

السرديات المتشابكة: من خلال التشابك الكمي والحوارية: استكشاف علاقات
الشخصيات في رواية زيارة من الفرقة الخارجة عن القانون

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Entangled Narratives: Through Quantum Entanglement and Dialogism: Exploring Character Relationships in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*

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المخلص:

تحلل هذه الدراسة رواية A Visit from the Goon Squad للكاتبة جينيفر إيغان من خلال عدستي نظرية الأدب الكمي والحوارية الباختينية لتفسير كيفية تشكيل الهوية عبر العلاقات المتشابكة والتفاعلات الحوارية عبر الزمن. تعكس السردية المفككة والزمن المتناثر في الرواية كيفية كون الهوية مرنة وعلائقية — كما يتضح من الشخصيات مثل بيني، ساشا، لو، وسكوتي. التحولات الناتجة في هوية هذه الشخصيات تقودها الذكريات والجاذبية القادمة من ما هو أبعد من الزمان والمكان. تُظهر رواية إيغان أن الهوية بناء يتكون من هويات وعلاقات متعددة. التأثير المتشابك لهذه العلاقات مع الآخرين على إحساس الشخص بذاته معقد ودائم. تستمد الرواية مفاهيم من ميكانيكا الكم مثل التشابك واللا-locality لتخيل هذه الديناميكيات العلائقية المترابطة بين الأماكن عبر الزمن. من خلال اعتماد الحوارية الباختينية كعدسة لفهم هذه التفاعلات، يتم التركيز على أن الهوية يتم بناؤها بشكل مشترك في حوار مستمر مع الآخرين. تثير الرواية

تساؤلات حول الأفكار التقليدية عن الهوية بوصفها ثابتة ومستقلة من خلال تصويرها للذاكرة كحوارية وديناميكية. بينما ركزت معظم الكتب الأخرى على تحديد الهوية قبل وصف كيفية فقدانها، فإن *A Visit from the Goon Squad* تقدم الهوية بدلاً من ذلك كبناء يستند إلى التجارب والحوار المستمر الذي يعزز الروابط بين الناس. الأهم من ذلك، تعيد الرواية تخيل الذات المستقلة ككيان يتكون بالكامل من العلاقة، والذاكرة، والحضور الذي لا يمكن محوه للآخرين.

Abstract

This research analyses Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* through the lenses of Quantum Literary Theory and Bakhtinian dialogism to explain how entangled relationships and dialogic interactions across time shape identity. The novel's disjointed, broken narrative and scattershot timeline represents the way in which identity is both malleable and relational — see characters like Bennie, Sasha, Lou, and Scotty. The resulting transformations of the identity of these characters are driven by memories and pulls from beyond the temporal and physical. The novel by Egan shows that identity is a construct, a construction of various identities, relations. The entangled place these relationships with other people play out on characters' sense of self is complex and lasting.

The novel draws on concepts from quantum mechanics like entanglement, nonlocality, to imagine these relational dynamics connected from place to place in space, and time. Taking Bakhtinian dialogism as the lens through which to understand these interactions, the lens is that identity is co constructed in ongoing dialogue with others. The novel problematizes traditional ideas of identity as static and independent by its rendering of memory as dialogic and dynamic. Whereas most other books staked out identity before describing how to lose it, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* instead offers identity as a construction predicated on the experiences and ongoing dialog that cement the interconnections among people. Above all, the novel in essence reimagines the autonomous self as entirely constituted by relationship, memory, and the utter ineradicability of others.

Introduction

Jennifer Egan, the Irish author, displays remarkable ability to redress novel traditions in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Taking a fractured approach to time and point of view, the novel works with these various pieces to create a unified look at memory, identity, and connexion. Egan's novel fits into teachings of quantum mechanics in particular, the



notion that linked aspects influence each other, even if properties of distance and time (Wendt 23). Similarly, Egan's characters remain "entangled," their choices and lives resonating across the novel's non-linear structure. Quantum Literary Theory provides a lens to view these connections, interpreting the novel not as isolated episodes but as a "web of entangled narratives," where each interaction shapes the collective whole and individual identities (Barad 42). Moreover, to complement Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism, another framework can be used. In other words according to Bakhtin, the identity is performative and it always refers to the relation to others.

Meaning emerges not from a single voice but through a "chorus of voices," each contributing to and transforming the narrative (Bakhtin 92). Is this dialogic interplay depicted in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*? Characters like that of Bennie, Sasha, and Scotty whose lives are so much indebted to their histories and relationship. These interlinked narratives carry emphasis on relational identity and its dependence on previous interaction (Holquist 65). Egan's narrative structure embodies the principle of "superposition" from Quantum Literary Theory the idea that entities can exist in multiple states until observed or engaged with (Hayles 119). Like Bakhtin's dialogism, it brings to the fore how individual voices merely occur through dialogue with others. This study therefore analyses Egan's novel through these theoretical lenses to show how quantum and dialogic principles can be used to understand the relational and entangled identities of her characters, in particular, Bennie, Sasha, and Scotty. *A Visit from the Goon Squad* reveals its fractured yet interconnected characters changing and changing while being changed. Holquist (102) mentions that such embodiment of entanglement can play an important role as the representation of the novel; each chapter and character affect one another and create a complicated yet complete tapestry of human connexions.

