

Commentary on Son of Darkness

This commentary contains spoilers, so please make sure you read the chapters first.

Ch 1 *The Foundation*, a private organisation, is introduced here, but was pre-figured in *Schrodinger's God*. Superintendent Lynch becomes disenchanted with the police after a lifetime of working for them. He feels his methods are no longer supported and that his faith - which he sees as the essence of his being - makes him a target of unhealthy skepticism. The offer of a huge grant from the Howarth-Weaver corporation allows him to direct his efforts towards justice as he sees fit and with almost unlimited resources. The Foundation can assist with consultancy work or follow its own direction, just as Lynch and Power wish. Whilst Lynch is the prime director of operations, Power can follow his clinical and teaching work as a psychiatrist, coming in to work on cases for the Foundation as he sees fit. The establishment of the fictional Foundation coincides with the real world shedding of senior detectives from UK police forces, essentially to save the higher salaries associated with the length of service that tallies with such experience. Such cost-cutting has led to impairments in the quality of detective work and a rise in expensive mistakes that have in turn marred prosecutions. Inspector Beresford raises this point in Chapter 2.

Ch2 The emergency services are drawn to the farm near the Black Lake by the tragedy of a plane crash. Once there, by chance, they discover Mr Heaney's lair and the toxic family legacy he has left behind. There are a few clues as to the current inhabitant of the farm, but some residual traces of old Mr Heaney. It is Beresford's investigation as senior investigating officer (SIO), and his role to develop and investigative strategy. Level 3 investigations are usually led by at least a Detective Inspector (DI), like Beresford, attached to specialist unit such as a Major Crimes Unit.

Beresford welcomes having Dr Power's input as he has worked with him several times before and Power is no threat, clearly being outside the police force, by dint of his being from the medical profession. He feels somewhat anxious, or even ambivalent about Lynch's involvement. Although Lynch has never been anything other than a positive figure in Beresford's career Beresford feels that Lynch may encroach on what he sees as *his* case. To compound this niggling feeling of inadequacy, Beresford neglects to notice that the freezer contains the remnants of more than one body.

Lynch arrives at the farmhouse murder scene and immediately refers to it as 'Cain's lair'. There are several references to Cain through the book. Cain is of course the first documented murderer - for his slaughter of his brother Abel in the Book of Genesis, motivated possibly by jealousy. Cain is interpreted by Biblical scholars as the originator of evil and father of a tainted line, including all manner of mythical monsters, including Grendel.

The chapter mentions the humble, orangey-yellow and black Sexton beetle (*Nicrophorus vespilloides*). This is a kind of undertaker beetle found in the UK which buries dead animals like mice and birds. The beetle feeds on the corpses

and breeds there. The carcass is prepared and buried in a lengthy process over eight hours or so sometimes by both the male and female beetles. Hair is removed. Beetles leave secretions on the carcass to delay decay and limit the smell of decomposition that might attract other predators. The parent beetles thus create a kind of crypt for the corpse, which doubles as a nursery for their offspring. The beetles stay around after the eggs are laid and hatched, to rear their offspring in the crypt. In *Son of Darkness* the sexton beetle is meant to be attracted into the house by the scent of death.

Ch3 Mystery novels that focus in police investigations are often called 'police procedurals'. Police procedurals don't always follow strict police procedure. Some novels stray further from reality than others and in the balance between documentary and fiction place characters and plot first. *Son of Darkness* includes many elements that you would have found in a real police investigation in 2003, but does not follow the process slavishly, as the necessary, detailed routine in any investigation would slow the plot down. Readers who like detail may like to acquaint themselves with the techniques of the time which are glancingly mentioned – such as HOLMES2 – the computer database which was being rolled out. HOLMES 2 was the acronym for the Home Office Large Major Enquiry System 2 and was instrumental in some successful inquiries such as the murder of Danielle Moorcroft in 2002. Other acronyms are scattered through the chapter and the book to lend verisimilitude, and credibility to characters like Lynch – acronyms like TIE and NAFIS. Some of these investigational are actually also relevant to the later plot, such as the extremely dull-sounding SIO Investigation Policy File, which contains details of the investigations strategy and would include key details of advisers such as Dr Power. The loss of this key police file, as we find out in later chapters, puts Dr Power's safety in jeopardy.

Ch 4 – Dr Power wanders the Edge for an evening walk with Laura. The Edge is a nature reserve and landscape with a dramatic, red sandstone escarpment managed by the National Trust. There is a car park for visitors and a pub, The Wizard, so named after the legends surrounding the Edge and the Wizard. Dr Power's house is on the Macclesfield Road almost within the woods on the Edge.

Paul Gent's illustration shows Power and Laura standing on Castle Rock, overlooking the plain. The description of trees and wildlife, such as the insects, is accurate. Power retells another local legend besides that of the Wizard; a ghost story.

Ch5 – Although he is a professor, Power does not use the title more than he wants to, he chooses not to use it when booking the table at the *Dysart Arms*. Power and Lynch discuss the meaning of trophies kept in Kilner jars and potential motives for the murders including sacrifice. The notion of a spiritual dimension to the motivation irritates Power and this resurfaces later in the book

when he discusses how often 'religion or superstition' is invoked as sufficient explanation for our ancestors' behaviour.

