



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***RECONSTRUCTING UNNATURAL NARRATIVE STRUCTURE USING  
DRAMATISM THEORY IN HAROLD PINTER'S BETRAYAL AND  
CHARLIE KAUFMAN'S ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND***

**NUR AAINAA AMIRA BINTI MOHD SAID**

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By

**NUR AAINAA AMIRA BINTI MOHD SAID**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
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Arts**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in  
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Being a part of new narratology, unnatural narratology explores the unconventional methods authors used in their literary works. Similar to natural narratology, unnatural narratology suggests multiple ways for readers to interpret and understand unnatural texts. However, instead of naturalizing the unnaturalness, unnatural narratologists acknowledge and appreciate the intricacy of such texts. Accordingly, there are three categories of unnatural narratives: unnatural storyworlds, unnatural minds, and unnatural acts of narration. In view of this concept, this study emphasizes the reconstruction of unnatural narrative structure using Kenneth Burke's dramatism theory in Harold Pinter's play *Betrayal* and Charlie Kaufman's screenplay *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. Both texts are chosen due to their similar reverse chronological narrative which is presented as a part of an unnatural storyworld. It refers to the complex and non-realistic world depicted in the texts where the sequence of events is unfolded opposite to the temporal aspect of the real world. In other words, the reverse narrative in both texts is fundamental to their thematic values and textual structures instead of acting as a mere background setting. There are three research objectives focusing on the narratological aspects of the texts' structure. The first objective establishes the connection between the main characters' actions and motives with the central pentadic ratio of selected texts. Next, the second objective focuses on the reconstruction of the texts' reverse narrative structure using pentadic ratios and five stages of the guilt-redemption cycle without altering their overall meanings and thematic values. Lastly, the third objective examines the significance of the reverse chronology technique by comparing it with the 'natural' reading of the texts. To achieve the first two research objectives, two components of dramatism theory are utilized in which the dramattistic pentad is used to analyze the main characters' actions and

motives whereas the guilt-redemption cycle is implemented when reconstructing the narrative structure of the texts. Lastly, the third research objective explores Monika Fludernik's concept of 'natural' narratology and Alber et al.'s concept of unnatural narratology. As a result, based on the findings of the study, it is affirmed that the reverse narratives in *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* do not only assist in upholding the major themes but also accentuate the underlying messages and overall meanings of the texts. Simultaneously, this research also posits a reading model for future studies to possibly adapt to interpret and cognize reverse and unnatural narratives in a different perspective. Notwithstanding its utilization in rhetoric studies, dramatism theory is still relevant and significant to be a part of the analytical tools for literary analyses particularly on the narrative structure of play and screenplay texts.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia  
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

**MEMBINA SEMULA STRUKTUR NARATIF LUAR BIASA MENGGUNAKAN  
TEORI DRAMATISASI DALAM *BETRAYAL* OLEH HAROLD PINTER DAN  
*ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND* OLEH CHARLIE KAUFMAN**

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Naratologi luar biasa yang menjadi sebahagian daripada teori-teori naratif baharu, menerokai kaedah-kaedah penulisan yang tidak konvensional yang digunakan oleh pengarang-pengarang dalam karya sastera mereka. Seperti naratologi biasa, naratologi luar biasa memberi pelbagai cara bagi pembaca untuk menafsir dan memahami teks-teks yang kompleks. Tanpa mencuba untuk memudahkan bacaan struktur teks-teks yang rumit, ahli-ahli naratologi luar biasa cuba mendalami dan menghargai kerumitan tersebut. Mengikut konsep naratologi luar biasa, terdapat tiga kategori naratif: alam cerita yang luar biasa, fikiran yang luar biasa dan penceritaan naratif yang luar biasa. Berdasarkan konsep tersebut, kajian ini menekankan pada pembinaan semula struktur naratif luar biasa menggunakan teori dramatisasi oleh Kenneth Burke dalam teks drama *Betrayal* oleh Harold Pinter dan skrip lakon layar *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* oleh Charlie Kaufman. Teks-teks ini dipilih kerana kedua-duanya mempunyai susunan kronologi naratif terbalik dan merupakan sebahagian daripada alam cerita yang luar biasa. Perkara ini merujuk kepada dunia fiksyen yang kompleks dan tidak realistik yang digambarkan dalam teks di mana susunan kronologi naratif bertentangan dengan aspek masa dalam dunia nyata. Dengan kata lain, naratif terbalik dalam kedua-dua teks adalah sangat penting dalam perkembangan nilai tematik dan struktur cerita dan bukan sahaja bertindak sebagai latar belakang semata. Oleh itu, terdapat tiga objektif kajian yang memfokuskan pada aspek naratologi dan struktur teks. Objektif pertama memperlihatkan hubungan antara tindakan dan motif watak utama dengan nisbah utama *pentad* dalam teks-teks yang terpilih. Seterusnya, objektif kedua memberi tumpuan kepada pembinaan semula struktur naratif terbalik dalam teks-teks tersebut dengan menggunakan nisbah utama *pentad* dan lima peringkat kitaran penebusan kesalahan tanpa mengubah makna keseluruhan

