plot in fast motion. To encapsulate, the author has “weave all three fiction elements (dialogue, action and narration) for a three-dimensional effect” (Kempton 83) which sets the plot in forwarding momentum.

DIALOGUE: PLOT ACCELERATOR

Dialogue acts as a plot accelerator. One of the crucial aspects of building a thriller novel relies on the speed of the narration. Commercial novels are expected to move faster comparatively. The suspense stories are filled with both fast and slow-paced narration because

sticking to any one of these would lead to boredom. Thriller writers must maintain the balance in the story. Dialogue is considered a solid weapon to accelerate or decelerate the plot narrative. James Scott Bell stress, “The plot moves ahead with originality and pace because dialogue is used as a weapon” (Bell 14).

DCP Mankame investigates Ramesh Pawshe about the gelatin sticks he sold to the terrorist in the novel. The investigation was present with fast-paced dialogue, making the plot move quickly. The characters exchange fast-paced dialogues, which gain the interest of the readers. For example,

‘Ramesh Pawshe?’ Mankame asked.

Pawshe nodded.

‘what do you do?’

‘I sell construction equipment in Palghar, saheb’.

This time, Mankame nodded.

‘you sold thirty gelatin sticks to someone recently,’ Jaiswal said from his chair. [...]

Pawshe said nothing.

‘It means,’ Jaiswal said, ‘that this is now a terror case. Terror. (Zaidi 61)

The dialogue between Ramesh Pawshe and Mankame is very quick and crisp to the point and the situation and satisfies the readers' expectations.

The author has employed fast-paced dialogues to accelerate the thriller plot from the above example. Cleland stressed, “Writing dialogue (as opposed to exposition) speeds the pace. Adding multifaceted qualities to characters, then revealing those different facets one at a time through action-oriented incidents and dialogue maintains a quick pace while slowing the reveal” (Cleland 284).

DIALOGUE: TOOL FOR SUSPENSE

Shadowy dialogue

Shadowy dialogue maintains suspense in the plot. Shadowy Dialogue gives the readers hints to predict the events in the latter part of the story. A foreshadowing technique offers hints about imminent danger to the protagonist. In the novel, Rehmat young social reformer is kidnapped by a terrorist; she is trapped in the hands of inhuman beings. The saddest part is

that she helped the officials get into danger. Zaidi has presented this as,
Mankame drained his drink and reached for the bottle

Again.

‘she’s only fucking twenty,’ he said in a heavy voice.

Vikrant, Mirza and Shaina looked down.

‘We’ll find her, lad,’ Mirza said. [...]

‘Two people in burqas in a town full of burqas? How’re we

going to find them? [...] She’s a kid. The most dangerous situation she’s

been with a sixteen- year-old drug addict who wouldn’t

stop shouting because he wanted cannabis.’
(Zaidi 93)

The entire team was utterly clueless about the kidnappers and the Rehmat location, and it was challenging to find her. The dialogue expresses a threat to the life of Rehmat. The suspense is sustained because the clue that something terrible will happen to her provides a terrific feel to the readers and will be the mood of the fiction. The audience anticipates in terror what is going to happen next? Moreover, they feel sustained.

Breathless dialogue

Kempton accentuates, “The purpose of this kind of dialogue is to keep the reader on the edge of his chair, turning pages until the wee hours of the morning. The word you want to remember is suspense” (Kempton 50). The dialogue involves action, short dialogues, short emotional phrases, and retaining the readers' information. Breathless dialogue abandons the protagonist in fatal danger and leaves the audience in a thriller rollercoaster. For example, in the novel, the assassination of Rehmat was narrated with the aid of dialogue, The voice, Mirza and Vikrant realised, was unmistakably

Ayyub’s [...]

‘the plans that I have for your pathetic country are already

In motion. You cannot stop them. Even I cannot stop them. But

Every little inconvenience you create in my path will only be

Met with one response’.

without warning, Ayyub Whipped out an automatic pistol,
turned partially and shot Rehmat through the heart.

‘punishment’ Ayyub

The screen went blank. (Zaidi 95-96)

The terrorist Ayyub infer that Rehmat and the entire nation are also under threat, and every statement by him creates cliff-hangers to the readers when the audience is entirely drawn into the high raised suspense and mystery of what is going to happen next? The cruellest thing that happened is Ayyub put the bullet straight into the heart of Rehmat. The officials view the real action through the video sent by Ayyub. When the video starts, both the characters and readers are unaware of this inhuman killing. As the video progresses, the suspense and mystery ascend and finally reach their highest degree. According to Scott Bell, “Dialogue for them becomes another means of heightening the stakes” (Bell 285).

CONCLUSION

The paper offers both an acknowledging and critical analysis of Dialogues employed by Hussain Zaidi in his novel *The Endgame* (2020). Gloria Kempton’s conceptions on dialogue are ground-breaking and stand as a solid frame to analyse and understand the dialogues in fiction. To encapsulate, the dialogue is an effective literary tool to be blended with narrative and action to offer a “three-dimensional feel” for the readers. With the fine example from the novel, the dialogue certainly acts as a propelling force in the plot. Finally, the two unique dialogues, Shadowy and Breathless, are apt and could be traced in the primary source. It executes the function of raising suspense and mystery in the novel. Overall, the importance of dialogue in a thriller novel is brought to the spotlight.

REFERENCE

Bell, Scott, James. *How to Write Dazzling Dialogue: The Fastest Way to Improve Any Manuscript*. Compendium Press, 2014, p. 285
Brooks, Peter. *Reading For the Plot*. Harvard University Press, 1992, p. 305.
Cleland, k, Jane. *Mastering Suspense, Structure & Plot*. Writer’s Digest Books, 2016, p. 284.

Deardon, Amy. *The Story Template: Conquer Writer's Block Using the Universal Structure of Story*. Taegais Publishing, 2011, p. 189.

Kumar, S. (2022). Strategic management of carbon footprint using carbon collectible non-fungible tokens (NFTS) on blockchain. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 21(S3), 1-10

Kumar, S. (2021). Review of geothermal energy as an alternate energy source for Bitcoin mining. *Journal of Economics and Economic Education Research*, 23(1), 1-12

Ritika Malik, Aarushi Kataria and Naveen Nandal, Analysis of Digital Wallets for Sustainability: A Comparative Analysis between Retailers and Customers, *International Journal of Management*, 11(7), 2020, pp. 358-370.

Aarushi, Naveen Nandal, Parul Agrawal. AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH IN PRODUCT INNOVATION IN AUTOMOBILE SECTOR. *JCR*. 2020; 7(2): 522-529. doi:10.31838/jcr.07.02.98

Ephron, Hallie. *The Everything: Guide to Writing Your First Novel*. Adams Media, 2011, p. 253.

Kempton, Gloria. *Writing Great Fiction: Dialogue*. 1st ed., Writer’s Digest Books, 2004, p.79.

Munier, Paula. *Plot Perfect: How to build unforgettable stories scene by scene*. 1st ed., Writer’s Digest Books, 2014, p. 284.

Patricia, Highsmith. *Plotting and Writing Suspense Fiction*. Popular Press Limited, 1983, p.71.

Rasley, Alician. *Dialogue Dynamics*. Midsummer Books, 2015, p. 35.

Storr, Will. *The Science of Storytelling*. William Collins, 2019, p. 95.

Zaidi, s. Hussain. *The Endgame*. 1st ed., HarperCollins, 2020, p. 118.