Overview of A Visit from the Goon Squad

The characters in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit From the Goon Squad* hopscotch through the lives of an ensemble, through decades, countries, and cultures. Thematically the novel explores identity, memory and the ephemeral nature of time, and the novel's nonlinear structure switches between time, place, and perspective in fluid ways that mirror that exploration. Figures like music producer Bennie Salazar and his multitalented assistant Sasha are central to the narrative, and Murphy weaves in stories about them all the way from Bennie's college years. Butting their lives together and apart, drawing in other characters and

overlapping stories that show shared life and the coming apart of our experiences. Egan rejects the linear plot, creating instead a mosaic of what could be thought of as lived and remembered moments, a mosaic in which readers will experience themes of continuity and change as the traces of individual and collective history. Woven through the backdrop of the music industry, the novel juxtaposes cultural and technological shifts — ranging from analogue to digital, from youth to ageing, and from personal to global.

Characters move through this evolving world, working their way through changes in music formats and any change in personal identity, all as Egan uses the music industry as an extended metaphor for the fluidity of identity in a changing world. That bigger question is what technology does to culture, relationships, and your sense of self. In this way Egan reflects on how identity is formed by external agents and time. Her structure was innovative and her themes profound and winning critical praise, which awarded the novel the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2011. Fragmented storytelling like Egan's reflects the fluid nature of contemporary life, where to and from and in between blur to tell a story of memory and relationships. It isn't just memory, but the interconnectedness that this nonlinear presentation literally evokes — by moments that do not cease to shape and reshape us. For *A Visit from the Goon Squad* meditates on the relentless passing of time, and its effects on human lives and relationships and on human identity. The novel beckons readers to ask: what do we know about how all of this and all of us are connected in time; what do we notice about how that 'connectivity' is entangled and evolving?

Quantum Literary Theory and Entanglement

Quantum entanglement is a principle of quantum mechanics, whereby two, or more, particles can become linked to such an extent that the condition of one particle becomes correlated with the condition of another (such that if quantum state of one particle changes, it does so instantaneously in the other(s)). According to Barad (46), changes in one particle trigger the same immediately in its entangled counterpart, curling against classical notions of locality and horoscopic definiteness. Physicists like Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein, until recently, explored this concept in great detail, but beyond physics, this has become a metaphor taken up in literary studies. In this sense, the presence of quantum entanglement becomes a vehicle for analyzing character dynamics, narrative structures, and relational articulations in literature, insofar as all of these are beyond their immediate contexts of time and



space (Wendt 27). Quantum Literary Theory applies entanglement to narratives and characters: characters, like particles, cannot be separated in time, space or context, this form of connexion is permanent.

The basic thesis implied in this approach is that characters and events in literature are as contextually interdependent as are entangled particles with one another, recontextualised relationally through the narrative (Hayles 124). From this perspective it becomes possible for critics to manoeuvre through the text and discover how relationships and memories become a thread that weaves through the fabric of the text and it can be seen how characters exhibit their relationships and/or their memories in one chapter or in one time and the same manner in other chapter or other time as if it's bound by an invisible relationship (Barad 51; Wilde 42). Dana Wilde, in *Quantum Poetics: A Cosmology of the Word*, describes quantum entanglement as an ideal metaphor for understanding characters and narratives that “exist in superposed states, influencing each other in ways that are indirect yet deeply impactful” (Wilde 45). This view interprets character relationships as part of a broader, interconnected “network of influence,” where each element reflects and transforms the whole.

For example, in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* characters like Bennie, Sasha and Scotty are still tangled together because of these interactions in the past, still defining who they are in the present (Wendt 31). An alternate foundation for Quantum Literary Theory is offered by Karen Barad’s *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, who writes about how entangled states form in such human and social relations.

Barad (63) suggests that such relationships are processes of mutual influence and co-constitution as are entangled particles. In narratives, characters as Barad explains them are not separate beings but doing together with creating each other’s identities, said the characters through their shared experiences and interactions. In Egan’s novel, past encounters among characters form a narrative “field” in which their identities are mutually constructed, even in the absence of direct physical or temporal connection. This “dialogic web” aligns seamlessly with *A Visit from the Goon Squad*’s central theme of interconnected lives. All choices and actions have reverberations through the life of another, and the novel as a whole falls into greater and greater arcs. Through the lens of Quantum Literary Theory, we can begin to see how narrative which is partially or even wholly fragmented or nonlinear allows us to observe the interconnections and intertwining of relationships and events (Barad 66; Hayles 130).

Bakhtin's Dialogism and Relational Identity in A Visit from the Goon Squad

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, social existence is dialogical par excellence; meaning and identity are never free from others, what is social is always dialogic. Dialogism, as Bakhtin theorizes, emphasizes the relational nature of being, where identity and meaning are dynamic, shaped through exchanges with other "voices" (Holquist 65). In this framework, understanding is constructed in the "in-between" space of interactions, with each voice being shaped and reshaped by the voices it encounters. As such, characters cannot be fully understood without reference to the ways in which other dialogic relationships affect their self perceptions and choices. In Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* we encounter a narrative that fixates on the changing identities of her characters shaped by whatever they relate with or whatever the time they live in, becoming a narrative that is dependent on relationship and relationship alone. Part of the way Bennie Salazar is formed is through his ambitions and experiences, but also his dealings with others, such as his mentor Lou Kline, and his former bandmate Scotty Hausmann. Bennie encounters relationships as he navigates them and they come to define who Bennie is, that his identity is fluid and relational. Bennie's journey from a young musician to a successful producer exemplifies Bakhtin's idea that identity is dialogic, "co-created" through relational encounters and continuously reshaped (Bakhtin 82).