dan nilai tematik. Akhir sekali, objektif ketiga mengkaji kepentingan teknik kronologi terbalik dengan membandingkannya dengan bacaan teks secara 'biasa'. Untuk mencapai objektif kajian pertama dan kedua, dua komponen teori dramatisasi digunakan iaitu *pentad* dramatik digunakan untuk menganalisis tindakan dan motif watak utama, manakala kitaran penebusan kesalahan digunakan untuk membina semula struktur naratif teks. Kemudian, objektif kajian ketiga menerokai konsep naratologi 'biasa' oleh Monika Fludernik dan konsep naratologi luar biasa oleh Alber et al. Berdasarkan penemuan kajian ini, ditegaskan bahawa naratif terbalik dalam *Betrayal* dan *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* tidak hanya membantu menceritakan tema-tema utama tetapi juga menonjolkan makna keseluruhan teks. Pada masa yang sama, penyelidikan ini menyediakan satu model pembacaan untuk kajian masa hadapan yang boleh diguna untuk mentafsir dan mendalami kelebihan naratif terbalik dan luar biasa dengan perspektif yang berbeza. Walaupun penggunaan teori tersebut lebih tertumpu kepada kajian retorik, teori dramatisasi masih lagi boleh diguna dan penting untuk dijadikan sebahagian daripada alat analisis untuk analisis sastera terutamanya mengenai struktur naratif teks drama dan skrip lakon layar.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Historically, the study of narrative theories or narratology began to gather appreciation and recognition at the start of Russian Formalism propagated by Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1928). It further branched out during the period of French Structuralism piloted by Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Structural Anthropology* (1958) and later A.J. Greimas's *Structural Semantics* (1966) and Gérard Genette's semiotic approaches with *Figures III* (1972) (trans. to *Narrative Discourse* (1979)). The term 'narratology' itself was coined by a French structuralist, Tzvetan Todorov in his book *Grammar of the Decameron* (1969); formerly known in French as 'narratologie'. Then in the 1980s, structuralist narratologists such as Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman and Gerald Prince extended and refined the existing narrative theories (Herman 2009; Meister 2014). By themselves, these frameworks and theories have since become the customary strictures for analysing and constructing a narrative structure in literature.

However, following the emergence and growth of other schools of criticism that offer new parameters of literature interpretations and studies, narratology almost loses its mark in literature analyses. Thereby, many narratologists began to construct new inputs for the scholarship and this resulted in two trajectories of narrative studies: classical narratology which is a technical, more "scientifically motivated" that observes similarities and differences of narratives universally (Prince 115), and postclassical narratology which is "an extension, an expansion, a broadening, a refinement" of the previous narrative theories (116). The second category, postclassical narratology or new narratology was introduced by David Herman in his essay, "Scripts, Sequences, and Stories" (1997). His research posits new methods of reading and interpreting narratives cognitively and paves the way to more branches of narratology:

...the mind draws on a large but not infinite number of "experiential repertoires," of both static (schematic or framelike) and dynamic (scriptlike) types". Stored in the memory, previous experiences form structured repertoires of expectations about current and emergent experience. (1047)

Identified mainly as an illumination of the earlier classical narratology, postclassical narratologists explore the missing, uncharted "theoretical blind spots, gaps, or indeterminacies within the standard paradigm" (Alber and Fludernik 3). Because of this, classical narratology such as Russian Formalism



and French Structuralism no longer expected to be the core of the narrative studies but basic elements of the said theories are now used as analytical tools “to meet different requirements of culture, literature, politics, ethics, ethnics, gender, genre” of literary studies (Qiao 393). As a result, multiple transdisciplinary studies such as theoretical approaches (historical and postcolonial narratology; gender and queer studies) and transmedial approaches (new media and hyperfiction) are developed (Alber and Fludernik 6-8). Additionally, the new narratology also functions as tools for understanding complex narratives i.e. natural narratology (Fludernik 1996) and unnatural narratology (Richardson 2006; Alber 2013).

Another form of postclassical narratology ventures into rhetorical studies, taking certain frameworks from classical approaches and integrating their findings with reader-response theory (Alber and Fludernik 9). Wayne C. Booth considers the author as the “implied author” or “author’s second self” (71) who “chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read” (74). James Phelan further explicates Booth’s “implied author” by labelling it as “a streamlined version of the real author, an actual or purported subset of the real author’s capacities, traits, attitudes, beliefs, values, and other properties that play an active role in the construction of the particular text” (*Living* 45). He also suggests that thematic elements (as portrayed by the characters; implied by the author) in narratives may invoke ethical responses from the audiences and readers (*Experiencing Fiction* 5). Hence, there is a parallel association between the texts and readers, rhetorically.

