

RESEARCH ARTICLE**Demeanor of The Red Herring Narrative Technique in Peter Robinson's '*A Necessary End*'**

Ms. Sanmati Vijay Dhanawade

M.A., B. Ed., NET, SET, Ph. D.,

Shivaji University, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India

Abstract:

To achieve greater effects each author of any genre inclines to exploit several narrative techniques while writing his or her piece of writing or work. There are numerous categories of narrative techniques to insert and experiment in literary work. Peter Robinson, British born Canadian Crime Fiction author in his DCI Alan Banks' novel series has exploited various formulas of narrative techniques in his unusual mode. The Red Herring narrative method is the much cherished one of Peter Robinson and he has mastered it in using it versatile ways. The present narrative scheme is peculiar regarding crime, detective, mystery, and suspense thrillers. The present research paper tends to explore the Red Herring narrative technique used in *A Necessary End*, a novel penned by Peter Robinson. The usage of this Red Herring concoct in his writing has made his created work more enriched and ornamented in various ways.

Keywords: Crime fiction, Narrative techniques, The Red Herring formula

In a general way, Red Herring is considered as a type of misconception that is an inappropriate subject matter offered in a disagreement to distract the introspection of listeners or readers from the original subject matter. This deceptive perception is customarily used in detective or suspense novels to mislead readers or characters or to vitalize them to form fraudulent interpretations.

A Red Herring is a common ploy used in mystery and thriller stories to divert the reader from recognizing the real wrongdoer. The Red Herring in a story can take the form of characters or various clues which misleads readers, other characters of the novel and even the protagonist investigator. It objects at keeping the readers predicting at the possibilities until the end, and consequently keeps them engrossed in the story. To keep readers captivated in the reading till the end is a huge assignment, and if the reader is predicting the offender effortlessly then also the novel may fail the magnetism of reading the novel till its completion. The climax of any story is the major plus point and in the case of detective fiction; it is the life force that can be boosted up with this technique of writing.

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More or less all mystery writers are warmhearted about this narrative technique as it benefits them for the concealment of the facts and inspires readers to venture in multiple wrong directions in search of real convict or truth. Ultimately, it creates more mystery in writing, arouses more pressure in the novel, endorses the aura of suspense, and smartens up the writing in a more rational way.

One illustration can be cited in this regard of the novel *Da Vinci Code* written by Dan Brown. The character of Bishop Aringarosa functions as an example of a Red Herring throughout the novel. The recitation of this character in the novel obliges readers to undertake him to be the key convict of the entire conspiracy. However, far ahead, it is exposed that he is not guilty. This illustration of a Red Herring in the novel diverts the readers from the actual debauched person to add more mystery pages to the novel. Fascinatingly, the Italian last name of the bishop 'Aringarosa' decodes in the English language as 'Red Herring.'

A Necessary End, first published in 1989, is the third novel by Canadian detective fiction writer Peter Robinson in the multi-award-winning Detective Chief Inspector Alan Banks novel series. The novel got appreciated all over the world by readers along with various critics. The novel is the finest example of the employment of this Red Herring technique.

A sudden eruption of violence at an anti-nuclear demonstration outside of Eastvale Community Centre leads to chaos, bloodshed, and ferocity, in the novel. The demonstration culminates PC (Police Constable) Edwin Gill stabbed to death. Besides, during this commotion PC Susan Gay also got hurt severely along with other police officers. At first, there are over a hundred suspects as there was a number of people were gathered to oppose the nuclear power station. But then things get narrow down to the people who live on 'Maggie's Farm'. It is an isolated house, high on the Daleside. The farm is in the possession of Seth Cotton. He is a quiet person and works as a carpenter. He lives with his girlfriend, Mara Delacey. Mara is composed kind of a person by nature. She works as a part-time potter in Elspeth's Craft shop, in Relton. This couple has other tenants such as Paul Boyd, who is a young vagabond with a violent background. Then Zoe Hardacre, an astrologer, a Tarot card reader precisely, lives with her four-year-old daughter named Luna. Another tenant Rick Trelawney, an artist with strong Marxist learning's with his five-year-old son called Julian, is also there. After the demonstration and murder of a policeman, all these people at Maggie's Farm come into the web of suspects. Maggie's Farm has been kind of meeting point or hub for all local activists who always get indulge in any movement for the good social cause. Current frequent meetings at Maggie's Farm and its previous activist history made the police department to ponder about everyone at Maggie's Farm and everyone who visits Maggie's Farm often. Also among the suspects is