Through her woes with kleptomania and her attempts at self-reflection, Sasha is the other central character and her own struggles with identity are dialogic in nature. By engaging in her therapeutic dialogue: both external and internal she is able to engage with the external perspective, confront and reframe her compulsions, thus validating Bakhtin's idea that dialogue promotes growth and self-knowledge (Bakhtin 95). Unlike the powerful pressure of Sasha's therapist, Coz, whose external perspective provides Sasha introspection and transformation, Sasha's relational identity is not formed in isolation. Egan's relationship extends past the immediate and physical. For example Scotty's link with Bennie is by far existent even after almost a few decades. When they reunite, their interaction reveals how memories and past encounters continue to shape their identities, aligning with Bakhtin's claim that voices in a narrative exist in a relational field, where they "respond to, absorb, and shape the other" (Bakhtin 93).

On top of the novel's non-linear narrative structure and shifting points of view, the use of heteroglossia in the novel clearly mirrors Bakhtin's idea that there are several speech's in one text, each shares its own voice.





This technique uses by Egan to emphasize the altering and mixed character of Bennie, Sasha, and Scotty. All these characters are always moving, part of a web of voices, a web of dialogues that overpower them, which shape them into becoming, moving them beyond the static state, beyond the moment. As I see it, Egan's treatment of relational identity in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* corresponds to Bakhtin's conception of dialogism. The novel constructs a network of linked lives that sounds out in time and place, shaping in turn characters' identities and connexions. This dynamic interplay of voices emphasizes the relational and dynamic nature of identity, whereas the work of Egan and the theory of Bakhtin (Bakhtin 110) constitute fundamental elements in the investigation of identity.

Synthesis of Quantum Entanglement and Dialogism

In literature, quantum entanglement and Bakhtin's dialogism, while quite different, are complementary ways to understand connectedness, the relational dynamics as well as identity in the two worlds. Quantum entanglement refers to the behaviour of particle pairs through space and time quantum mechanics; particles do not require physical proximity, but are connected, and changes to one instantly alter the other. This concept, when applied metaphorically, highlights the "nonlocal" connections between characters in literature, where past interactions and shared histories continue to shape lives, even when individuals are separated (Barad 52). In *A Visit from the Goon Squad* there is such entanglement: as characters' lives interweave through memory, through relationship and through experience, in a literary web of influence. Bakhtin's dialogism complements this metaphor by framing identity and meaning as inherently relational, emerging through reciprocal interactions between "voices." Within this framework, characters are no longer separated, isolated things, but have been and continue to be shaped and reshaped by interaction with others.

In the interactions and transformations of Egan's characters (Bakhtin 88), dialogism offers a lens to analysis how voices embodied by characters within a narrative, though interconnected, are connected to a layered and evolving sense of self. Quantum entanglement and dialogism shape together a powerful paradigm for the study of dynamic characters with emphasis placed on the continuing power of relationships, and the relationally of identity. In *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, characters such as Bennie and Sasha exist within a "web of influence," where their choices and actions resonate through the lives of others across time. Quantum entanglement serves as a metaphor for how past connections

continue to impact characters long after physical or temporal separation, as if they remain “entangled” in one another’s narratives.

Dialogism goes further, explaining that these connexions are sites of identity formation, in which interaction and memory shape characters’ own sense of self. For example Bennie and Scotty’s relationship demonstrates how identity is co- constructed. They created who they became even when they were separated by time and circumstance, their shared memories, and past interactions. Holquist (79) states that for Bakhtin, identity is a dialogic, ongoing process and determined by external voices, perspectives, and relational encounters.

This synthesis of theories represents identity as fluid and relational, produced from intercourse through interplay between connexions, and external forces. Quantum entangled relationships are conceived as a lasting and swallowing distances, which dialogism equals dialogical construction of meaning and identity through interactions. Egan’s fragment back to back timelines and shifting scope of vision combine to demonstrate how past events continue to influence present identity in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Dialogic interactions further show how relationships enable the “give and take” process of identity formation, with each character’s voice shaped by their engagement with others (Bakhtin 93; Wendt 35). We achieve this synthesis of quantum entanglement and dialogism, in which identity becomes conceived of less as a fixed or isolated attribute and more as an ongoing, living and dialogic process made possible in community histories. In this hybrid view, Egan’s novel illustrates a character as part of an evolving narrative web in which every life is deeply shaped in turn by others. The inverse happens: identity becomes the product of entangled histories and dialogue relationships, corresponding to the human experience as a process of object ether nation (Hayles132; Wilde47).

