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TRACING METAFICTIONAL ELEMENTS IN IAN MCEWAN'S *ENDURING LOVE AND SATURDAY*

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ABSTRACT

Since the emergence of postmodernism in the middle of the twentieth century, many of the contemporary novelists have experimented with new ways of storytelling and practised new styles and techniques in narration. One of the most popular and dominant features of such novels is metafiction or self-conscious narration, a narrative mode which was theorised by critics like Linda Hutcheon and Patricia Waugh. Metafiction is a kind of fiction which tends to expose its own process of writing and thereby reveal its status as an artifact. This article examines metafictional elements in two of Ian McEwan's novels, namely *Enduring Love* and *Saturday*. It endeavours to show how McEwan draws the reader's attention to the fictionality of his novels by undermining such notions as narration, history, closure, and originality. To unearth the metafictional threads of McEwan's narratives, a number of relevant concepts and practices like intertextuality, open-endedness, historiographic metafiction, and ironic allusions are briefly defined and then explored in his selected novels.

Key Terms: Metafiction, Intertextuality, postmodern historiography, irony

1. INTRODUCTION

Metafictional novelists try to draw the reader's attention to the process of constructing a story. It is mostly done by challenging some notions like narration, linear plot-line, closure, originality, and history. The paper examines the concept of metafiction in McEwan's two novels, *Enduring Love* and *Saturday* respectively, in an attempt to locate and shed light on the features of metafiction, which we claim scatter throughout these narratives. A selection of metafictional notions relevant to the upcoming analysis of metafiction in McEwan's *Enduring Love* and *Saturday* will lay the foundation of the reasoning of the paper. A major portion of the analysis is allocated to the study of intertextuality in the two selected novels. In the present article, first by referring to different examples and extracts, the researchers try to show how the concept of intertextuality can affect a metafictional narrative in *Enduring Love*. Secondly, self-consciousness, as a key attribute in any metafictional narrative, will be discussed to realise how the text flaunts its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. To show the self-consciousness nature of the text, the concept of closure will be challenged, in order to declare that the meaning of the novel can be left to be constructed by the reader, and the meaning can also be deferred in the challenge to a totalised, fixed, and closed meaning. After discussing *Enduring Love*, the intertextual qualities of McEwan's *Saturday* will be analysed. Since the novel contains a large number of borrowings and referenced to other works – sometimes ironically, too – the researchers try to show how the interconnectedness of *Saturday* to other texts contributes to the fact that the novel is metafictional. Before treating the metafictional aspects of the novels, a plot synopsis will be separately provided.

2. DISCUSSION

Enduring Love is rich in its allusions and references to previous literary works and scientific views. From the very beginning Joe Rose, a scientific writer and journalist, and first-person narrator says that the beginning of this story is simple to tell. But, what happens in the story is anything but simple. When he is in a picnic with his wife Clarissa Mellon, an academic literary figure and Keats scholar, their day is ruined by a balloon accident. John Logan tries to control the balloon, but to no avail. In the fourth chapter, Joe Rose is seen writing. He thinks about the narrative in science and argues about inordinate fabulation in science and the exaggeration made in scientific narrations. Jed parry in the meantime makes a call and tells Joe that he loves him. The next day, when Jed calls him again, Joe unplugs the

phone to enjoy Clarissa's company. Joe knows that Jed is insane and brings himself to tell it to the police. But interestingly, the police questions Joe's mental health instead. The next chapter of *Enduring Love* provides the reader with the understanding that Joe Rose is seen as an unreliable narrator. In the next chapter, Joe plans to see Mr. Logan's wife to tell her that husband was innocent. She is really frustrated through the fact that her husband died because he was showing off to a girl he had a secret relationship with. In the concluding part of the story, when Joe returns home, he finds Clarissa tied by Jed in the apartment and Jed, although threatened with a weapon, asks Joe to forgive him. Joe shoots him. Clarissa freaks out, and everything is certainly finished now. But Joe still has a business to finish. He arranges a meeting for Mr. Logan's wife and the girl whom is accompanied by the Euler Professor of Logic. Here, it is revealed that the Professor and the young girl were given a lift by Mr. Logan who, actually, was innocent. The story ends when Logan's children ask Joe to tell them the story about the river.

