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Martin Amis calls for euthanasia booths on street corners

Maurice Chittenden

THE novelist Martin Amis has called for euthanasia booths on street corners, where elderly people can end their lives with “a martini and a medal”.

The author of *Time’s Arrow* and *London Fields* even predicts a Britain torn by internal strife in the 2020s if the demographic timebomb of the ageing population is not tackled head-on.

“How is society going to support this silver tsunami?” he asks in an interview in *The Sunday Times Magazine* today.

“There’ll be a population of demented very old people, like an invasion of terrible immigrants, stinking out the restaurants and cafes and shops. I can imagine a sort of civil war between the old and the young in 10 or 15 years’ time.”

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Amis, himself 60 and a grandfather, added: “There should be a booth on every corner where you could get a martini and a medal.”

The writer says his support for euthanasia has deepened since the deaths of Lord Kilmarnock, his

stepfather, and Dame Iris Murdoch, the writer.

Amis said: “My stepfather died very horribly last year ... He always thought he was going to get better. But he didn’t get better and I think the denial of death is a great curse.”

Murdoch died in 1999, aged 79, two years after her husband revealed that she was suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. Amis said: “I’d known her a very long time, a friend, I loved her. She was wonderful. I remember talking to her just as it started happening, and she said, ‘I’ve entered a dark place’. That famous quote. That awareness of loss is gone, the track is gone. You don’t know the day you’ve spent watching *Teletubbies*; it just vanished.”

The novelist added: “There should be a way out for rational people who’ve decided they’re in the negative. That should be available, and it should be quite easy. I can’t think it would be too hard to establish some sort of test that shows that you understand.”

Would he kill himself? “There’s a certain point where your life slips into the negative. If you can recognise that point . . .”

Meanwhile, he says, he is worried about the death of his talent as a writer: “Medical science has again over-vaulted itself so most of us have to live through the death of our talent. Novelists tend to go off at about 70, and I’m in a funk about it. I’ve got myself into a real paranoid funk about it, how talent dies before the body.”

He is back next month with a long-awaited new novel, *The Pregnant Widow*, after slashing 90% of the manuscript and starting again. An exclusive extract will appear in next week’s *Magazine*.

He has already done the first draft of his next novel and got the idea for the one after that. The next book, *The State of England*, will feature characters inspired by Katie Price, who achieved fame as the model Jordan, and Michael Carroll, the “chav” who spent his £9m lottery winnings on new homes, drugs, parties, jewellery and cars.

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