Literature Review: Studies on Nonlinear Narrative and Fragmented Identity in Modern Literature

Nonlinear narrative and fragmented identity are used commonly in contemporary literature to represent the way life is shaped and self is, in reality, as much fluid as it is complex. This third definition is my personal favourite; nonlinear narratives abandoned traditional linear storytelling and adopted fragmented forms that run across the span of time, place, and perspective. Through these structures, identity is represented as not a still line, as in progression, nor linear at all, but as something dynamic and formed by experiences, relations and memory. Jennifer Egan’s *A Visit from the Goon Squad* shows a very successful example of this technique,



through characters where their lives are affected by multifarious personal histories and dense fabric of related events. As Elizabeth Garcia has shown, scholars have explored fragmented narrative forms, how forms of past and present imbue modern identity. Garcia believes that fragmented structures stand for the systematic description of the contemporary identity (Garcia 17), especially the undergoing process of reconceptualization of the memories and experiences over time.

Such a perspective fits with Brian Richardson's, Jonathan Lee's, and Linda Hutcheon's theories of the ways narrative forms that are postmodern in their postmodern destabilize conventional understandings of self, truth and history. These theorists point out in works such as *Narrative Dynamics* and *The Politics of Postmodernism* that the contingency of memory and time are expressed in nonlinear narratives, and in so doing they allow for the description of identity as a stylistic configuration of fragmented snap shots and cumulative relationships. Egan refuses to define her characters in absolute terms, as she presents them as evolving composites in whom little is fixed and which retain their identity from interaction and choice. This fits with the mosaic of identity, an incoherent amalgam of bewilderingly, often incompatible experiences. Marie-Laure Ryan and Ananya Patel further explain the function of fragmented narratives in fashioning simultaneity and interdependence.

Ryan describes nonlinear narratives as reflective of a "networked" reality, where characters and events function as interconnected nodes within a broader system. This idea, of the lives of characters being woven together through their shared memories and mutual influence is a theme of Egan's novel. As fragmented narratives afford the opportunity to explore the inner lives of characters, the past informs the present identity, Mark Currie and Amy Elias state. The recursive nature of identity supported by such structures, they argue, allows authors to reveal identity as a product of memory, relationships, and time. Something about this view speaks to *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, where Egan deploys a fragmentary narrative to disentangle connexions among and between characters, memories, and time themselves. The constant flux of these two elements, the complex cross cutting everyday experience structured past, and unified in spite of having collective and personal elements, identity is laminated and fluid.

These theories eventually demonstrate that contemporary literature does not recognize fixed identity, but rather identity that evolves as an issue of relationship, imagery, and even in the broader socio-cultural setting. Egan's novel does just that via an approach of a fragmented narrative: relying from an interconnectedness and ongoing transformation

of its characters, and mimicking the complexity of the modern identity. Based on principles of quantum mechanics (entanglement, superposition, and nonlocality), Quantum Literary Theory offers conversational metaphors that will help to analysis complex narrative structures and fragmented identities in modern literature.

In using these quantum concepts, these quantum ideas provide imaginative thinking on relational dynamics and nonlinear storytelling; rather than isolation, the characters and events exist in a connectedness. Specifically, this theoretical approach resonates with narratives of fluidity in memory and identity and relating. For example, Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, with its thick, intertextual, and intricately interwoven plot lines and characters, exemplifies that narrative, because the major characters and their relationships are always changing and influenced by other, all of which confirmed the principles of Quantum Literary Theory identities and relationships are always developing, always in relationship to each other. Karen Barad's *Meeting the Universe Halfway* introduces the concept of "agential realism," which posits that reality is inherently entangled and that all interactions create mutually influential relationships that defy strict separation (Barad 43).

This translates for Egan's novel into a narrative in which characters and events continue to connect with each other across time and space and shape each other's identity. For instance, the life the characters, like Bennie and Sasha, go through exists on through memories and past interactions, illustrating the very mutual dependency that Barad is describing. Alexander Wendt's *Quantum Mind and Social Science* builds on this idea by suggesting that social interactions mirror quantum entanglement, being "nonlocally connected" (Wendt 30). In *A Visit from the Goon Squad* characters affect each other across temporal and spatial boundaries, showing us that identity and relationships cross well defined boundaries. Bennie and Sasha's separation remains physical, but not relational, and serves well as a stand in for Wendt's theories about nonlocal connexion. N. Katherine Hayles and Dana Wilde extend this to application to quantum mechanics in literary studies.

As in Wilde's introduction to the concept of superposition in literature, characters in this rhetorical mode can simultaneously be in conflicting, multiple, states until interaction settles their identity (50). We see how identity of a character like Sasha can be turbulent, changing with the choice she makes, her relationships, her experiences. Similarly, Hayles' *The Cosmic Web* likens fragmented and interwoven narratives to a "cosmic web," where every part of the narrative affects the whole (Hayles



112). This fits with Egan's multiple pattered lives of his characters that roll through the nonlinear narrative.

Contained in the How Egan's Novel Depreciates Identity as a Fluid, Relational Construct, the principles of Quantum Literary Theory outline a framework for comprehending how Egan's makes identity a fluid, relational construct. Many of these characters derive their shape as much as from what exists immediately around them as from past memories and cross time relationships. The novel awares the fragmented structure of the novel, mirroring quantum, shows how each narrative affects the other to form an integrated whole. From quantum mechanics, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* shows how characters transcend presumptions of time or space underlying the boundaries of their identities. It then takes us deeper into our understanding of how Egan has portrayed the way identity arises from the collision of memory, interactivity and nonlinear experience. The quantum framework emphasizes novel's talk of relations and richness of its narrative complexity.