To Lynch, who is strongly motivated by his Faith, such motivation is more comprehensible. Lynch is troubled by a change in how society views religion, with the rise of a secular society.

Power reflects on his teaching psychiatry – how a man with psychosis –killed his mother when he thought she was a witch, citing Exodus 22.18 – *'thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'*, now seen perhaps as an anachronistic and decidedly judgemental point of view.

The book touches several times on the strange phenomenon of cultural change and how what is deemed reasonable in society at one time (e.g. witch finding and their punishment) becomes seen as unreasonable. Whatever beliefs motivated the society that built neolithic stone circles and sustained such endeavours for thousands of years are lost to us, and can only be surmised. Local history testimony of the Edge from a man called Alastier Clay-Egerton described a coven allegedly meeting in the Alderley Edge woods and mines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; when this was more widely discovered the members of the coven were supposed to have received death threats.

Ch6 The chapter describes how Dr Power cares for the wife of his closest friend. There is a professional dilemma here. Purists would argue that a doctor should not treat his friends or relatives. There are all sorts of pitfalls that could occur. The doctor might over-treat, or under treat, or act outside his field of expertise and be a real interfering nuisance to other doctors. Friends might prevail upon the doctor for prescriptions the doctor might not normally give – like addictive drugs. Or the doctor might come under pressure to provide euthanasia at the end of life. But there is also the burden of guilt that a doctor might have to live with if the doctor does not intervene. For instance, in this situation where Dr Power finds Mrs Lynch is severely depressed, what if he had earlier refused to see her when Lynch asked him and she had later died by her own hand? How could he have lived with the knowledge that he had the training and skills to help her? I think Power negotiates his way through a minefield here, trying to do his best for his friend and Pamela Lynch. Ultimately he defers to the GP to act and to actually prescribe though.

Lynch is trying to develop the Foundation to be a legitimate and useful agency, and to do so he seeks a mutual co-operation with the security services. Having previously relied on the internal intelligence network provided by the police he is seeking strategic alliance so that the Foundation can act in this and other cases. He can only do so through his good reputation, links with sympathetic politicians and the 'clout' that comes from an almost unlimited supply of money through the Howarth-Weaver Corporation. Nevertheless Lynch is initially viewed with suspicion by his handler, and clearly Lynch will have to build on this relationship if the Foundation is to grow.

Dr Power returns to the farmhouse, believing the scene to be a cold one, devoid of action and a place he can reflect in. He is particularly keen to try and isolate the motives behind Heaney's actions. He explores the unpleasant motive

of cannibalism. He is clearly struggling with many aspects of the case. His plunge into the water is an external symbol of threat that mirrors the Lake outside, is an urgent real physical threat and also represents the conflict of ideas in his unconscious.

Ch7 'Looks were deceiving for this was clearly a portal into a different realm; Heaney's world'. The water that marks a transition into 'Heaney's world' symbolizes both the amniotic world and the world of spirits that Heaney and his kin also see in the lake at Lindow. It is a transition point, between Power's world and Heaney's, and there the two men grapple in the darkness. There is another distant echo of something in *Beowulf*, but we will consider this later.

The journalist, John Lovett, is an impostor, and is the same man who stole Beresford's file. He uses the details in the file to try and tempt Power into a meeting, on his own.

The visit to see his father is Power's last ever meeting with him, although neither know this explicitly. It is by luck that they manage to express something of the feelings father and son share.

T the end of the chapter Power and Lynch again discuss the motives of Heaney – discussing, rather obliquely at times as their discussion is over breakfast, the subjects of Heaney's cannibalism and trophy keeping. Power's final comment is "You are what you eat." And in this he is partially alluding to Lynch's omnivorous diet as Power himself is a vegetarian.

Ch8

Lynch undertakes to visit a number of funeral parlours in the vicinity of Lindow Common to try and find out if these might be a source of the body parts, and also to see if Mr Heaney works there. His visit is ultimately not profitable and he is dismayed by the secular nature of the funeral directors, and comforts himself with an ancient hymn, which he sings softly, "Still be Thy care, O God, our shield; Still may Thy wisdom guide us".

In a parallel search to Lynch, Dr Power visits Dr Lehman, a volunteer doctor, who runs a psychiatric drop-in clinic for the homeless. Power's hunch is that the victims of the Lindow murderer may be from this homeless population. Dr Lehman mentions the frightening statistic that the average age of death for a man on the city streets is about 47 and 43 for a woman. The cynical and profoundly unwise closure of the asylums (the UK now has fewer psychiatric beds than in the 1800s when the population was less than a third of what it is now) and the grim results of austerity programs have resulted in an itinerant population of which studies indicate over 24% have drug problems and over 37% alcohol problems. Over 12% have psychosis and over 11% have major depression. 23% have personality disorder (Fazel et al, 2008). (N.B. It is possible

for some individuals to have more than one diagnosis). Only the coldest of hearts would not be filled with anger at society's abandonment of these people.

Professor Rose is the friendly archeologist first mentioned by Laura in Chapter 4 as the professor who took her school group round the University Museum. Professor Rose is a composite figure and not based on any unique individual. She adds a glimpse of the distant past to the story, talking about Neolithic mining and smelting on the Edge. The character is there to remind Dr Power that what happens in the present often has roots in history long-gone. She also implies that Power should explore these roots in the tunnels below his house. Power hesitates as he remembers his experience in the dark below his house (see *Dr Power's Casebook*).