The most relevant definitions of the term intertextuality in the present analysis is the theory propelled by Julia Kristeva. She proposes that any text is an "intersection of other texts where at least other [a third] text can be read" (1986, 37). In this sense, a literary text can not be totally original. For Kristeva, the text is not an isolated object but "a compilation of cultural textuality" (in Allen, 2000, 36). Therefore, intertextuality is a process in which the meaning of a text is related to other texts and contexts.

It should be added that Kristeva's theory of intertextuality moves beyond the simple allusion to other literary artifacts. Intertextuality cannot, of course, be reduced to a problem of sources or influences. For Kristeva, in other words, intertextuality is far more than just references to literary texts that have come before; rather, according to Padwick, "intertextuality is indissoluble and is a part of the intrinsic link in any story, which is the link between the culture the storyteller belongs to and the story being told" (2006, 14). In fact, intertextuality not only demonstrates the fictiveness of the text, but also reveals how the previous narratives are re-invented or re-told. It must be noted that intertextuality refers not only to the literary text as an intersection of other literary texts, but also to the literary text as an intersection of literature, history, and the culture in which it is written. According to Kristeva's conception of intertextuality, McEwan's *Enduring Love*, like any text, finds its existence from other texts. Readers' understanding of the novel, to a large extent, comes from the meaning or meanings created by the presence of previous literary works or scientific views. There are some examples in the novel that prove the narrator himself is aware of this fact. The protagonist, Joe, says: "there are always antecedent causes. A beginning is an artifice, and what recommends one over another is how much sense it makes of what follows" (2004, 25), and later he claims: "I can spin a decent narrative out of the stumblings, backtrackings, and random successes that lie behind most scientific breakthroughs" (75). These two extracts from the novel imply that the story we are going through is the result of "antecedent causes" or, simply, the past, representing a fictional writing which self-consciously draws the reader's attention to the nature of its existence.

McEwan's *Enduring Love* describes an unusual and powerful story of illusion and obsession within a unified and well organised system of intertextuality. Among many intertextual echoes, reference to John Keats seems to be central. As Regina Rudaityte claims, "the author adopts the literary history (life stories of the Romantic poets John Keats and William Wordsworth) as well as the facts of sciences, medicine, of psychopathology to be more exact, thus moving among heterogeneous discourses incorporated into the narrative" (2004, 33). The role of the Romantic poet John Keats, who was referred to from the very beginning, seems to be quite significant. Joe's wife, as a scholar in English Romanticism, is in connection with a Japanese intellectual who has read a note to a letter written by Keats to his fiancée Fanny Brawne:

There was a reference to a letter addressed to Fanny but never meant to be posted, a "cry of undying love not touched by despair." Clarissa had spent every spare hour trying, without success, to track down the Severn connection. The library's transfer to King's Cross was complicating the search, and now she was considering flying to Tokyo to read the scholar's notes. (221)

In fact, this "undying love" is synonymous with the title McEwan selected for the novel. This shows that love plays a central role in the story. Keats's devotion and passionate love for her fiancée can be paralleled to Clarissa's love for Joe. As Peter Childs has observed,

In a strand of the narrative that runs parallel to Joe's attempt to divert Parry's love through rational analysis, Clarissa is determined to track down further proof of Keats's ardent love for Fanny: of something undying at the moment of Keats's death. Her quest is as driven as Joe's, and just as his is partly rooted in guilt, hers is partly rooted there too. (2007, 19)