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Dennis Osmond, a social worker and frequent visitor of the farm. He is in a love relationship with Jenny Fuller, a psychiatrist. She is Inspector Banks' friend also.

A large number of characters mean large number of suspects and a larger opportunity to mislead the reader along with the protagonist in the novel. The galaxy of characters contributes to creating more mystery in the novel, ultimately indicating the Red Herring technique.

The additional appointment of Detective Superintendent Richard Burgess on the case gave different turns to the case and different pages to the novel. As per the departmental manner, Assistant Chief Constable decided to investigate the murder case of PC Edwin Gill with the Police Complaints Authority and thus they appointed Detective Superintendent Richard Burgess from London to investigate the case. Accordingly, Superintendent Gristhorpe has instructed DCI Banks to work with him. The appointment of Detective Superintendent Richard Burgess, his investigation methods and activities definitely stirred the atmosphere in the novel. This addition is a kind of Red Herring making readers relatively perplexed and tricking them up.

The entire police department believed that the murder of PC Edwin Gill as a political murder committed for official benefits. In this regard, DCI Banks interviewed PC Edwin Gill's colleagues and other mates. But after investing so much time and energy in this procedure Banks does not find any strong point or clue to follow this perception. Over here the writer is trying to mislead his readers. 'The more Banks thought about it, the more the thick of a political demonstration seemed the ideal cover for murder.'(94) Several pages of the novel have invested by the writer to investigate the case on this ground and ultimately it has assisted to mislead readers via Red Herring.

The character named Denis Osmond is on the radar of police investigation. He is an active member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the International Socialists and Amnesty International as well, in the novel. Furthermore, DCI Banks got informed and amazed by Denis's former criminal records. Once he was arrested by the police force as he was a part of anti-government demonstrations with charges ranging from breach of the peace to theft of a police officer's helmet. In addition, he had also been accused of physical attack by a live-in girlfriend named Ellen Ventner four years back. The accusation was true. In forthcoming days DCI Banks also explores that Denis filed a complaint against murder victim PC Edwin Gill for beating a fellow female demonstrator in one of the demonstrations. All these findings modestly reinforce the image of Denis Osmond as a possible suspect who is against the deceased for a long time. Both DCI Banks and Detective Superintendent Richard Burgess stopped at his house regarding the investigation of this case. Denis Osmond's character is painted with the Red Herring enigma.

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Tim Fenton and Abha Sutton, a pair of Marxist revolutionaries, supplements episode to murder mystery of PC Edwin Gill with the viewpoint of political delinquency. The couple was involved in organizing the demo. Therefore, DCI Banks considered them for investigating the case. This pair is utilized as a Red Herring ploy by the writer which adds an extra element of a brainteaser to the main storyline.

An Additional riddle is generated by the writer with the help of Paul and Mara. Mara observed blood on the hands of Paul and inquires about it. So he informed Mara that he got injured during the tumult. However next day Mara detected no cut or injuries on his hand. Thus she started doubting Paul as a killer, supposing blood on his hand was of the PC Edwin Gill. After some days a shepherd, Jack Crocker, spotted the murder weapon that is a knife on the moor. Paul Boyd's abrupt escape from the house made him a solid suspect. The knife was taken out of the murder scene and thrown on the moor by Paul, by mistake. He was not the actual executioner, but then again just got carried away with a knife in that circumstance. Finally, he got captured and bitten by the police. The sudden escape of Paul Boyd, the abrupt discovery of a murder weapon, false alibis of Paul, and doubtful Mara Delacey's character eventually perplexed readers along with other characters in the novel.