For some, the idea of storytelling using the unconventional narrative technique is not relatively new. Even Richardson, one of the pioneers of unnatural narratology, admits that “there is nothing unusual at all about running a film backwards” (*Unnatural Narrative* 17), and yet when the story is enacted on stage, it becomes “delightfully unnatural” (18). In view of this notion, play and screenplay texts can also induce similar responses from readers and viewers alike. However, contrary to film and stage adaptations, reading and understanding unnatural play and screenplay texts (i.e. reverse narrative) can be regarded as challenging due to their inability to deliver the unnaturalness visually. Hence, a major question remains: what is the significance of reverse narrative then? Although some may suggest that reverse narratives are the “integral part of the plot and a source of meaning” (Ryan 160), some may also infer that the technique only works if there was a “strong thematic motivation” (Chatman 52).

Either way, the representation of reverse chronology in unnatural prose such as Philip K. Dick’s *Counter-Clock World* (1967) or Martin Amis’ *Time’s Arrow* (1991) is proven to evoke certain responses and interpretations from readers and scholars (Slater 1993; Glaz 2006; Eldjarn 2010; Brütsch 2012; Wyk 2015; Stutz et.al 2021). In an essay, Maya Slater considers *Time’s Arrow* as “unreadable as a novel... has deprived us of our ease of reading” (152). This statement affirms the need for a reading model or strategy for better comprehension and interpretation of unnatural texts. Therefore, based on these perceptions,

unnatural play and screenplay such as Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* and Charlie Kaufman's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* can be read and interpreted following a specific reading model so the significance of the unnaturalness is not lost to the readers.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

There should be at least two subheadings to justify having subheadings. Reverse chronology is a part of temporal reconstruction known as "antinomic" (Richardson 49) which refers to a narrative that tells the story backwardly. This technique is a contrast to other temporal paradoxes such as reverse time narrative which affects the level of a story (Ryan 143), or conventional flashback technique which is a series of acts of narration that "interrupt the plot on occasion" (Chatman 33). Instead, reverse chronological narratives moves backwardly in "deviant plot flow, sustaining a backward pattern throughout the text" (33). Despite often considered as a non-linear narrative, it is still viewed as a part of linear structure because the narrative moves either in a sustained episodic manner (e.g. *Betrayal*) or in sustained continuous temporality (e.g. *Time's Arrow*) (33-34). Listed as one of the key characteristics in unnatural narratology, antinomic temporality is rarely utilized nor analysed in literary studies. However, Richardson believes in their prominence and considers them as a part of narrative theory (*Unnatural Narrative* 170).

As a result, this study is inspired by the intricate yet underappreciated concept of unnatural narratology. The concept refers to the ideologies and rationality behind the use of unnatural narrative structure in literary works. As of now, the current emphasis of unnatural narratology is largely placed on modern and postmodern literature (Vargas 2018) although there were attempts to dissect literature from earlier eras in the past decade (Richardson 2012; Contzen 2017). However, this study does not attempt to neutralize the existing trend, rather it is done to further reinforce and strengthen the concept of unnatural narratology in postmodern literature particularly in the unnatural narrative structure of Harold Pinter's play *Betrayal* (1978) and Charlie Kaufman's screenplay *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) (abbreviated as *Eternal Sunshine*). To accommodate the analysis of the selected texts, a selected framework from Kenneth Burke's dramatism theory is chosen as a part of the study's methodology.

Even though rhetorical narratology is already established as a part of narrative theories while unnatural narratology is developed from cognitive narratology, this study differs by not grouping it within similar parameters. Instead, the main focus of this research is to inspect the texts' unnatural textual structure by using Burke's selected framework and from the standpoint of unnatural narratology. This is intended to repurpose dramatism theory as one of the analytical tools for literary analyses particularly on the unnatural narratives of the screenplay and play texts. Thus, the overall objective of this study is to investigate the significance of unnatural narratology i.e. reverse chronology to the texts'

narrative structure and thematic elements by grounding them within the contents of dramatic analysis i.e. dramatic pentad and guilt-redemption cycle.

Theoretically, there are three facets of unnatural narratology: “unnatural storyworlds, unnatural minds and unnatural acts of narration” (“Unnatural Narratives” 116). Among them, reverse narratives are categorized under “unnatural storyworlds” where the world depicted in the story has “physical or logical impossibilities that concern the represented world’s temporal or spatial organization” (116). In other words, time, as presented in the narratives does not follow the conventional movement of time in the real world. As a result, the world depicted in the text *has* to follow the narrative discourse which causes the reverse order of the events. To some, these complicated structures are unproblematic for them to read and enjoy, but to those who intend to dissect, study and investigate the nuances of unnatural narratives and the ideologies behind the writing technique, this concept allows them to read and understand the “strange narratives” properly (Alber 2009).

Therefore, Alber et al. propose the concept of unnatural narratology in which it is “to challenge general conceptions of narrative” where they investigate the ways for “innovative and impossible narratives challenge mimetic understandings of narrative” and also the significance of such narratives “may have for the general conception of what a narrative is and what it can do” (“Unnatural Minds” 2-3). And yet, these unnatural elements in literature are most likely “neglected or marginalized in existing narratological frameworks” (1) particularly within the parameters of “natural” narratology. Similarly, the concept of unnaturalness is also “a narrative mode that persists across different epochs, in different manifestations” (Alber 6), thus allowing us, the readers, to interpret the texts without disregarding the unnatural parameters of the narrative structure.