The phenomenon of the preserved remains of the bog people throughout Europe is both fascinating and disturbing. Were these people murder victims who were deliberately disposed of where they would never be found by a single murderer, or sacrificial victims committed to the spirits of dark water by a society? Historically Mr Reyn-Bardt did murder his wife and dispose of her in the bog in the 1960s. Ironically Reyn-Bardt confessed to the police when a body of a woman was discovered, (although this was of a woman who had actually died nearly two thousand years before). Other ancient bog people from Tollund, Dätgen, Worsley Moss and Holland also met violent deaths.

Professor Rose is open to Power's idea that these bodies were the result of murders that perpetrators wished to cover up, but also talks wistfully of ancient beliefs that such watery places were gates to the under world, returning to a theme in the book (see Chapter 21) that certain places offer thin boundaries to allow an exchange between different worlds.

The paragraphs of Dr Power's visit to the University of Manchester also contain a reference to Alan Turing who taught at the University in the 1950s (and whose memory features in the story 'Magpies' in *Dr Power's Casebook*).

Finally, Lynch is described at prayer in Chester Cathedral, where a Deacon preaches on Cain, the murderous son of Adam, and God's curse on Cain's family. The Deacon makes an elliptical remark about how we sometimes get glimpses of the truth, just at the edge of our perception. What she means is left unsaid, but might refer to how difficult it is to see the hand of God in our everyday lives, and Lynch is left in a reflective mood.

Ch 9

The chapter begins with a rail journey between Manchester and Alderley Edge. Alderley Edge really only emerged as an entity after the coming of the railway and the development of commutable suburbs and villas. The station features a couple of times in the book.

The journey also allows Power to reflect on his frustrated ambition to be a father. He is judgmental about a mother's focus on her mobile phone to the detriment of her baby. He imagines he would not make the same decision if he was a parent, but is he being fair?

On his journey Power reflects on his earlier visit to the Museum and the conversation with the archaeology professor. The dialogue about the Neolithic peoples of the Edge, and the long history of mining in the area contains some of the themes of heredity in the book. I am indebted to the University of Manchester's own Professor Prag for answering my queries about ancient or Neolithic peoples on the Edge and his successor Professor Sitch for his indirect recommendations via John Prag:

- <https://lindowmanchester.wordpress.com/2009/03/20/marginal-people-and-bogs/>
- Matthew Hyde and Christine Pemberton's 'Lindow and the Bog Warriors' (Wilmslow: Rex, 2002), and
- 'Lindow Common as a peat bog: its age and its people' by William Norbury
- The Story of Alderley: Living with the Edge. (Prag)

One of the sound inspirations for some of the writing was the song by Manchester band Everything Everything called 'Distant Past' (2015). Their lead singer Jonathan Higgs, described the song - "Distant Past is about primal human nature, and no matter how far we progress in our civilisations, we can never escape it." This theme is relevant to the Heaney family, who say they have always lived near the Edge, and is developed later in the book. Our actions are derived from a complex mixture of effects from genetics, early environment and experience. How much are our behaviours determined by these factors? Can we escape from the past and our family traditions?

Sometimes our identity is guided by our perceptions of our heritage. People living in the British Isles might for instance identify with the builders of Stonehenge, or, say, the Romans whose empire we were part of for the best part of four hundred years. However, should we lend such cultural identities so much power over us? Recent genetic studies challenge the notion of continuity and are consistent with successive sweeps of immigration from places like Iberia or Anatolia, and the rise and fall of various peoples in tandem with innovations in farming and decimations by infections such as plague. Those whom we perceive to be our forebears may not be. The builders of Stonehenge who replaced earlier hunter gatherers, may themselves have been succeeded by the Beaker people, who replaced 90% of the British gene pool in a few hundred years. (See for instance the work of Professor Reich and others in *Nature*. (<http://nature.com/articles/doi:10.1038/nature25738>).

There have been copper and cobalt mines under the massive outcrop of sandstone that is Alderly Edge. There are miles of tunnels, explored and unexplored. Several of the mines have been rendered relatively safe for the public to venture into with guides and the Derbyshire Caving Club holds occasional tours and Open Days. Visits can be booked on-line for those who can

tolerate the cold, the wet, the dark, low ceilings and some enclosed spaces...the author benefited from several tours underground in Wood Mine and at Engine Vein. (<https://www.derbysc.org.uk/alderley/>)

I should note that the Caving Club characters depicted in the novel are entirely fictional.

Looking at the Edge today, an epitome of a National Trust woodland landscape it is difficult to envisage it was once a semi-industrial landscape with mines, and brick buildings which housed large scale processes to crush the mined rock and treat it in huge vats of acid to free the deep-dwelling minerals from the earth.

“Born all in the dark wormy earth, cold specks of fire, evil lights shining in the darkness. Where fallen archangels flung the stars of their brows.”