McEwan's reference to John Keats's letter to Fanny, we can infer, may be considered as an example of intertextuality. His reference to Keats's letter to Fanny is not a simple allusion to be a source for the writer to make

his viewpoints credible, but to create an intertextual sign-system. When we read the novel, we may question the meaning and value of love in it. This question remains unanswered at the end of the novel. Clarissa's love for Joe, Jed's love for Joe, and Mrs. Logan's fears about her husband's adultery and unreal love for her are three principal love stories in the novel. The nature and meaning of love depends on analogy, comparison, contrast, and interconnectedness of the text to the other texts and contexts. Considering Keats's central role in the novel with reference to his poems, Peter Childs writes:

The relevance of Keats to the three protagonists of *Enduring Love* is suggested by the references in the restaurant scene to his poems 'Endymion' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'. While one of the closing lines of the ode is quoted in the novel, 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' (166), it is complemented by the equally famous line, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever", which are the opening words of Book I of 'Endymion'. (2007, 19)

When connected to the closing sentence of McEwan's novel – Jed's assertion that "faith is joy" – the lines help to draw the different values but linked terms of the novel's love triangle. Joe adheres to the notion of truth's importance above everything else, even though he is aware of the near impossibility of objectivity. Clarissa, the Keats scholar, places greater trust in Keats's view of love and beauty – joys that endure. For Jed, such joy is to be found in faith. As Rudaitytė has commented,

For Clarissa, as it was for Keats, beauty is the ultimate criterion of truth – the view which clashes with her partner Joe Rose's rationalist stance – the stance which will prove vulnerable indeed and which will fail to stand the test of challenging and menacing circumstances of real life. (2004, 57)

Furthermore, Keats's odes have themes that are relevant to *Enduring Love*: the difference between the transient and the permanent, the inextricable ties between joy and pain, the contrasts and similarities between nature and art, knowledge and imagination. Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" contrasts life, with its trials leading only to death, to the permanence of beauty in art, represented by the figures on the urn. Textual connections between the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and *Enduring Love* are easy to trace, most clearly in Keats's phrase "Forever wilt thou love," but there is also, for example, the second line's reference to the urn as a "foster-child," bringing to mind Joe and Clarissa's adoption of a child.

Similarly, "Endymion" has many phrases that are relevant here: "if this earthly love has power to make / Men's being mortal, immortal." Keats' poem is an allegory of search for love, based on the Greek myth of Endymion, which tells the story of the moon goddess, Cynthia, who falls in love with the shepherd boy Endymion, tending his flock on Mount Latmos. She is so besotted by his beauty that she descends from heaven to be with Endymion in his dreams. Endymion begged youth, sleep, and immortality from gods so he could dream forever. The poem is a fine example of Keats's ability to luxuriate in sensuous description, though it is often deemed also to have faults of excessive digression and tedious narrative exposition.

Another relevant concept here, which is a key element in any novel or story dubbed as metafictional, is that of self-consciousness writing. In his "Time Literary Supplement" review, Oliver Reynolds observes that "the opening sentence," in *Enduring Love*, "is one of a number that proclaims a self-aware narrative, a story as experiment, one where the telling will distance us from what is told" (1997, 12). There are a number of examples in *Enduring Love* by which the narrator draws the reader's attention to the process of the composition of the novel. The protagonist's language offers a sound piece of evidence of the claim. From the very beginning Joe declares that "The beginning is simple to mark" (1). It indicates that this is a narrative with a point of commencement, a story with a beginning. Joe, the narrator of the novel, states his ideas about the form, structure, and organisation of the narrative. He even shows off his talent as the narrator:

People say I have a talent for clarity. I can spin a decent narrative out of the stumblings, backtrackings, and random successes that lie behind most scientific breakthroughs. It's true, someone has to go between the researcher and the general public, giving the higher-order explanations that the average laboratory worker is too busy, or too cautious, to indulge. (82)

What is inferred from the narrative style of *Enduring Love* is the unreliability of any account or judgment. It seems that the author is willing to play with his reader. For example, the balloon accident is narrated in a number of different ways, and Joe offers a commentary on the different versions:

There was so much repetition that evening of the incidents, and of our perceptions, and of the very phrases and words we honed to accommodate them, that one could only assume that an element of

ritual was in play, that these were not only descriptions but incantations also. There was comfort in reiteration, just as there was in the familiar weight of the wineglasses and in the grain of the deal table, which had once belonged to Clarissa's great-grandmother. (36)

According to David Malcolm, "throughout the novel characters make stories constantly, and the novel stresses the limits of these stories. Thus, metafiction connects with concerns about knowledge" (2002, 180). Jed's story of Joe loving him is nonsense. Mrs. Logan's narrative of her husband's adultery is a fiction. Joe simply rejects some of the details of Clarissa's version of the events. The beginning and ending of the novel show that the narrator is completely conscious of what he says and the reader sees the possibility of seeing more than one end for the story. This, in fact, is a poststructuralist thought believing in an endless play of the signified/signifier, which results in "différance". The narrative structure of McEwan's novel undermines the conventions of a beginning, middle, and an end of a traditional narrative. The ending of *Enduring Love* might have two different perspectives. In the first ending of *Enduring Love*, Joe is about to continue telling a story to Jean Logan's children, Rachael and Leo. Jean Logan has convinced herself of an imagined story in which her husband was having an affair and died showing off to his lover as he held on to the rope attached to the balloon. Joe has discovered that this was not true and invites the real lovers, James Reid and Bonnie Deedes, to a picnic in order to show Jean that her fears are unfounded. Later, after Jean Logan has been told the real story of her husband, Joe returns to the river and the two children. It is Rachael's prompting that concludes this first ending: "So now," Rachael says, "tell Leo as well. Say it again slowly, that thing about the river" (239).

Peter Childs argues that "*Enduring Love* is a text defined by the construction and articulation of narratives" (2007, 56). It is not surprising that the novel ends – before the other endings – just as another story is about to begin. The novel proliferates in narratives and stories and these, McEwan stresses, are the fundamental ways in which a sense of identity and an understanding of the world are rooted. Of course, particularly in the case of Jed, the text also dramatises the dangers of the main narrative. Jed's unsettling and ultimately self-destructive story – that of Joe's love for him and, for that matter, God's love – is seen as a misinterpretation, a bad narrative relying upon skewed readings, repression, and willful misunderstandings. The centrality of these competing narratives emphasises the multiple ways in which individuals, groups, and systems make sense of the world through the use of narratives. It also may imply that each character seeks to order and control their lives through the use of a particular narrative viewpoint.

Joe's story, "billions" and "trillions" of drops of water (233) can be seen as a metaphor of the countless variety of narratives available to people. *Enduring Love* embodies this potential for multiple perspectives in its various endings and also through the consistent recognition of the many points of view and ordering principles that Joe and others both choose from and use. Joe keeps reminding himself – and perhaps the reader – that these narrative perspectives are highly contingent. It can be concluded, therefore, that two aspects of metafiction, namely intertextuality (ironic allusions to Keats) and open-endedness (multiple ending) lay bare the self-conscious nature of the novel.

Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, too, is replete with references to many literary works and theories. According to Michael L. Ross, "as a writer whose earlier work sometimes involved French, German, and Italian settings, Ian McEwan has an honest claim to be called cosmopolitan. Although geographically more confined, *Saturday*, too, displays a global reach" (2008, 2). Reading the novel, one sees McEwan's allusions to Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, and Mathew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*. Literary works such as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Saul Bellow's *Herzog*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum*, Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, Mathew Arnold's famous poem "Dover Beach", and McEwan's own masterpiece *The Child in Time* is also alluded to. McEwan's *Saturday* seems to have a literary interconnectedness to these literary works. McEwan, by linking *Saturday* to the many literary works belonging to different historical eras, is successfully creates a context that embodies various themes and interpretations.