Before the conceptualization of unnatural narratology, narratologist Monika Fludernik proposes a cognitive reading model in her book, *Towards a “Natural” Narratology* (1996) where she redefines Jonathan Culler’s theory of naturalization as narrativization that entails “human experientiality” which “reflects a cognitive schema of embodiedness that relates to human existence and human concerns” (9) and “centres on experientiality of an anthropomorphic nature” (19). This reading model allows the readers to naturalize the unnatural elements of the narratives by disregarding the unnaturalness. Then recently, Paul Wake discusses the unnatural aspects of gamebook where readers are presented with characters who encounter various possibilities “in order to generate an identificatory reading experience... within the story world” (194). However, his research suggests that despite the readers’ experientiality in making sense of the gamebook narratives, they also “generate a connection between reader-player and reader-as-character” (203) thus resulting in the readers’ compliance to the unnatural structure of the texts. This shows that the readers can experience and comprehend unnatural narratives by simultaneously acknowledging the unnatural elements.

Unlike gamebook which shares similarities with “digital narrative and video games” (Wake 193), *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine* represent an analogous contrast where readers and viewers commit role as spectators to the characters’ journeys. This also suggests that identification is indispensable but the way our responses are conjured is different. As Chatman opines, backwards or antonymizing discourse eliminates the opportunities for suspense or surprise (“Backwards” 48), whereas traditional, linear chronological texts employ elements of suspense with the implementation of foreshadowing or suspended flashback. However, not all reverse narratives are void of such elements. Several anti-chronological texts such as *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine* do utilize suspense in the narrative. Even though certain aspects such as the ending of the story are already presented at the beginning, some main aspects are disclosed later as the narrative unfolds. Likewise, this also raises a question: if we reconstruct the order of the events, would the thematic elements of the text be altered too?

Jerome Bruner, in his essay “Life as Narrative” (1987) states that narrative in literary works is a “form of thought that goes into the construction not of logical or inductive arguments but of stories or narratives” (691). This reasoning corresponds with Burke’s foundation of dramatism theory where he considers humans’ motives as “forms of thought” which “can be embodied profoundly or trivially, truthfully or falsely”. He further explains that these thoughts are “equally present in systematically elaborated metaphysical structures, in legal judgments, in poetry and fiction, in political and scientific works, in news and in bits of gossip offered at random” (*Grammar xv*). In view of this notion, it is believed that drama or moral disorder exists in any form including literature. At the same time, the theory is used to examine the aspects of moral conflict or disorder; its discourses, and its effects on the real world. For that reason, it is now commonly used in interdisciplinary studies particularly in rhetoric and communication studies (Huglen & Rountree 2008, Graham 2011). Even though the theory started from literary analyses, the recent application of this theory in literary studies is scarce.

Then again, the lack of literary analyses using dramatism theory is caused by its reputation as rhetoric and communication theory. As a matter of fact, the recent trend of dramatism analysis (as shared and viewed in the *KB Journal*) shows that they are mostly interrelated to political rhetoric and social cases. However, as mentioned previously, this study does not attempt to modify the existing philosophies of the concept and theory, rather it utilizes both of them in the analysis and reconstruction of the selected texts. This insight is based on the absence of previous studies of *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine* that has applied Burke’s dramatism pentad and guilt-redemption cycle. As of now, a major portion of scholarly studies and reviews focused heavily on the texts’ thematic elements from various literary schools of thought.

Therefore, as a part of this study’s main purposes, dramatism theory is utilized to reintroduce it as a pertinent analytical tool for the narrative analysis of the selected texts. At the same time, this study also attempts to illustrate the importance of reverse narrative techniques in play and screenplay. The

reasoning behind this notion is derived from the infrequent analyses of unnatural narratology in literature. Moreover, this study argues that the reverse chronology in the texts is not only integral for their thematic values but also to the development of the characters and narrative structure as well. In hindsight, the concept of unnatural narratology and dramatism theory may be perceived as unrelated to one another but dramatism theory allows the researcher to identify and clarify the motives of the characters in the selected texts, which resonates with the earlier hypothesis between the significance of unnatural narratology to the meaning of the text.

### 1.3 Research Objectives and Questions

- 1) To establish the connection between the main characters' actions and motives with the central pentadic ratio of Pinter's *Betrayal* and Kaufman's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*.
- 2) To reconstruct the reverse narrative structure of the selected texts using pentadic ratio and guilt-redemption cycle without altering their overall meanings and thematic values.
- 3) To examine the significance of unnatural narratology by juxtaposing it with the "natural" and reconstructed reading of the selected texts.

The research questions are as follow:

- 1) How do the characters' actions and motives interrelate with the central pentadic ratio of Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* and Charlie Kaufman's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*?
- 2) Can the reverse narrative reconstruction using the pentadic ratios and guilt-redemption cycle of the selected texts be accomplished without altering their overall meanings and thematic values?
- 3) How does "natural" and reconstructed reading of unnatural texts differ from the concept of unnatural narratology?