In the book Dr Power occasionally muses on the nature and purpose of ritual – psychiatrists are familiar with the rituals we all engage in to allay our anxieties. Some rituals are more extreme and time consuming than others – for example the elaborate undoing rituals seen in obsessive compulsive disorder – e.g. lengthy handwashing rituals to overcome a fear of contamination. Power expressed some frustration with academics who perhaps overly resort to the concept of religious ritual as an explanation for inexplicable aspects of archaeological sites or phenomena. His interest in ritual is particularly piqued in this book as he is endeavouring to explore the motives for the various murders in the novel. In considering the historical deaths of European bog people he rails against the formulaic reliance on ritual as a motive, when more prosaic motives could be employed.

In Chapter 9, and in a few other places in the book Power discourses about the various types of cannibalism, again to illustrate the mental exploration he is engaged in to ensure he is covering all possible avenues before discounting any.

Ch 10 Hospitals are now large organisations, employing thousands of staff. It would be possible to assume an identity and walk unchallenged through its corridors. The staff group is diverse, and the hierarchy from the most menial employee and the Chief Executive is extensive, with the pay on the latter exceeding the poorest paid member of the staff by over ten times. In such a complex organisation the average Chief Executive has become far removed from the nursing staff and patients. The staff of a hospital would not know a modern-day Chief Executive either by face or name. Some areas of a hospital are protected by electronic and conventional security – the Chief Executive’s suite perhaps and wards such as maternity (as a result of past experiences with baby theft) and psychiatry (to prevent absconion), so the absence of a security card would be a temporary deterrent to a determined criminal, but confidence and cunning can run rings even round the tightest security systems.

In Chapter 10 the Matron is, of course, an impostor. Modern Matrons were being newly introduced across UK NHS hospitals from 2001 onwards and staff would be unfamiliar with the role, and possibly fearful of their power.

This who doubt that impostors can get very far in the modern NHS should look at the example of Dr Levon Mkhitarian, who posed as a locum doctor, and treated 3,363 patients in two years. He successfully convinced people in seven NHS Trusts across various specialties including oncology, cardiology, and surgery. He was caught out when he applied for a security pass in the name of a another doctor. He was convicted in 2015 and sentenced to six years in prison.

In the latter part of the chapter Power mourns his father and becomes introspective, focusing on small details such as the carving of a Green Man in his house. The long history of the Green Man is interesting and this figure is glimpsed everywhere in Europe on buildings. He is seemingly ubiquitous. He is often identified as Adam. There is an apocryphal story of how Adam became the Green Man involving a desire to return to Eden at the end of his days, sending his son Seth to ask for permission for Adam's return, God's refusal, the provision of three seeds from the Garden, which are placed in Adam's mouth on his death, and the prolific growth of greenery from his body which in turn becomes the tree that provides the wood, upon which Christ is crucified. The appearance of the Green Man is a sign, perhaps, that Power is being watched over, but also links symbolically to Cain, the other son of our original family, whose story is told elsewhere in the *Son of Darkness*.

Ch 11

This chapter explores the nature of Power's father's death. The initial assumption that his father died a natural death is challenged by a crude note received by Power, clearly from Cousins, a man who has himself seemingly risen from the grave to act out a revenge against Power and his kith and kin. Power refers to the ancient Law of Hammurabi, the Babylonia king, when he says "An eye for an eye, the death of a relative for the death of his brother".

Power reacts with a mixture of disbelief (he initially noted the pathological petechiae on his father's face when he visited the hospital but chose to be reassured by the impostor pretending to be Matron, rather than listen to any internal suspicions), despair, swiftly followed by anger and guilt. The chapter ends with him battling against the earth itself, digging frantically in the rain and darkness.

Ch 12

Power is challenged morally and physically during a working day despite wanting a peaceful time; the tests he faces are unbidden and unwelcome.

This chapter shows Power resisting temptation, even though he is encouraged to fall by Dr Shacklin. Shacklin is a very senior figure in the University that Power has moved into. Shacklin acts purely in his own interests, and notes that there is no had and fast rule against employees having a relationship with other members of staff or students motivate him. Shacklin, despite his seniority and our expectations of a more moral stance in such a figure, interprets the lack of a prohibitory rule as being a green light to enjoying such relationships. Power is baffled by Shacklin's viewpoint, but before he can protest, Shacklin is gone.

Dr Shacklin is introduced here ahead of a more substantial appearance in the next Dr Power mystery.

The chapter ends with Dr Power receiving a further communication from Cousins, who is stalking him and motivated by revenge, to seek what he sees as balance. This quest for revenge is perceived as justifiable from Cousin's viewpoint, but as Power has always acted in terms of justice from a societal point of view, few would agree with Cousins about his justification.

Ch 13.

This chapter is about transition from one reality to another. Mr Susskind, the patient discussed by Dr Power when he is on call claims to have suddenly moved from one universe to another – like slipping between bubbles. Dr Power also slips suddenly between one world in which he is childless, to another where he gains a son. Both Susskind and Power have to come to terms with these sudden transitions.

There are a number of events, which illustrate a theme of universal balance in the book – for instance Power loses his father but also gains a son. There is also homeostasis occurring Susskind's universes – a balanced like for like exchange of people between universes. And there is a kind of balance in terms of revenge – which motivates some of the villains – notably Cousins and Mrs Heaney, as they seek to maintain a kind of balance in their eyes.

