

Free indirect discourse and possible worlds in Ian McEwan's *The child in time*

Abstract:

*The paper discusses the nature of free indirect discourse and the manner in which it appears within postmodern fiction, more precisely in Ian McEwan's novel *The Child in Time*, through the modality of possible world semantics. First it explains how free indirect discourse should be understood in this context, outlining the theoretical introduction and justification of this particular approach. The subsequent discussion focuses on speech acts and how they can be understood theoretically and in a fictional universe. It then showcases how free indirect discourse works in Ian McEwan's *The Child in Time*, which offers an excellent case study for this type of analysis, given the fact that the novel is a third person narrative, an indirect account of events, and a reported story, and thus a perfect sample of free indirect discourse in fiction. Finally, by blending these perspectives within the narrative universe and observing how they render a structural matrix of fiction upon which worlds of possibility can be modally distinguished, the paper will prove that the analysis of free indirect discourse completes the picture of narrative syntax within possible world determinism.*

Keywords: *Possible worlds; Free indirect discourse; Possible world semantics; Fictional discourse.*