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Children's images in the works of Ian McEwen

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Abstract: He article explores the influence of a great French writer and philosopher Jean-Jaques Rousseau on a modern English writer Ian McEwan. The subject of the given research is the interaction of Enlightenment ideas with the modern realistic tradition in McEwan's works.The research objective is to enrich investigation of Ian McEwan's works in home literary studies. The study was carried out on basis of the writer's interviews' and texts' analysis.

Keywords: Jean-Jaques Rousseau, Ian McEwan, comparative studies, human and nature, childhood.

The problem of cross-cultural communication is closely related to comparative studies. Literary comparative studies are one of the leading directions in modern philology, which is adequate to the spirit of integral processes in world literature and culture. Comparative method of investigation is one of the most effective methods of literary analysis. Literary comparative studies have a significant place in modern science. Russian philologist V. Zhirmunsky emphasizes that none of the world literatures develops beyond a living and constructive interaction with other national literatures. He considered that the more civilized a nation is, the more intensive its interaction is. Thereupon, the influence of great French enlightener Rousseau's ideas on a modern English author Ian McEwan is of indubitable interest. The Booker Prize winner Ian McEwan is one of the brightest and the most original prose writers of modern England. He is an author of such international bestsellers as "Atonement", "Saturday", "Enduring Love", "Innocent" and many others.McEwan is well known as an author who resorts to creative experiments quite often. His literary exploration relates first of all, to form and genre. In different years he has written short stories, screenplays, librettos, novels and children's books. The writer grasps the importance of diversity in his work and often compares new creative experiences with a journey abroad: "Choosing a new form in which to write bears some resemblance to travelling abroad; the sense of freedom is no less useful for being illusory and temporary. The new place has its own rules and conventions, but they are not really yours, not quite yet.What you first notice is the absence of the old, familiar constraints, and you do things you would not do at home" [1, 26].

Prosecuting Rousseau's traditions, McEwan builds up an individual who is still endowed with the worship of sense and nature. In his conversations about art and nature, McEwan stated that his feelings of nature was incredibly strong."In the world of nature I feel bigger, freer. I remind myself (not having any religion) of the arbitrary fact of existence, that in could all be the consequence of an extraordinary chapter of accidents on a beautiful rock surrounded by sterile space. So to cross a landscape is a kind of necessity, and the longer I'm out there – if I can get time to walk days on end – that feeling grows. It's hard to describe without falling into a well clichés. It kicked in for me with the hormones, the first stirrings of adolescence. It was very strong, that sense of the earth, the rocks, the trees, the earthly realm filled me at that age with joy, and nothing, not literature, not even sex could fulfill me at that way" [1, 134]. He also noted that it gives him a feeling of greatness.

For Rousseau, to walk in the country, to wander about fields and forests was necessary to refresh himself and calm down, to stay alone with the nature, to get lost in thought under the canopy of trees or on the banks of the stream. Under the influence of Rousseau, who was able to describe his mood so finely and ardently among the urban population of Europe, a hunger for nature was awoken, a longing for it occurred, and a nature walk has became a new plentiful source of inspiration for poets and novelists, a banner of new cultural tendency [2, 125].

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Following Rousseau, McEwan recollects the feeling of inner freedom during his strolls. "It's great that not everybody wants to be on a mountain. When you're up there, it's an interesting experiment, to try and see mountains from a pre-romantic, pre-eighteenth-century point of view – as ugly, chaotic, threatening, a punishment for man's first disobedience. No one much thought of wandering around up there for pleasure until the English began the cult of alpinism in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century. When the weather closes in and suddenly you're cold and wondering if you've gone too far and not left yourself enough time to get down, then landscape takes on this other aspect, its indifference can be a shock. You could fall off here and die, and it doesn't mind. It doesn't care what you do" [1, 137].