Saturday describes a day in the life of an English neurosurgeon, Henry Perowne. It takes place in a special day, Saturday, February 15, 2003, when massive protesters in London, object to the upcoming war on Iraq. This historical fact encompasses the whole narration, which is told from Henry's point of view. When he wakes up early in the morning, he sees a burning airplane falling down. Although this appears not to be a terrorist attack, it overshadows the book's atmosphere.

Henry's family members are all intellectuals; his wife, Rosalind, is a lawyer, and his son, Theo, is a blues guitarist, and their daughter, Daisy, is a successful poet. They are planning to have a family reunion, so that they can reconcile Daisy and her grandfather, John Grammaticus who is a famous poet.

When Henry is driving to a squash game, he experiences a car accident with a very complex character named Baxter. When he argues with Baxter, he comes to realise that Baxter suffers from Huntington's disease. He talks to him about the disease and speaks of a non-existent treatment. By this, Baxter is humiliated in front of his friends.

Baxter with a few friends follows Henry's wife and get into the family house. After frightening Rosalind with a knife, and breaking Grammaticus's nose, they force Daisy to take off her dress. Here Perowne finds that Daisy is pregnant. Then Daisy decides to recite a poem — Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" — and, interestingly, it mollifies the aggressive Baxter, so that Henry finds the opportunity to take him upstairs with the promise of finding some ways to treat his disease. In the concluding part, Perowne goes to his bed to sleep.

Saturday is de-originated in that it reflects many voices, not just that of McEwan's. His novel is shaped, framed, and understood through its relation to other texts and contexts. The text provides contexts within which other texts may be created and interpreted. The first voice in the novel is that of Saul Bellow's, which appears in a passage borrowed as an epigraph from Saul Bellow's *Herzog*. In an interview with Dave Weich, McEwan says:

I would say, if one were beginning to write, there are two places I would start, especially with American writers. One would be the particular chapter in Bellow's *Herzog* where Herzog goes back to his New York apartment, showers and changes, and goes to see his lover. That's all that happens, basically, but there are just some of those superb Bellowian asides, divagations, on what it is to be a man, to be in a city, in a century, in a country, of a class, in a time. (2004, 12)

The novel *Herzog* deals with the life story of a person named Moses E. Herzog. Regarding McEwan's allusion to *Herzog*, Anita Brookner writes: "As a foreword to this excellent novel Ian McEwan quotes a passage from Saul Bellow's *Herzog*, in which the bedeviled protagonist launches a passionate indictment of the moral disorders of his time, extracting from them a small nugget of hope, or rather of value, to set against his justified despair" (2005, 1). Let us take a look at the epigraph of *Saturday*:

For instance? Well, for instance, what it means to be a man. In a city. In a century. In transition. In a mass. Transformed by science. Under organised power. Subject to tremendous controls. In a condition caused by mechanisation. (2005, 1)

It is worth noting that McEwan's novel is a kind of response to the same universal viewpoint expressed in Bellow's novel. *Saturday* takes place in London in the twenty first century, but *Herzog* is set in New York in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it seems both of them are dealing with the same global questions: "what it means to be a man." In fact, *Saturday*, which appears to be interpretable in a number of ways, is a story that questions the position of man in the twenty first century, as does the epigraph quoted from Bellow's *Herzog*. Writing *Saturday*, in fact, has enabled McEwan to interrogate the value of literature. Unlike Herzog, Perowne is not a man of literary intellect. He is a realist, a "professional reductionist" (272), a man whose interest in objective facts makes him feel indifferent not only toward religious questions but, more importantly for McEwan's aim, toward the value of literature. Perowne is not interested in fictional worlds; he believes that they often provide unreal events that fail to provide satisfactory answers.