### 1.4 Significance of the Study

Firstly, this study is done to expand the horizon of conducting literary analyses using dramatism theory rather than limiting them to the existing narrative theories. The theory first emerged from the analysis of literary texts yet as the theories of narratology and structuralism advanced, dramatism theory is not seen as relevant anymore when compared to other narrative theories for narrative analyses. As a result, it adapts itself amongst rhetoric and communication studies and has since been used as an interdisciplinary study. Therefore, by repurposing this theory, it will contribute to more literary analyses using it as an analytical tool to examine and interpret the motives of the characters and their implications to the narrative structure in literary texts.

Secondly, this study also emphasizes the significance of unnatural narratology in literary works that most scholars often overlooked. The concept of unnatural narratology is relatively unfamiliar to many and it is not vigorously analysed as the other concepts in literature studies. Oftentimes, unnatural narratology is regarded as a product of postmodern literature rather than as a concept in narrative theories. Besides that, unnatural narratology has also been contested and discussed as the opposite side of “natural” narratology propagated by Monika Fludernik. Even though there are two sides to this debate, this research would put forth the concept of unnatural narratology as one of the features worth exploring in future studies of narratology and literary analyses.

Thirdly, this study intends to reinvigorate narratology as a school of thought that could be discussed and studied by students and scholars alike to comprehend and interpret narratological aspects of certain narratives. As of now, both classical and postclassical narrative theories are scarcely utilised in literary studies due to their reputation as more technical and rigid theories. In contrast with the other schools of criticisms, narratology allows scholars to look at literary texts from an impartial point of view, giving a rather concrete and objective interpretation. Its duality which is interchangeable with other concepts and theories can also gather more interdisciplinary studies. Hence, by focusing on the technical aspects of literary texts, it could add and enlighten the meanings and purposes of the text as a whole.

Fourthly, this study also contributes to the scholarship of Harold Pinter’s and Charlie Kaufman’s literary works specifically to *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine*. Even though *Betrayal* is deemed as one of Pinter’s best works, very few, limited studies were done on it in contrast with his other works. This is mainly because of the different themes *Betrayal* portrays in comparison with his other dramatic plays. Meanwhile, Kaufman’s screenplay has not been studied within the context of literary criticism. Because its film version is much more renowned, most of the previous studies on *Eternal Sunshine* used it as a primary source while film theories and postmodernism poetics become the main analytical tools and focus. Besides that, none of them has implemented dramatism theory and also addressed the concept of unnatural narratology in their studies except for this current study.

Aside from adding to the literature scholarship, dramatism theory also provides a better, more comprehensive examination and interpretation of the selected texts. Since *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine* rely heavily on dialogue (or lack of it) to represent the characters’ motives, dramatism theory can analyse each one of them, and this aids in the reconstruction of the text according to the study’s framework. Furthermore, this study also produces a reading model for future studies as the components of the theory are flexible to suit the needs of any analysis despite having specific rules to adhere to. As a result, the analysis of the texts would be cohesive and particular to one’s research study.

Lastly, this study also cultivates more approaches in reading and understanding complex narrative techniques i.e. reverse chronology of play and screenplay. Unlike other literary forms and genres, the studies of play and screenplay are not widely implemented in literary analyses despite the abundance of texts and sources. Most of the studies often compare the original text of literature with its film adaptation instead of analysing them separately. Besides that, past studies of these two forms of literature often focus more on other literary elements and devices rather than the narrative structure. Therefore, this study adds to the scholarship of the reverse chronology analysis of play and screenplay.

## 1.5 Justification of the Texts

In this research, Pinter's *Betrayal* (1978) and Kaufman's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) are chosen as the selected texts for the analysis. Both texts are classified as unnatural narratives but they are not directly discussed under the concept of unnatural narratology. For instance, *Betrayal* is mainly examined on how Pinter's unconventional narrative technique is represented in the narratives and its functions to the interpretations (Gaggi 1981; Clyman 1991; Gray 2001; Scolnicov 2008; Das 2013; Krüger 2014), and the relation between the complex conceptualization of time to the text's main themes (Regal 1995; Corrêa 2010; Das 2013; S. Smith 2017). The play has also been studied from postmodernist parameters (Quigley 2009; Krüger 2014) and the standpoint of power and authority between the main characters (Bakalářská 2014). However, based on these past studies, *Betrayal* is largely discussed from the cultural and social aspects of the story. Even though the studies have noted Pinter's standpoints behind the reverse chronological narrative technique, the significance of the technique to the narrative structure (not the main themes) is regrettably neglected.

In comparison to *Betrayal* which uses the technique solely as a plot device, prominent original screenplays such as Christopher and Jonathan Nolan's *Memento* (2000) and Kaufman's *Eternal Sunshine* (2004) aptly applied similar narrative technique as a part of the main character's disposition. For instance, *Memento* tells a story of a man who suffers anterograde amnesia disorder which condemns him to live a life in reverse as he is unable to retain new memories. Meanwhile, *Eternal Sunshine* visualizes a man's journey in his subconsciousness as he erases the memories of his lover. By itself, *Eternal Sunshine* is riddled with both linear and non-linear narratives with disjointed order of events following the main character's circumstance.