McEwan supplements that "the great biologist E.O. Wilson uses the term biophilia to describe how our interest in and love of landscape, plants, and animals have been inscribed in us by our evolutionary past. He's suggesting that our ideal of the perfect landscape, of open grassland with spaced clumps of trees, is formed by our ancestral environment, the savannah. It's a lovely and unprovable idea. We've been talking of this call of the landscape as if it were a universal. But we know this is not historically so, and I have plenty of friends who could never see the point of traipsing around in the countryside. They'd rather be in a restaurant or an art gallery" [1, 137]. McEwan believes that such kind of sentimental events helped him to start his writing career and form as an author: "I got swept up by this wave of friendliness and freedom. I'd always been a rather conventional boy – and now I found myself striding through the English countryside … and thinking, "If there isn't a god, well then there jolly well ought to be". Then I met two American pals and we went to Amsterdam and bought a microbus and drove it to Munich and then to Istanbul and then to Tehran and then to Kabul and Herat. … Afghanistan was a blessed hiatus, before all the disasters that have befallen it since.An intensely poor country with some of the most beautiful buildings, mosques, I've ever seen in my life.Harsh scenery and a Homeric form of hospitality. People, however poor, invite you into their houses and lay out their best food. We ended up in Peshawar, having spent some time along the Khyber Pass – really frightening area actually. The Pashtun tribes were there. Stateless pride – they were controlled by nobody and never would be – and there they still are. We couldn't get to India because of a war brewing between India and Pakistan at that time, then we turned back. I was about nine months on the road and there came a point bouncing around these desert tracks coming westwards at ten miles when I thought, "What I really long for is a white-washed, small, bare room in a house in a quiet city under a very gray sky … and I want to get back to writing. … I went back to Norwich, found just that room, and started writing much more seriously than I had" [1, 162-163].

For McEwan "being in a powerful landscape does what we hope art does – it enlarges your immediate mental arena" [1, 138]. Even a category of time is viewed by McEwan on the scale of environment. In his works an interest to existentialist prose is viewed, which, according to McEwan, is hard to be identified with certain space and time. Therefore, his novel "The Child in Time" has become a narrative of the nature of time and its emergence in subjective human perception.

McEwan considers that the category of time should be treated in various aspects: "I'm talking about time in a landscape – geological time, evolutionary time, human time. Time does a curious thing to human sorrow – it weathers it, the way water might weather rock. So you might stand by a ruined croft in Scotland where a family was driven away, and all that remains in the landscape is an echo of the human tragedy" [1, 140].

One of the most distinguished English literary critics, Ryan Roberts, in his interview with McEwan, touched a topic - human relation towards nature, which was treated by McEwan in his

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essay on expedition to the Arctic. The dominant ideas of the essay were reflections on human nature, of art, and of mankind's influence on the environment.

The issue challenges our nature. Individually, we're competitive. Nations are competitive. They have to collaborate on this, and they can only do this if they exercise their rationality and agree on a set of rules within which they can compete. We get these standoffs between the United States, saying it won't sign up for anything unless China and India do, and they say they won't sign up because they have to lift millions out of poverty and, besides, they are not the real problem, the United States is. We need good rules within which these circular problems are going to be resolved.

There hasn't been much ground for optimism lately. CO2 is rising two or three parts per million every year. We're now approaching the 400 level. The talk of trying to stabilize at 560 parts per million this century is looking increasingly shaky. And yet we know enough science, technology, and negotiating knowhow. People know what needs to be done. In the end, self-interest rather than idealism is going to focus our minds. And even greed can be regulated in our favor – an effective carbon trading system could help drive down CO2. And as I said in that piece, we're used to doing good works for those who might return the favor. We're fine-tuned to that process. Now we have to think outside the framework of an individual lifetime and start doing favors for unborn people.

Following Rousseau's tradition in McEwan's works, human spiritual experience appears in many aspects, particularly as love experience, sense's breeding, or personality formation experience.Rousseau's "Confession" is still considered as the most candid autobiography in world literature. According to the philosopher, his aim was to reveal "un homme dans toute la vérité de la nature" [3, 2]. He portrayed his life events sequentially, expounded the story of his soul, the story of his way of thinking forming.He depicted his deeds clarifying them with peculiar properties of his temper. Rousseau claimed that he had depicted himself "montré tel que je fus; méprisable et vil quand je l'ai été, bon, généreux, sublime, quand je l'ai été: j'ai dévoilé mon inétrieur tel que tu l'as vu toi-même". [3, 3].It is well known that Rousseau's extensive creation caused the ideological movement called "Russism". It had an influence not only on his contemporaries but upon subsequent evolution of ethical and aesthetical ideas in France and Europe, and it still has an impact.

It is well known that Rousseau's "Confessions" represents an original synthesis of a biography and a novel. Rousseau's life is presented in all its plentitude and contradictoriness. He thinks it over, clarifies, interprets and artistically generalizes the course of his life. Rousseau believes that actual reality forms human personality and mentality. An individual, as he's depicted in "Confessions", arises as a complex, versatile being. Hence, Rousseau paves the way to a psychological novel not merely of the XIX, but also of XX century. The reader of "Confessions" realizes that human life is guided by differing sorts of ambiguous irrational sensations and deeds as well as by a rational basis.

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