In early forms of the manuscript there was a recognition that Power had gone through two major life events – the death of his father and the sudden arrival of a son. It would predictable that he would succumb to depression, but after reflection his descent into despair is short-lived and he quickly channels his anger. This acknowledges readers' expectations that heroes will necessarily be active, rather than passive or perhaps that a hero's mask cannot skip for long. Detectives such as Sherlock Holmes and Harry Hole may dabble with substance misuse, but such idiosyncrasies are temporary, even if recurrent.

Mr Susskind's experience is revisited later in the book, and Dr Power reviews the clinical possibilities, but his complaint could be seen as an example of a false memory as per early work by Freud and Janet and revisited by other researchers such as Elizabeth Loftus and populist author Broome, who coined the term "Mandela Effect".

Ch. 14.

Power tries to build a relationship with his suddenly acquired son, Jo. His house is not adapted to cater to the sudden arrival. The bedroom he is given in the tower is no nursery, and is initially poorly provided – without a side lamp - and Jo is unprepared to live in a vegetarian household. Despite Power's long-term hope for a child, particularly a son, the sudden arrival of Jo is highly stressful for him. He is unprepared and caught off guard. Laura acts as an initial bridge between father and son, and lends Power useful observations. The situation is probably more stressful for Jo - his mother has died and his ailing grandfather has landed him with his father and disappeared. He brings some of his beliefs with him, like a game he and his mother might have shared about protecting people or things by walking three times around them. Power is not critical of this, but suggests improvements (changing the direction Jo walks) and thus fails to enter the spontaneous spirit or fun of the moment.

Jo was conceived in the context of a flying visit Power made to Dublin where he met a PhD student, Penny Ferrer. A short story called '*The Fallen Man*' features their meeting and pre-figures Jo's appearance in *Son of Darkness*. The story is in *Dr Power's Casebook*.

Another tale in this collection of short stories prefigures *Son of Darkness*. This story, '*The Dark*', features Dr Power's first foray into the dark realm underneath his house. This realm is also symbolic of Power's unconscious and analogous to a Jungian viewpoint of how a house is symbolically structured. The theme of the unconscious is also woven into *Son of Darkness*. Power even refers to how he relies upon creatively listening to his unconscious as a method in his solving problems. Dr Power books and stories, and even the illustration, often contain clues as to other stories in the series. For instance in the *Fire of Love*, an illustration of a chapel includes a reference to the next Dr Power book, *The Good Shepherd*. If you care to carefully look for it '*The Dark*' also includes the first appearance of the Heaneys.

The chapter also highlights that Power and Lynch face a dual threat. There is Heaney, and there is Cousins. Both threats coincide. Cousins first appeared in *The Good Shepherd*, and was thought to have died at the end of that book. Cousins' simultaneous absence and seemingly ghostly-presence haunts Power throughout *Schrödinger's God*. His more definite re-appearance in *Son of Darkness* through mortal threats and actions resolves the ambiguous nature of his disappearance in *The Good Shepherd*,

Power meditates on the phrase 'Death cannot be experienced' in a personal sense. This is because if there is no after-life then to experience death would require an individual to perceive it before and after the event, which would be impossible. It is perhaps because of this that Cousins decides to wreak havoc upon the lives of Power and Lynch by targeting their loved ones (rather than killing them) in revenge for his brothers' deaths (in *Schrödinger's God*). He believes they must suffer by experiencing the pain caused by their relatives' demise. From Cousins' warped perspective Power and Lynch hounded his

brothers to their respective deaths. That Power and Lynch were seeking justice for the lives damaged by the brothers does not register in Cousins' *weltanschauung*.

In Chapter Fourteen Power also briefly confronts his guilt about his father's death. The thought occurs to him and he refuses to give the thought life and explore its meaning immediately. It is too much and too soon.

The two stanzas quoted in Chapters 13 and 14 are by James Joyce from the poem *Ecce Puer*. The poem neatly describes a man in mid-life -between two generations – considering his feelings for, and responsibilities to, his father and his son. With the sudden arrival of Jo and the murder of his father Power faces the same conflict of emotion:

A child is sleeping:
An old man gone.
O, father forsaken,
Forgive your son!

Ecce Puer, Joyce, 1932

The process of Power getting to know his son and vice versa contains some surprises. Power is alarmed when his son kills two magpies using a slingshot. Power cannot understand why any son of his would indulge in this cruelty. Jo cannot understand why his father does not applaud a demonstration of such skill and accuracy. Magpies from Power's garden previously appeared in a short story in *Dr Power's Casebook*.

Ch. 15

A train station has been on the site of Manchester Piccadilly since 1842, and it is the major station in Manchester. At the time *Son of darkness* is set it had been going through an expensive process of renovation costing some £100 million by 2002. There is an undercroft beneath the main station, but the description of the area visited by Power and Lynch is entirely fictional.

The Willow Tea rooms, modeled on designs by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, are at 97 Buchanan Street, Glasgow and very fine tea and light meals can be enjoyed there. The tearoom is very close to the Central Station in Glasgow and it is quite conceivable that Lynch and Power could run between the two locations in a few minutes.