Nevertheless, due to the film's ingenious depiction of intricate lovers' relationship, a number of essays done on *Eternal Sunshine* mainly highlight the themes of personal identity, romantic relationship, and their association and implications to the memory of the characters (Grau 2006; Carel 2007; Jess-Cooke 2007; Miah 2008; Driver 2009; Reeve 2009; Samuel 2011; Terrone 2017; Goc 2019; Casey 2020; Paiella 2020). Furthermore, due to the screenplay's attributions as postmodern literature, it is also discussed under postmodernist

qualities (Holmbach 2006, Dedulle 2010). And yet, similar to *Betrayal*, the anti-chronological narrative is not analysed extensively in these studies.

As one of the research gaps of the study, the major similarity and difference between the texts is their utilisation of reverse chronology; *Betrayal* uses it as an essential plot device where it aids in the storytelling of the themes whereas *Eternal Sunshine* adapts reverse chronology as a part of the main character's journey which assists in the representation of the themes. Even though both of them are products from different years (*Betrayal* in the 1970s and *Eternal Sunshine* in the 2000s) and from different genres (*Betrayal* is a play and *Eternal Sunshine* is a screenplay), they are written in the postmodern era, sharing almost identical philosophies. Similarly, both Harold Pinter and Charlie Kaufman also attempt to emulate the representation of human nature and follies in their works, and both are considered as among the best in their respective field of work (Esslin 1976; Zoller 2009). Therefore, both of the texts are still appropriate to the prospects of the study wherein they are analysed from the perspective of dramatism theory and the concept of unnatural narratology.

In addition, the depiction of unnatural narratology i.e. reverse chronology in play and screenplay is not widely analysed in literary studies. Unlike other literary forms such as poetry and prose, screenplays are often studied under film studies and are always believed and labelled as adaptations in literature studies. As a result, the most common method in adapted screenplay analysis is by comparing it with its original text which in most cases are novels or dramas. This, however, causes original screenplays to be overlooked in literature analyses. Therefore, because of their general association with film studies, its credibility as a part of literature studies is oftentimes disregarded.

Traditionally, a screenplay has always gathered diverging opinions regarding its authenticity and originality. Although there are a number of scholars suggesting its definite value as literary work, some critics disregard its ability to stand at par with literature. However, most of the arguments are based on the adapted screenplay and not on the original screenplay. For instance, Charles Newman regards adapted screenplay as "a willfully inferior form of cognition" while James Naremore considers it as "culturally inferior" to its literary texts (qtd. in Hutcheon 3). Even though it is reasonable for the adapted screenplay to be condemned for its ingenuity, the original screenplay treads the line carefully. Claudia Sternberg argues that if a film is thought of as a "hybrid position" between theatre and prose, therefore screenplay should have a similar position as a hybrid text (32). Likewise, Linda Hutcheon also considers adaptations as equivalent to their source texts:

All these adapters relate stories in their different ways. They use the same tools that storytellers have always used: they actualize and concretize ideas; they make simplifying selections, but also amplify and extrapolate; they make analogies; they critique or show their respect, and so on. (*A Theory of Adaptation* 3)



Based on this statement, Hutcheon agrees that certain films, albeit adapted, possess similar qualities as literature. She also commends adapters as storytellers who implement similar tools as the original authors. In addition, Khalid Alqadi expands on this intertextuality between literature and film where he agrees that “both films and literature tell stories” (43). This notion is also supported by Ted Nannicelli who regards screenplays to have a similar outlook with literature: “...it seems plausible that for a text to be literature, it needs to be written with a certain set of intentions and read in a particular way”. Hence, to disregard original screenplay as something inferior is archaic because of the medium it uses. In contrast with the adapted screenplays which have the source it imitated on i.e. most of Shakespeare’s film adaptations, original screenplays are written specifically for a filmic viewing; a movie script, in other words. If we considered the basic elements of storytelling, original screenplays have comparable literary devices and elements. Therefore, based on the above opinions, this study concurs with these scholars that screenplay should be recognized as a form of literature.

## 1.6 Scope and Limitations

This study encapsulates two primary texts, Harold Pinter’s *Betrayal* (1978) and Charlie Kaufman’s *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004). These two separate literary forms are examined closely with dramatism theory as the analytical tool and also within the concept of unnatural narratology. The analysis focuses on specific literary devices particularly on the main characters, the development of the arcs (their textual structure and narrative technique), and the main themes of the texts. Additionally, in the second part of the analysis that uses the guilt-redemption cycle, only one character from each literary work is discussed: Jerry from *Betrayal* and Joel Barish from *Eternal Sunshine*. The rest of the characters are merely mentioned as a part of examples and references.