One more mystification is added via Detective Superintendent Burgess. He appoints two investigators on the same case, namely DC Keith J. Cranby and DC Stickley without prior permission and modus operandi of the department. These two fellows turn into annoyance to DCI Banks. These two private detectives broke in Denis Osmond's along with Tim and Abha's flats to collect so-called evidence. They messed the whole residence and produced the picture of robbery. This incident created more confusion in the novel and one more twist in the main storyline.

Furthermore, the main story of the novel holds the reference of one organization called WEEF. It stands for Women of Eastvale for Emancipation and Freedom. They usually focus on limited subjects such as weak road lights and gender discernment in employments. Dorothy Wycombe is the leading person in this organization. Regarding the PC Edwin Gill murder case Detective Superintendent Burgess decides to raid and make inquiries about this organization. Such references are made in the core story to act as the Red Herring element.

After this long chaos, one more incident took place to add on the pressure and ambiguity in the story. Unexpectedly, in Chapter 13, Part 04 Seth Cotton found dead in his workshop. DCI Banks found one suicide note admitting that he murdered PC Edwin Gill near the dead body. However, the mystery is still concealed about the reason for the assassination of PC Edwin Gill until now.

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On the other hand, DCI Banks has the intuition that someone must have fiddled with the suicide note. This suicide note acts as another Red Herring component.

Seth Cotton left behind a suicide note hence handwriting expert, namely Geoff Tingley, took his essential entry in the investigation team. The findings of Geoff Tingley were unusual. Geoff Tingley is a handwriting expert and an expert typist too; he precisely concluded that the suicide note was not typed by Seth Cotton before his death. It was forged by someone else. For any ordinary person, the written note or typed note will appear the same and real, without any hesitation. However, Geoff Tingley is not the average one; he detected the modification and assisted DCI Banks in his exploration. Seth Cotton left one note stating only 'Sorry, Mara' (*A Necessary End*, 363) But to avoid police enquires Paul Boyd typed another fake note stating :

'I did it. I killed the policeman Gill. It was wrong of me. I don't know what came over me. I'm sorry for all the trouble I caused. This is the best way. Seth.' (*A Necessary End*, 286)

In the course of time, DCI Banks unveils the core cause of the murder of PC Gill to others in the novel. He unfolds the mystery that due to PC Edwin Gill, Seth Cotton's pregnant wife, Alison, was deceased a long time back. PC Edwin Gill was a headstrong kind of a fellow. He was short-tempered and used to take pleasure in violence. Whenever there is any demo or emergency he would be first to register his name. During demos, he would act like a demon. His violent nature often compels him to hit people badly without giving a second thought about age, gender, and situation. He has done the thing several times in the past and he is following the same thing now also. Not only departmental people but also other people in the locality were known to his violent temperament. But due to his headstrong nature and position in the police force, no one dared to talk and consult him about his bad activities ever. His fanatic nature caused Alison's death and devastation of a sweet family of Seth Cotton. This compelled Seth to kill PC Edwin Gill. DCI Banks had a word with departmental medical authorities regarding this. The Police doctor confirmed the changed behaviour of Alison and her death was due to the blow. This thing clears the reason of Alison's death and Seth's decision to slaughter the murderer of his wife to readers.

In this way, writer Peter Robinson has succeeded in creating a magnificent puzzle for readers in this novel. A multicastr novel gives a generous opportunity to suspect many characters. Every character with due clues and mottos seems a credible murderer. But ultimately, the secret divulges in its own diverse manner. It is the estimable endowment of writer Peter Robinson that his every novel starts and finishes in varied style. He is a proficient writer who can operate Red Herring modus operandi judiciously. Every criminal in his novels commits a crime in a diverse fashion. This criminal possesses his own style to conceal the fact. Every time as per the

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requirement of the story the conundrum of the faulted person and its depiction gets described in dissimilar style by the writer. This multiplicity benefits writer as a Red Herring.

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