The foray north is a red herring, devised by Cousins to take Power and Lynch away from home. Cousins designs his trap using the SIO Policy File which he stole from Beresford, knowing that Power and Lynch were working on the case. The Policy File would give Cousins the definitive record of critical policy decisions in the case and documents the progress of an investigation, naming key figures, contact details, suspects, victims, listing priorities, strategies, tactics, investigations and so on. The record would include details of the crime scene,

forensics, pathology, witness details, elimination enquiries, searches and so on. The record is used by the SIO to account for any decisions he or she makes. The Policy File also records the plan for the investigation. Its theft would be a grave matter for Beresford. And it gives Cousins a vital insight into what is currently occupying the minds of Power and Lynch and would suggest ways he might entrap them. Using the Policy File he can decide what bait to use to lure them far enough away from home so he can act.

Ch.16 Power and Lynch venture north to talk to Mrs Kilty about a potential lead to Mrs Heaney. Mrs Kilty set up a meeting in the Willow Tea Rooms – Like the Matron in an earlier chapter Mrs Kilty is an impostor, creating a simple trap to lure Power and Lynch away from those they love – the use of a place to eat as a venue, is a deliberate choice that ironically mocks Power and Lynch's penchant for good food and drink.

Later in the chapter Power and Lynch discuss altruism and why people put themselves at risk for the sake of others. Power takes an evolutionary approach, pointing out the advantages to the individual as well as society – 'if we help society, society will help us, reciprocally. And altruism is an attractive trait, biologically speaking, if a person demonstrates altruistic behaviour, then a potential mate might think them kind; a good provider for any children. And altruists have more life satisfaction. Research finds they are less likely to be depressed or anxious.'

Lynch's contrasting approach is that to be altruistic is to express love for one's fellow man, which in turn brings one closer to God, quoting *I John 4*.

Altruism, as a term, is not that old, being coined by the French philosopher Auguste Comte, from the latin *alteri*, meaning another [person]. Comte developed the term in contrast to egoism.

Altruism was a major theme in the Dr Power mystery, *The Good Shepherd*.

Acts of altruism vary from the everyday acts of kindness towards others as demonstrated, say, by Leopold Bloom and his everyday altruism in *Ulysses* - in the course of his day Bloom attends a funeral he strictly does not need to, visits the sick, helps someone across a road, and even puts himself in jeopardy to save the son of a friend from some irate soldiers.

The chapter closes as Cousins acts out his long-planned revenge, stalking outside Alderley House and watching its occupants. The house itself seems to recognise the threat and even the Green Man glares ominously down on Cousins as he broods before the front door.

Ch 17.

According to a newspaper article, quoted in *Schrödinger's God*, Cousins began his career as a trainee priest. He left the seminary after a scandal however, and thereafter always told people that he focused his efforts on becoming a solicitor. He left his two twin brothers behind at the seminary and they completed their studies and were ordained. Whether Cousins ever applied himself to the lengthy years required at University and obtained a training contract is an entirely different matter. Cousins would see little point in investing his time in years of study when professional systems can be bypassed or hacked, CVs forged, and identities acquired in a few days. At some point he then became an agent for an international pharmaceutical corporation working for one of the elderly Howarth-Weaver brothers. It is not likely that he applied for any such position, rather that he attracted the attention of the brothers for his ability to operate without the narrow confines of legality and regulation. He is likely to have been recommended to them as someone who can fix unpleasant matters or inconvenient truths without fuss. For those naïve enough to believe that public institutions and corporations only operate openly in a transparent fashion within a strictly regulated arena, slumber on. Industrial espionage has a venerable tradition, and is infinitely better funded than the machinations of the state, being funded to a level commensurate with the profits achievable. This is Cousins' world, which we explore in *The Good Shepherd*. Cousin's world is an unpleasant one, parallel with our own, and sharing few of our values. As historical example of industrial espionage consider the eighteenth century French Bureau of Commerce which obtained English technology in plate glass and steel industries. (Holt, J R (1985) *Industrial Espionage in the Eighteenth Century*, *Industrial Archaeological Review* 7.2, 127-138.)

Cousins would be a prime example of a sociopathic personality disorder. He has narcissistic and sadistic traits and harbours a deep-seated resentment against Power for an injury sustained in *The Good Shepherd*. After the death of his two brothers in the course of Power and Lynch's enquiries Cousins determines to come out of hiding and destroy their lives. First, he takes Power's father. Power never vocalises his deepest fears after he learns his father was murdered, but he is tortured by the idea that Cousins was alone with the old man before he dies and hates to think what words of gall and spite Cousins might have spoken to his father before suffocating him.

Cousins deeply repellent sadism is again demonstrated by an allusion to his arousal at seeing the fear in the eyes of Power's son, hinting at a more perverse motive for the murders he has committed over the years. Krafft-Ebbing was one of the first to describe such sadistic homicides in 1898. The general reader is spared many of the details of this element of Cousins' psychopathology. Some readers might fuel further academic interest by reading Malmquist's 2006 book, *Homicide: a psychiatric perspective*.

Ch 18 The Pamela of Chapter's 17 and 18 is markedly different to the depressed Pamela that Dr Power visited at home in Handbridge. Such is the contrast between a depressed and well state. In her depressed and passive state Pamela's

attention was focused on her inner anger and helplessness, but by Chapter 17 she is well again, active and able to direct her anger outwards, appropriately, and take on the threat to her , and her friends' lives.

Ironically Pamela uses exactly the same model of firearm, a SIG P226, to shoot Cousins that he was intending to use to murder her, Laura and Jo.