Another significant voice, audible in *Saturday*, is that of Mathew Arnold's. As mentioned in the summary, Perowne's daughter, Daisy, is a poet. Her recitation of Mathew Arnold's "Dover Beach" and her attempt to encourage her father to change his attitude about literature are two key examples from the novel, indicating McEwan's inclination to write intertextually. According to Peter Childs,

"Dover Beach" is one of Arnold's most well-known mid-nineteen century poems of reflection and doubt where the speaker is caught between two worlds (as Arnold famously has it in his poem The 'Grande Chartreuse'), just as Perowne is caught between the precarious happiness that marks his Saturday and the looming darker world of Sunday, a tomorrow where his deepest fears may be realised or even eclipsed, just as any anxieties at the beginning of the twentieth century where probably no match for the horrors of Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Saddam Hussein. (2007, 146)

Perowne, the protagonist of McEwan's *Saturday*, is a steadfast realist; he is pragmatic, precise, and his judgments are always based on scientific and objective facts, not feeling. Commenting on his personality, Padwick writes: "Henry uses the metanarrative of science as a means to contextualise his terror for the upcoming war" (2006, 23). It all signals the importance of science or scientific discourse in McEwan's method of narration. Here, one can detect another significant thread of intertextuality; not only does the text draw upon prior texts as a source of meaning, but the presence of a discourse like science can have intertextual effects, which present a new perspective. According to Padwick,

McEwan demonstrates that science is not outside narration by challenging science's omniscient and explanatory position in popular culture. Moreover, he foregrounds the ways in which the

pretense of objectivity is untenable, as we will see, by having scientific knowledge and explanations fail his narrator as a means of both contextualising violence and explaining terror. (2006, 23)

Perowne's worldview makes him appraise everything scientifically. Since he is a neurosurgeon, he is totally involved in a scientific thought, and often relies on scientific justification to analyze what happens around him. He is sure that he is capable to figure out everything with the help of science, and he prefers to apply his personal understanding to an incident. That is why "he's too impatient" to "abhor literature" (66). Confessing his deep admiration for neurosurgery, he claims that

a man who attempts to ease the miseries of failing minds by repairing brains is bound to respect the material world, its limits, and what it can sustain consciousness no less ... he knows it for a quotidian fact, the mind is what the brain, mere matter, performs. (67)

This statement becomes more illuminating when Perowne says: "this notion of Daisy's, that people can't live without stories, is simply not true" (68). In the climax of *Saturday*, Henry is provided with a situation to observe a tangible example about the value of literature. When Baxter feels infuriated and revengeful, he finds out that Daisy is a poet. So he makes her recite a poem. Instead of reciting one of her own poems, she tries Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach", which consequently mollifies the aggressive Baxter. Interestingly, his anger subsides and becomes curious to know more about Henry's fabricated stories about the treatment of his disease. Baxter's friends leave him, and he feels lost and confused:

Still, Baxter fell for the magic, he was transfixed by it, and he was reminded how much he wanted to live. No one can forgive him the use of the knife. But Baxter heard what Henry never has, and probably never will, despite all Daisy's attempts to educate him. Some nineteenth-century poet - Henry has yet to find out whether this Arnold is famous or obscure - touched off in Baxter a yearning he could barely begin to define. (279)

Since Perowne fails to comprehend the source of rage targeted against him and his family, he resorts to scientific ways as privileged methods to establish certain facts. However, he gradually finds that "this imposed metanarrative of science as entire explanation has also let him down" (in Padwick, 19). Interestingly, it is Arnold's "Dover Beach" that saves Henry. Daisy's recitation, in fact, enralls the aggressive Baxter and puts an end to his hostility toward Henry's family.