Analysis of Entangled Relationships in A Visit from the Goon Squad Entanglement through Nonlinear Structure

The quantum concept of entanglement is evidenced in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, a multipara graph novel rich with event, idea, and character that does not adhere to linear structure, temporal or spatial limitations. The arrangement of chapters succeeds because the novel offered are complete in themselves, but work together to create an ongoing web of relationships and shared history. This fragmented narrative style gives the feel of how bits and pieces of the who and the when of an identity and relationship are layered crudely one upon the other the passage of time, seemingly even as characters attempt to live forward. Egan's structure underscores, in both plot and theme, how the actions and interactions of the past reverberate through the present and become a conglomeration, in Weldon's words, of all of those influences bundled up in a very specific constellation that you see or see the effects of those actions and interactions happening today. For one, Bennie Salazar's relationship with Lou, his mentor, imprints itself on Bennie and stays imprinted on his values and decisions to come, later life as a music producer. Sasha's amnesia also works in a similar manner as well, with Sasha's memories of her time working with Bennie effecting her struggles with self and the present state even though they aren't physically together.

Their cumulative effect on the first part of the character's childhood and experiences is stressed by highlighting these nonlinear portrayals which give way to a feedback loop that continues to influence the character's dynamic identity. Egan continues to take this theme of entanglement to other critical relationships in the novel, such as Ted, Sasha's uncle; her friend Rob; and her daughter Alison. The evidence of these relationships reveals that identity is not a one shot deal, but rather, a crawling, living entity permeated by exchanges between people across the generations. One notable example is the PowerPoint chapter, "Great Rock and Roll Pauses," narrated from Alison's perspective. Generational entanglement is epitomized in this chapter between Sasha's past continuing through Alison's present. Egan brings these experiences together in ways that shows how individual experiences are interwoven in our sense of identity, over time and across the courses of generations.

Entangled relationships are also the central feature of Egan's relational rendering of identity. Character's lives spin together perfectly into a web, of experiences which does not have any linear temporality. *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is built as a fragmented structure which captures identity as multi and intersecting, fragments which nevertheless remain connected. Thus Sasha's developing identity traces her interactions with others from her rebellious childhood, then the attempt toward stability, to present. Similarly, Bennie is an identity of the music industry – it is a part of his relationships, such as his relationship with Lou and Sasha and also the way he fits into the wider music industry. A metaphor for this relational identity, the novel's nonlinear structure works in much the same way as time does, looping back and forth between past and present and future.

This approach lifts the veil and allows readers to see how a person's life is intricately entangled with other people as much as with choices of their own, and how that entanglement can endure—a fact ages an individual in ways far more profound than time moving forward can. On the whole, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* shows that identity and indeed relationships are tied together into a web of power that extends across time. Egan's disjointed narrative conveys the nature of entanglement: lives of characters as the ongoing playing out of dynamics between interactions and the forces of memory.

Dialogic Interactions and Character Relationality



In *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, I apply Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to show that the relational dynamics among the characters produce a chosen identity and a set of life trajectories. For Bakhtin identity and meaning, are projects, worked out dialogically, in relationship and interaction with others. Each "voice" in a narrative is influenced by its encounters with other voices, creating a web of interconnected relationships that contributes to the characters' development and sense of self (Bakhtin 88). Jennifer Egan's novel shows us how this principle works, demonstrating how the people surrounding a character shape that character's identity, and how the seemingly small connexions among characters help them create meaning and create a self. The connexion between Bennie Salazar, a music produce, and Sasha, his assistant, serve as a central example of dialogic relationships in the novel. The relations between these characters fulfill Bakhtin's dialogic principle because each character's identity is built on the interactions with the other: Bennie's connexion to Sasha sharpens his feelings of authenticity in a commercialized music world, as theirs is a contradictions about identity and self-acceptance that Bennie struggles with in his career.

Bennie uses Sasha to reflect on values and life choices (societal and personal and professional) that have in turn led to an impact upon his personal and professional trajectory. Bennie gives the same grounding and growing that Sasha finds in him. This reciprocal influence illustrates Bakhtin's assertion that "to be means to communicate dialogically," where identity is shaped through relationships (Bakhtin 93). Sasha's dialogic relationships, however, are more elaborate than the one with Bennie: she also converses with Coz, her therapist. Coz's voice in a sense works inductively, leading Sasha to examine her impulses in order to work toward self-acceptance. Bakhtin likens identity formation to an ongoing process of negotiation with others (Holquist 79), and these therapeutic dialogues strike me as a good fit with that model. Bennie's mentor, Lou Kline, is also more indirectly influenced in his hedonistic personality and values by Lou Kline's larger than life personality. Lou's impact persists as a "dialogic echo," shaping Bennie's decisions and values long after their direct interactions, reflecting Bakhtin's idea that interactions can resonate across time and distance (Holquist 79). Egan also uses the generational dimensions of dialogism.