Besides that, these texts are selected because the authors utilised an unnatural narrative technique, which is reverse chronological narrative (or also known as reverse narrative, backwards/antinomic narrative). Although there are a few other works that have same the narrative technique e.g. Phillip K. Dick’s *Counter-Clock World* (1967), Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969) and Martin Amis’ *Time’s Arrow* (1991), the background of these works are entirely different from each other. *Counter-Clock World* is a science fiction text whereas *Slaughterhouse Five* applies a non-linear narrative and *Time’s Arrow* is set during the German Holocaust. Similarly, films such as Christopher and Jonathan Nolan’s *Memento* (2000) and Gaspar Noé’s *Irréversible* (2002) are not comparable as they have different characters’ characterization and themes from *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine*. The justification to use *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine* lie in their similarities in terms of characterization, main themes and narrative structure.

In addition, the texts are analysed using dramatism theory and two of its major components: dramatisitic pentad and guilt-redemption cycle. However, another

component such as identification is briefly covered to give a background of the theory. Furthermore, the reverse chronological narrative technique and its impacts on the texts are examined closely as part of research objectives. This is because the narrative technique is regarded as the backbone of the texts rather than the mere passive background. Conversely, even though this study regards unnatural narratology among its scope of research, the analysis of the selected texts only focuses on specific contents from unnatural narratology to give more emphasis on the attribution of dramatism theory and its applicability in narrative analyses. This is decided following the main purpose of the study: to repurpose dramatism theory as a part of analytical tools for literature and narratology studies particularly on plays and screenplays.

Aside from these grounds, this study is limited to the contents of the texts. They are not to be analysed together as a comparative analysis or as an intertextual analysis. This study differs from intertextuality studies because the emphasis is on the narratological aspects of the reverse narratives. Moreover, it is important to note that *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine* are not examined together with their film adaptations/versions. Although *Eternal Sunshine* is originally written for filmic viewing, there would be discrepancies if it is to be examined using the film version and this decision is also applied to *Betrayal's* film adaptation. Likewise, the analysis examines the 2004 version of *Eternal Sunshine* instead of its 2003 version. This is because the 2004 version is the closest depiction of the film while the 2003 version differs greatly from the current version of *Eternal Sunshine*. Aside from that, the analysis of the texts does not contain references using cinematic jargon and film studies terminologies as it will be fully grounded as close textual analysis and within the parameters of dramatism theory and the concept of unnatural narratology.

## 1.7 Methodology

This study is conducted as a close textual analysis using a close reading approach on the selected texts. As stated previously, there are two components from Burke's dramatism theory that are applied for the analysis: dramastistic pentad and guilt-redemption cycle. Principally, dramastistic pentad is the most fundamental method because it identifies pentadic ratio from the pairing between pentadic terms (*act*, *scene*, *agent*, *agency* and *purpose*). The pentadic ratio is a central piece for the analysis as it clarifies the connection between the characters' actions and decisions, with their motives in the narratives. As for the second component, the guilt-redemption cycle becomes the foundation for the narrative reconstruction of both texts.

The first research objective utilises dramastistic pentad to identify and examine the connection between the characters' actions and motives with the central pentadic ratio of Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* and Charlie Kaufman's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. To achieve this research objective, the central pentadic ratio will be identified first using the dramastistic pentad. After determining the pentadic ratio, the analysis of the main characters' actions and

decisions will then ensue. According to the dramatism theory, the implicit motives behind the characters' actions will be justified after the central pentadic ratio is established. Therefore, the first research objective is essential because it acts as a framework for the next research objective.

Next, the pentadic ratio and guilt-redemption cycle will be the analytical tools for the second research objective. Following the results from the first objective, this objective is achieved by reconstructing the unnatural narrative structure of the texts using the identified central pentadic ratio with the elements and stages of the guilt-redemption cycle. This objective is conducted to show the importance of reverse chronology to the overall meanings and thematic values of the selected texts. Lastly, the third and final research objective includes data from the findings of the first and second objectives. In addition, several key features of natural and unnatural narratology will be included and discussed. Conversely, their ideologies are vital to address the significance of unnatural narratology by juxtaposing it with the "natural" and reconstructed narratives of the selected texts.

To reiterate, dramatism theory is selected because of the conception of "symbolic action" which insinuates that human motives are inherently implicit yet it can be analysed and extracted based on their actions and decisions. Accordingly, since drama is present in any medium, this theory is chosen because it enables us to illustrate the connection between characters' actions and motives to the narrative structure of the texts. At the same time, this study is also done to explicate the importance of unnatural narratology specifically anti-chronological narrative to the meanings of the texts. Therefore, based on this brief explanation of the study's methodology, the analysis will be conducted following the theoretical framework in Chapter 3. The findings from the analysis should showcase the vitality of dramatism theory to be among the current narrative theories that researchers can use to analyse unnatural narrative structure in literary works.