Lynch arranged firearms training for Pamela in the same way he arranged training for Power in the story *The Shooting Range* in *Dr Power's Casebook*.

Ch 19

In this chapter Lynch asks Power to mimic the thinking used by profiles and Power considers how such profilers work from the crimes backwards looking at factors like whether serial killers are 'organised' or 'disorganised' and making *thematic inferences* – looking at the dominant themes of the criminal style –like stealing from the victim leading to the conclusion that the perpetrator might have prior convictions for burglary; this process of inference guides the police to extrapolate from known convictions to find their offender. Working this way-backwards from the crimes - does not accord with Power's medical training, which is to work forwards from the patient, and so he struggles with this process. Throughout this case, Power is puzzled by the varying themes and how he can resolve various different motives into the psyche of one individual.

Ch20

Power regains consciousness after a head injury and is in darkness. Amnesia initially prevents him from a perfect understanding of how he came to be in darkness. The darkness under the earth is unlike the darkness of night, and is so profound that that Power wondered whether he had gone blind, or had a stroke affecting the parts of his brain that allow him to see. Sensory deprivation of this sort can lead to hallucinosis as the brain attempts to fill the sensory void and so when Power hears the conversation about him he wonders whether this is real or imaginary. Eventually he pieces together and understanding of what happened to him and the alarming position he is now in, trapped in the mines below the Edge and entirely within the power of two serial killers. He must somehow outwit the Heaneys and overturn his helpless position.

The chance occurrence of an earthquake allows Power to bargain with Mrs Heaney by implicitly offering her the hope of saving her son. (There was such an earthquake leading to roof falls in the Alderley mines, in 2002. Using artistic license I have moved the earthquake from 2002 to 2003). Mrs Heaney is outraged that Power manipulates the situation after she releases him, reversing their circumstances, so that he can escape, leaving her and her dying son in darkness. She lacks insight and expects Power to live by his Hippocratic oath and save her son (an impossible task given the nature of his injuries), even though she clearly intended Power to die when he was her captive.

Heaney's injury to his arm parallels that of Grendel in Beowulf, and Mrs Heaney rises from the depths to seek revenge on Power in a parallel to Grendel's mother rising from her sea-cave.

The Heaney family members clearly share, and act upon, some overvalued, or even delusional, ideas about society. The closest diagnosis to a condition that would fit the mother and son is *folie à deux*. This is a condition where the psychosis of one individual becomes shared by another. The madness can extend beyond a pair of family members to three or even more. Recent examples would include twin sisters Ursula and Sabina Eriksson in May 2008, or in 2016 a family of five from Australia who suddenly fled the family home travelling more than 1,000 miles across the country, living off-grid (like the Heaneys), because one member had become convinced someone was out to kill and rob them all. The first three reports of *folie à deux* were published in 1877 by two French psychiatrists, Charles Lasègue and Jean-Pierre Falret.

Of course in terms of Grendel and his mother, they come from a work of fiction, ancient thought that tale may be. It might be interesting to speculate as to whether the author based these monsters, albeit loosely, on a historical case of *folie à deux*.

The Heaneys' case is more complex still though, because the family's odd ideas have persisted, possibly due to their deliberate isolation from society, across generations as the speech by Joel Heaney in the mines indicates that the family's tradition of behaviours including the veneration of the bones of past generations of ancestors have proceeded in exactly the same way for many years, and that much of the current generation's behaviour was taught to it by the father and husband, Arthur Heaney (b.1904), with other statements implying that the family has always behaved in this way.

Ch 21

The chapter starts with a consideration of different realities; with Dr Power seeing Mrs Susskind in clinic and listening to her description of her husband's scientific work and his beliefs he has somehow crossed over from an alternate universe. Before clinic though Dr Power reads The Times for December 18th 2003 – in 'his' alternate fictional Universe the Times was preoccupied with the death of Joel Heaney and the paper devoted an article to Dr Power himself, to Power's discomfort. He shuns publicity. In the non-fictional world of our 'reality' the news that week focused on the Old Bailey trial of the Soham child murderer, Ian Huntley, and his girlfriend Maxine Carr. Other events of that week included the film release of the final instalment of The Lord of the Rings and the capture of the dictator Saddam Hussein, discovered in an underground bunker.

Dr Power tries to teach a medical student, Mr Cooper, using the case of Mr Susskind, but comes up against a singularly closed mind. There is a discussion as to whether Mr Susskind's ideas regarding alternate universes could satisfy the definition of a delusion or not. Mrs Susskind clearly sympathises with her

husband's ideas...is she colluding with him to avoid thinking about the possibility he just chose to leave her? Or does she share his delusion? This possible case of *folie à deux* deliberately echoes the mother and son case of the Heaneys.

In his fictional research Mr Susskind seeks to detect alternate realities – as Dr Power points out to his medical student that some scientists do consider there are alternate Universes. Susskind thinks he has caused some anomaly and has slipped through this thin space between universes. Experiments to detect elements of such alternate realities, to the extent of creating some kind of portal, have been devised by US scientists at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, (The Independent, 2019). This element of human scientists trying to engage with another realm parallels the sacrifices made to spirits in the 'thin places' like the lake at Lindow. These "thin places" are sites in the landscape where the boundary between the sacred & profane worlds is thinnest. At these places the Heaneys continue their family traditions of sacrifice.