In the PowerPoint chapter, "Great Rock and Roll Pauses," narrated by Sasha's daughter Alison, Sasha's past continues to influence Alison's understanding of family and identity. Through Alison's reflections (Bakhtin 103), we see how this cumulative, dialogic relationship shows how voices and experiences passed down through past generations pave

the way for the ways future generations will be spoken of. Egan shows that identity is a relational construct, rebuilt across the interactional space of encounters with others. Egan uses a multi perspective narrative to illustrate Bakhtin's claim that identity is socially constituted. *A Visit from the Goon Squad* presents characters as composite characters of their dialogic interactions, engaged by and in the network of influences surrounding them. Egan's novel demonstrates that identity is relational and dynamic and built upon the constant discourse between self and others (Holquist 88).

Bennie Salazar and Scotty Hausmann: Entangled Lives and Distant Influence

Scotty Hausmann and Bennie Salazar's friendship is an example of how shared histories have stayed with one another such a way that it influences one's identity in this period. From a bandmate, from the same obsession for music, Bennie and Scotty's lives have taken a sharp and twisted turn. Both Bennie and Scotty do make it in the music industry but Scotty's failure and loneliness strike him. Physical and temporal separation, however, nonetheless holds them together — people are tied to past versions of themselves and one another as quantum entanglement binds people in past and future (Barad 43). So it is on this level that these characters are profoundly connected to each other. Scotty's identity is the product of his memories of Bennie and he uses those as the ultimate touchstone for the sense of failure that he perceives in himself.

After admiring Bennie's success, he hates thinking about his potential life and using Bennie to center his identity. Moreover, this tension manifests this idea of dialogism, in the sense that identity is constituted relationally even in the absence of dialogue (Mikhail Bakhtin 93). This process of ongoing, internal dialogue is what leads to Scotty's later decision to reengage with Bennie, his self-concept is ever being moulded under the assumption of their past. Reflective of this is the reunion of Scotty and Bennie as their meeting between them becomes a moment for both man to face another version of themselves that each man's divergent paths have produced.

Bennie puts Scotty's concert together — an act that both reasserts Scotty's value and draw Bennie back to his own beleaguered sense of authenticity, inextricably bubbling away in the waters of commercial music. However, this moment of the dialogic and entangled bond between two comes to also show the depth of their relationship. Scotty's concert becomes a symbolic resolution, where Scotty and Percey symbolically balance each other admitting who they are with their



identities, rather than their self-interests. This quantum entangled style relationship is similar to the where change in one particle affects the other even at greater distances. By the same token, Bennie and Scotty become so entangled with each other that they influence each other's identities across time and space. Bennie's attempts to 'live up to Bennie,' and Scotty's attempt to breathe life back into each other's authenticity and values. Egan's depiction of their relationship is in evidence of Wendt's observation that lives so intertwined can change individuals in ways that are unforeseeable (Wendt 27). This case study exposes revealed how dialogic and entangled connexions endure to alter identities and choices in comprehensive and felt in a manner, contemplating how heredity may affect individuals in manner.

Sasha and Her Therapist, Coz: Dialogic Exchanges and the Reshaping of Identity

Sasha's relationship with her therapist, Coz, in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is dialogic, as Mikhail Bakhtin would have it: identity is always being constructed and reconstructed in and through relation. During sessions with Sasha, her therapist, Coz, is creating dialogic space for Sasha to reflect on her behaviours and choices. With a shared project of understanding Sasha's actions, Coz is the external eyes in this piece, something that forces Sasha to remember that her behaviors are not immutable traits but can be nailed down, figured out and ultimately changed. As Sasha talked therapy, she starts to investigate the illusive reasons behind her kleptomania. Coz prompts her to reflect on the "moment before" she steals, helping her confront the feelings of emptiness and need that drive her actions. This process aligns with Bakhtin's notion that "meaning is co-created" through relational exchanges, where identity emerges from dialogic interactions (Holquist 78).

Sasha is able to begin to describe her emotions and motivations to Coz, who then helps her to construct a new self-narrative, a new way of seeing herself as compelled because of unhealed pain, rather than because of inherent flaw. Their conversations progress, and Sasha starts to work out what she's doing in terms of her emotional situation, realizing they are things she's doing to try to cope with something deeper: loss, disconnection. This heightened awareness helps her to look at herself with a bit more compassion and also opening herself to accepting her behaviours as part of a process of ongoing self-understanding. Coz does not provide direct answers but instead acts as a "responsive voice," supporting Sasha in navigating her internal conflicts and fostering her

self-discovery (Holquist 79). This therapeutic dynamic actually parallels Bakhtin's contention that identity is interdependent and we have chosen it relative to others. Through dialogue with Coz, Sasha changes Recipient's self-identity using Sasha's own terms, from a place of shame to one of self-acceptance.

Through their relationship we are able to see how dialogue assists in identity formation in telling, re-telling, reframing life stories to get to self-awareness and personal growth. In Coz's sessions, Sasha's journey of self-reflection and identity reconstruction, speaks to the agency of dialogic relationships in creating such environment. Sasha's experience on the therapeutic exchange allows her to work through this dissonance between what she does and what she thinks she should be doing, and to put the pieces together so she can choose actions that are more in consonance with her experience of herself. Coz acts in this sense as a force pulling Sasha along the road of healing and self-acceptance, indeed it functions as a manifestation of Bakhtin's notion of the self as an interaction of dialogues with others.