## **1.8 Conceptual Theory**

### Dramatism Theory

Defined by Kenneth Burke himself, dramatism theory is generally "a technique of analysis of language and thought as basically modes of action rather than as means of conveying information" ("Dramatism," def. 2). In his works dated in the 1950s, Burke insinuates that human beings are essentially "symbol-using animals" who manage to manipulate language as "symbolic action" to transpire meanings and purposes. According to him, drama emerges from "moral disorder" which disrupts the relationship between individuals (or within an individual, man versus himself), and dramatism examines possible ways to mend the disrupted relationship or moral disorder. As a result, he develops several tenets in his theory such as dramatistic pentad, guilt-redemption cycle and identification. However, as mentioned previously, this study is limited to two of

the tenets which are dramatistic pentad and guilt-redemption cycle as analytical tools for the textual analysis.

As signified by the name, dramatistic pentad consists of five key terms, 1) *act*; 2) *scene*; 3) *agent*; 4) *agency*; and 5) *purpose*. To simplify, these terms can be categorized into basic grammatical terms: nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in which each term signifies a different element of journalistic key questions. For instance, *act* signifies *what* or the action of the agent; *scene* signifies *where and when* which is the setting; *agent* signifies *who* or the individuals involved; *agency* signifies *how* the deeds are done; and lastly, *purpose* signifies *why* or the motives. These terms are co-dependent on each other and intrinsically present in our actions and motives. Dramatistic pentad has been suggested by Burke to “show how the functions which they designate operate in the imputing of motives” (*On Symbols* 135).

The second component of dramatism theory, the guilt-redemption cycle situates itself in a structural hierarchy. The cycle has five major elements or stages and each one of them has a specific feature according to the dramatistic pentad. As Burke has stated, “...If action is to be our key term, then drama; for drama is the culminative form of action... But if drama, the conflict. And if conflict, then victimage” (*On Symbols* 125). Based on this statement, drama emerges from conflict or moral disorder. However, in order to amend a conflict, victimage or redemption must occur. Therefore, it should be understood that the characters (in fiction) or individuals (in reality) are divided into different positions and roles. For instance, a protagonist will not experience conflicts without an antagonist and vice versa. In view of this, by mending the moral disorder only then the characters’ redemption will occur.

## 1.9 Outline of the Dissertation

Following the introductory chapter that discusses numerous facets of the research briefly, Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review with a number of specific sections. The second chapter covers the study’s connection to the characteristics of postmodernism, narratology, and also a discussion on previous studies of *Betrayal* and *Eternal Sunshine*. Besides that, the chapter also includes epigrammatic biographies of the authors to have a better understanding of the history behind their literary works. Afterward, Chapter 3 addresses the methodology and pertinent information of dramatism theory and its two major components: dramatistic pentad and guilt-redemption cycle. This chapter also has separate sections for previous researches that used dramatism theory in both rhetoric and literary studies. In addition, the chapter also discusses the framework and process in reconstructing the narrative structure of both texts. Next, Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of the texts following the methodology as presented in the previous chapter. And finally, the last chapter, Chapter 5 encompasses the conclusion of the whole study.

## 1.10 Definition of Terms

Drama: In the context of dramatism, it refers to “moral disorder” or “moral conflict”: “Moral conflict to set right a situation gone wrong, or to keep right, a situation that could go wrong” (Appel x).

Dramatism: “A technique of analysis of language and thought as basically modes of action rather than as means of conveying information” (“Dramatism” def. 2).

Dramatistic pentad: One of the main components in Dramatism theory and it has been suggested to “show how the functions which they designate operate in the imputing of motives” (Burke 135). It comprises five pentadic terms; *act*, *scene*, *agent*, *agency* and *purpose*. Each term represents journalistic key questions: *act* is what (action); *scene* is where and when (setting); *agent* is who (character); *agency* is how (method); and *purpose* is why (reasons).

Guilt-redemption cycle: A dramatistic analysis of order that has five elements/stages. Each element or stage has its own attribute and hierarchic to one another. The five elements or stages are: 1) morally disordered situation or setting; 2) guilt-obsessed actor vs. a guilty opponent or counteragent; 3) repentant or rebellious attitude; 4) self-sacrifice or victimage; and lastly, 5) redemptive purposes and means (Appel 29-31).

Moral disorder: A term that defines conflict in an individual's relationship and to the moral and cultural expectations of the society. According to Burke, drama emerges from “moral disorder” which disrupts the relationship between or within individuals but dramatism looks at the way on how the disrupted relationship or moral disorder is mended.

Pentadic ratio: A pair of pentadic terms. They are interchangeable and can be paired in any way possible as long as it is matched and precise to the analysis. As Appel summarizes: “The “ratios,” correspondences that tend to obtain between two pentadic terms, one controlling, the other more passive, like scene-act, the scene here reckoned and touted as chief motivator in rhetoric, literature, or life” (267).

Rhetor: In rhetorical analysis, a rhetor refers to a person who describes a situation symbolically: “...they interpret those situations or develop particular orientations toward reality” (Foss 368).

Unnatural narratology: This concept celebrates unnatural narrative that “from “natural” cognitive parameters, i.e., real-world frames and scripts that are derived from our being in the world” (Alber 449).

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