Later in the chapter, Mrs Heaney rises from the depths to avenge her son's death, perhaps to create some kind of balance. This is a parallel to Grendel's mother rising from the sea cave to wreak vengeance on Beowulf and his kind. Mrs Heaney's revenge is targeted at Power, but in the event she mistakes Cousins for Power and kills him instead.

The story of Beowulf is the oldest surviving work of English literature, and dates from the last millennium. Beowulf offers himself as a hero to kill the monster Grendel who has killed dozens of the king's men as they slept in the King Hrothgar's hall. Beowulf slays the monster by tearing off his arm. Grendel's mother rises from the watery depths of her cave to slay the men of Hrothgar's hall again and avenge her son's death. This ancient tale is both a horror story and an epic account of heroism.

Surely the most chilling aspect of the Grendel element of Beowulf is that Grendel's mother, rather than disapproving of her son's senseless slaughter, shares his murderous capacity. Her revenge is every bit as violent and terrible as her son's repeated massacres. Whilst one might expect Grendel's mother to balance his rage with her reason and temper his savagery with some maternal mercy, she shows that both of them share the same scalding fury and hatred for the world of men.

What makes the idea of Grendel's mother so chilling and so horrific to us? Perhaps it is the notion we carry inside that mothers and, by extended inference, all women are predominantly nurturing by their very nature. Beowulf tells us that this cosy generalization is plain wrong, and this is what hurts and surprises us. Grendel's mother not only supports her son, she condones and reprises the evil acts he wrought. Lest the reader think the behaviour of Grendel's mother is pure fantasy, we have unfortunate examples of women supporting murderous men in recent history- such as Rosemary West, (convicted in 1995) or, as mentioned above, Maxine Carr (convicted in 2003).

Mrs Heaney, like Grendel's mother, brought her son up in a particular way, grooming him towards a series of murders that he enacts in his own particular style, but still very much according to a family tradition. It is the case that Mrs Heaney enables her son's murderous activities. When Kyle talks to Dr Power she senses that he will lead the inquisitive outsider to their door. As Kyle represents a threat to the Heaney family's strange existence she deals with him herself, administering poison. It is her hand that Power witnesses, giving Kyle the poisoned tea. And it is Mrs Heaney who cooks and serves the joint of meat from the family freezer, and who poisoned the girl (the 'Ice Maiden') in the freezer through jealousy at the thought of losing her son to her.

In the commentary above there is some consideration of whether Joel Heaney and his mother share a *folie à deux*, and we could speculate as to whether Grendel and his mother represent the first possible description of this psychopathology.

The use of the underground world in 'Son of Darkness' is a metaphor for Carl Power's unconscious, in a way that echoes a dream that psychiatrist Carl Jung published in 1909. The unconscious is a truly ancient world, born early in our evolution. The theme of the distant past is imbued within the family traditions of the Heaneys who are fully at home in the underground tunnels and caverns of the mines under the Edge.

Jung's dream is as follows:

"I was in a house I did not know, which had two storeys. It was "my house". I found myself in the upper storey, where there was a kind of salon furnished with fine old pieces in Rococo style. On the walls hung a number of precious old paintings. I wondered that this should be my house and thought "not bad". But then it occurred to me that I did not know what the lower floor looked like. Descending the stairs, I reached the ground floor. There everything was much older. I realised that this part of the house must date from about the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The furnishings were mediaeval, the floors were of red brick. Everywhere it was rather dark. I went from one room to another thinking "now I really must explore the whole house." I came upon a heavy door and opened it. Beyond it, I discovered a stone stairway that led down into a cellar. Descending again, I found myself in a beautifully vaulted room which looked exceedingly ancient. Examining the walls, I discovered layers of brick among the ordinary stone blocks, and chips of brick in the mortar. As soon as I saw this, I knew that the walls dated from Roman times. My interest by now was intense. I looked more closely at the floor. It was of stone slabs and in one of these I discovered a ring. When I pulled it, the stone slab lifted and again I saw a stairway of narrow stone steps leading down to the depths. These, too, I descended and entered a low cave cut into rock. Thick dust lay on the floor and in the dust were scattered bones and broken pottery, like remains of a primitive culture. I discovered two human skulls, obviously very old, and half disintegrated. Then I awoke."

At various times in the book, Power is unconsciously attracted to the mines – both as a means of solving the crime and facing his own fears after losing his father and gaining a son, he also needs to find courage after nearly losing Laura / Jo and dealing with his guilt. His unconscious mind has already combined all the information that points to the underground world as the solution.

The underworld/unconscious contains a combination of Jungian archetypes- there is Power himself as hero, plus shadow, animus, anima and mother in varying positive and negative qualities and amounts.

Epilogue

As he searches his house Power confronts the fear of losing the son he gained so recently. He doesn't know if his son is alive or dead, only that he is missing and that Cousins, and Mrs Heaney too for that matter, would happily have killed Jo. Power finds Jo. Initially Power is overwhelmed with relief, but in the midst of that emotion Jo tells Power that he believes that he stabbed Mrs Heaney whilst she was distracted in her fight with Cousins. Up to this point the reader may have assumed that Joel Heaney was the son referred to in the title Son of Darkness, but could this refer to someone else in the book?