Bennie and Lou Kline: Generational Entanglement and Identity Formation

It's a tragic narrative and a poignant example of how puppetry carries through to generations, most poignantly by Lou Kline and Bennie Salazar, who fail to recognize that once they are no longer formal mentor and protégé, they are nonetheless joined for life in a relationship that will determine a lifetime of identity and career choices. Bennie is a fairly ethical but very charismatic music producer who owes his early development to the character of Lou, a charismatic and very ethically ambiguous producer.

Bennie amuses himself with the blind man Louis (Lou) favorites, blending the dangerous potential of music and decadence with the music's option to create. When Bennie catches fire on the floors of his record label through this mentorship, it sparks in him a love for music that leads him where he will, and also saddles him with the ethical ramifications of doing Lou's work. Lou was one of many things that made Bennie who he is today. On one hand Bennie believes he becomes driven by a drive for moral authenticity and achievement by Horn; on the other, Horn exposes him to the moral compromises at the heart of the music industry. Nothing outside of disregarding mortality is taught by Lou to the infant Bennie, and as he grows, the infant becomes more and more critical of Lou's hedonistic lifestyle and more and more aware of the ethical ambiguities involved.



This reflection puts Bennie on the spot to reflect on his own career choices with commercialism becoming a hard thing to do while hoping to stay true to his roots. Bennie remains unable to hold onto authenticity, and his admiration of and rejection of Lou's legacy plays into both. But Lou is a model of success and a cautionary example. This points towards Bennie's yearning to reexplore music as it was when Lou's, when it was not yet a thing – a commodity. This duality forms Bennie's identity as a dual admiration of Lou's passion and charisma and his conscious denial that he is not going to be his mentor's ethical misstep. This dynamic comes full circle in the chapter "Pure Language," where Bennie mentors a young artist. In this, Bennie shows a bit of responsibility and a knowledge of what's what that is tied to his relationship with Lou. Bennie nonetheless rewrites Lou's legacy dialogically, understanding his role differently than his mentor, Lou: deliberately, seeking to further the integrity and creativity of the artist.

In this way Bennie converts his identity, a combination of lessons from Lou and of things Bennie subscribes to now. Bakhtin's use of his theory of dialogism is applicable to Bennie and Lou because Bennie's identity has a dialogic nature, developed by his interactions with past influences and current ethical action. The mentor's legacy procreates and morphs through a generational marriage between mentor and mentee. This was the first of Egan's broader themes of interconnected lives and the interrelatedness of mentoring. Bennie's passage is a story of the addiction that comes with having entangled relationships and how they keep influencing people time and over time, altering identity and directing choice profoundly and forever.

Implications of Entanglement and Dialogism on Identity and Memory

In Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, identity becomes something less fixed and isolated, in favour of being something much more dynamic, relational and constantly reconstructed by what can never disassociate; enduring, entangled connexions. It is the principles of Quantum Literary Theory, as conceptualized by Quantum Literary Theory and dialogism, as conceived by Mikhail Bakhtin, which Egan based his depiction of identity on. Identifying how identity unfolds incrementally over time, through sets of interactions and dialogues with others, these frameworks show us how. Egan shows how selfhood is made relational and interdependent through the Bennie Salazar, Lou Kline, Sasha, and Scotty Hausmann. They are incomplete and in a continual flux in their own song, their relationship to others. For instance,



Sasha's story typifies this entangled, dialogic identity. The therapeutic relationship between Coz and the patient is analyzed: relational exchanges enable the patient to unearth the emotional sources of her actions.

Coz helps Sasha grow from self-judgment to self-awareness and self-compassion. This dialogic space illustrates Bakhtin's assertion that "to be means to communicate dialogically," as Sasha's identity transforms through her interactions with others, guiding her toward self-acceptance (Bakhtin 93). Similarly, Bennie's soul is in great part formed by his bond with Lou, his mentor. Though they are no longer active together their influence continues on Bennie throughout his career; Lou leaves an impression on Bennie's values and why he makes the choices he does. It's Lou who taught Bennie about authenticity and warned him also about the commodification of music, a message as much a guide as it is cautionary. Bennie's thoughts about Lou, his mark on Bennie and the cumulative unfolding of identity over time, are a reflection of the multiple and cumulative ways in which identity is formed by past relationships and prior experiences.

Bennie's rediscovery of rekindled connexion with Scotty Hausmann, also points us to memory and relationships in identity formation. There's a sense of rekindled idealism and younger Scotty's interaction with Bennie brings Scotty back to the past; his own past, so to speak, and he starts to wonder how he has ended up where he is, how he may have grown up and become the person he's become. This shows that identity is not only formed by memory, but that it is mediated by relational and dialogic exchange over time from past to present.