"Henry's attitude towards literature", according to Padwick, "underscores the flawed position of science as independent narrative in postmodernity" (2006, 26). At the end of the novel, McEwan's protagonist concludes that literature has value, as it is a tool to cope with difficulties and dangers of the life. We can infer that McEwan has used literature to show the importance and value of art in the middle of the crisis with which Henry, who is hostile to literature for its "insufficient imagination", is grappling with (67). Perowne finally realises that literature can bring about "a yearning he could barely begin to define" (279). According to Padwick,

Henry started his day by opening his window and scientifically analyzing what he saw in the square; he concludes his day, after his experiences of violence and terror, by stating he is "timid" and "vulnerable," and that he is "weak and ignorant, scared of the way consequences of an action leap away from your control and breed new events, new consequences, until you're led to a place you never dreamed of and would never choose. (2006, 68)

Henry's change of attitude denotes that now he has arrived at a new conclusion about science and the undeniable value of literature. He confirms that he feels no pain "falling towards oblivion" (279). It shows that Perowne has accepted the central role of literature in life as "the modern variant of a soul" (279). Although Perowne detests the fictional world, he prefers the realism of *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary*, and he believes that "they had the virtue at least of representing a recognisable physical reality" (67). In answer to the question what novels know, Perowne says "nothing", since "they are divided between childish make-believe, pointless reinvention, inane moral teachings and workmanlike drudgery" (in Currie, 1998, 126). These metafictional examples from the novel, with the intertextual references mentioned before, contribute to the fact that *Saturday* is counted as a self-conscious novel which draws attention to its status as an artifact.

McEwan's *Saturday*, therefore, is polyphonic, as many voices are heard at the same time. Among the voices, the voice of Herzog seems to be quite audible here, and in effect it is one of the best examples of intertextuality in McEwan's novel. McEwan's allusions to *Herzog* show how he manages to embed in his work the same philosophical notion introduced in the hypo-text, namely, man's uncertainty about his position and identity in the

world. Interestingly, *Herzog* can have another interpretation, that is, as far as the nature of intertextuality is considered. Unlike *Herzog*, who is a lyrical thinker, McEwan's protagonist, Perowne, is a pragmatist and a philistine. By referring to *Herzog* in his novel, and contrasting him with Perowne, McEwan finds a way to talk about the value of literature. The importance of Arnold and his poem, "Dover Beach" is revealed in relation to Henry's scientific attitude towards life. In his view, scientific discourse is always privileged. McEwan's narrator, in fact, insists on exploiting the metanarrative of science to define and analyze different things. Ultimately, when Henry is frustrated with his incapability of explaining incidents with his scientific methods, he comes to realise the value of literature, to which he resorts to placate himself in the turbulent pre-war days. The intertextual quality of McEwan's novel opens it up to different interpretations and deconstructs the notion of the originality of literary texts. McEwan's ironic allusions to previously-written literary texts and his re-contextualised quotations from specific literary works all speak of the irreducible plurality and productivity of his novel, and lead to the conclusion that no literary work can actually be considered as purely original in that any text derives its meaning and significance from previous discourses and contexts.

3. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the present study, which reads McEwan's *Enduring Love* and *Saturday* in the light of metafiction and its relevant poetics, reveals that these two novels incorporate many conceptual elements that seem to characterise a metafictional narrative. A number of techniques and concepts such as intertextuality, metafiction, and open endedness were examined here to highlight the self-conscious nature of the novels. Intertextuality and metafictionality, as McEwan has demonstrated in his novels, undermine the notion of originality. For McEwan, a literary text is a web and a network and intersection of discourses. His numerous borrowed voices and blurred or distorted quotations both create a new context in the hypertext and shed a different light on the anterior texts or hypotexts. It follows that in McEwan's intertextual novels, borrowings both create new meanings and give new meanings to the borrowed texts. Through metafiction and intertextuality, McEwan warns the reader that meaning is not inherent in texts, but is added to them. Texts generate innumerable meanings, and each reading produces a novel interpretation. When one reads a metafiction novel, one finds out that both the writer and the text are trying to draw the reader's attention to the process of writing and the composition of the novel. In McEwan's *Enduring Love* and *Saturday* we observe narratives that are intertextual, metafictional, and self-conscious and, therefore, are open to endless fresh interpretations.

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Statement:

We hereby confirm that this research paper is our own original work and we have cited all sources that were used.