For Egan, identity is alluded to as an enmeshed, supple construction, built of input from prior as well as existing workplaces, family, social contexts, and personal experiences. Her novel foregrounds our relational boundless our identity is constituted relationally prior to and after time. Together Sasha's transformative dialogue with Coz, Bennie's ongoing reflection on Lou's mentorship and Scotty's rediscovery of his dreams show the way in which relationships and identity are interrelated. *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Egan forces us always to think of identity as never static, or self-contained, but as a process of creation and sustenance through relational entanglements. They demonstrate the interconnectedness of selfhood, memory, and interaction expressing an image of identity a continuously constructed process of the human experience. Memory is fluid and relational for Jennifer Egan that continually redefines identities in ways proximate to principles from Quantum Literary Theory and those outlined by Mikhail Bakhtin in



dialogism. In *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, memory is not static, not linear, but dynamic and woven, defining the characters' self understandings, and relationships in a cumulative, relational way. This novel imagines memory as one of construction and reaffirmation of identity whereby entities remain bound in temporal and spatial dimensions (entanglement) and relate to others in dialogic interaction whereby individual consciousness emerges dialogically through engagement with the other.

Memory as Dialogic and Entangled in Sasha's Journey

The concept of memory dialogic and entangled reflects in the character of Sasha. The recollections are not passive but active in defining her identity and her choices. Shackled to her past, kleptomania and randumb relationships contaminate the present, the memories consume the self, and influence decisions. Coz gives her space to face these memories and the power of self transforms from judgement to consciousness. Within these sessions, Sasha dialogically reflects on her impulses and the actions while listening as her past, and now, present selves engage and play. It allows her to reframe her past, renovate her self-concept. Bakhtin's idea that "to be means to be for another" underscores this transformation, as Sasha's evolving identity is influenced by her past relationships and actions (Bakhtin 92).

Thus Sasha uses these dialogic interactions to see a more compassionate Sasha and to show how memory is a relational act in constructing a more compassionate understanding of herself, so that she can grow and accept herself. Further examples of how memory works dialogically and entangled are Bennie's recollections of his mentor, Lou. Bennie learned about authenticity and success in music industry from Lou; it's through Lou that he could understand what is and isn't authenticity, and what winning looks like. Lou remains a dual figure in Bennie's memory: It's also source of inspiration and cautionary tale. That entanglement makes Bennie wrestle between reconciling his idealistic past with the present state of the world he's help maintain in the music business. Bennie's memory of Lou and Lou's memory for him becomes a relational touchstone to Bennie's own compromises and accomplishments. Yet this process draws attention to the way in which the entanglements of relationships stretch out over time and shape identity through what Barad (63) calls the "nonlocality of memory." What stands is that memory circumvents spatio and temporal boundaries, how it becomes part of the cumulative identity, such as Lou being present in Bennie's mind.

As intergenerational, Alison's daughter Sasha, takes up the theme of memory as dialogic and quantum. This is how Alison knows her mother's past affects Sasha's past to generations. Memory works holographically, and past events contribute echoes forward, into the present, where Sasha is struggling and sometimes succeeding, and Alison struggles and sometimes succeeds in forging her own conception of family, self. The intergenerational transmission of memory emphasizes how identities are made through communal experience that does not live solely within the lived lives of the individuals. Alison's narrative reflects Bakhtin's idea that "voices respond to each other," highlighting the cumulative and entangled nature of identity across time (Holquist 88). Sasha's past, then, is no longer a private, private affair but rather an encounter, across the network of her relationships, with memory which becomes a relational force, shaping, first, her daughter, but layers deeper, it affects a broader web of relationships as well. Twists to memory appear in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Egan that still relates memory as dialogic and entangled thread that links characters in time and life stages. Memory is depicted as a relational process of identity construction in Sasha's therapy sessions; Bennie's reflections about Lou, and Alison's intergenerational view.

Conclusion

Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* interweaves a host of people's memories, lives, and identities: for example, fluid and relational selfhood. The novel through a fragmented, nonlinear narrative shows how identity is constantly being shaped and reshaped in the course of our interactions and memories with the other. In this way Egan integrates ideas of Quantum Literary Theory with Bakhtin's dialogism and discusses how a network of entangled relationships constructs the human identity and stresses that identity is not fixed, isolated. Metaphors relating to the interspatial / intratemporal connectedness of the characters are based on the physics of quantum mechanics (entanglement, superposition, nonlocality). This framework complements this description by showing how our sense of self is constructed through continuous relational exchanges.

Sasha, Bennie, Lou and Scotty are all great examples that identity is not a given, that it is formed in relationship, made up and broken down, built and torn down, a product of negotiation. Infinite mirrors of human interaction sum up the idea that the self is something that must always be a work in progress. As an example of entangled and dialogic dimensions of identity formation, perhaps the most prominent is the mentorship of Bennie by Lou, of Sasha to Coz and Sasha – to her daughter Alison, and



of the transmission of memory between generation to generation. By showing these connexions, we see that memory continues to rebind the characters, both from the past and the present, and it always does so in a cumulative and active way. In *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, memory sheds its traditional shoes of something that discursively recalls the past. And it is seen as a living, dialogic force that acts to shape the present and will affect the future.

The novel's fluid narrative structure reflects that dynamic by moving in and out of memories and relationships, all while related as a community of memory and relationship that is larger than individual lives. Addressing entangled Relationships and dialogic identity in a profound meditation on the complicitness of human experience, Egan explores the interconnectedness of human experience. *A Visit from the Goon Squad* exemplifies how identities are jointly constructed and reciprocally redefined by implicated relations and time, and suggests how memory and interaction (literally) can transform, time and space, and person.

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