

Karam Nayeypour

# **Mind Presentation in Ian McEwan's Fiction**

Consciousness and the Presentation of  
Character in *Amsterdam*, *Atonement*, and  
*On Chesil Beach*



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*Our Stories Are Interwoven—*  
to  
Naghmeh  
and  
to Our Burgeoning *Narrative—*  
Nahal



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AM</i>	<i>Amsterdam</i>
<i>AT</i>	<i>Atonement</i>
<i>CB</i>	<i>On Chesil Beach</i>
CN	Cognitive Narratology
TR	Thought Report
FIT	Free Indirect Thought



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

[T]he novel is a special case. As a form it's so rich in explicit meaning, so intimately concerned with other minds, with relationships, and with human nature, and so extended too—tens of thousands of words—that the writer is bound to leave his or her personality behind on the page. There's nothing we can do about it. The form is total in its embrace. (McEwan, »Art of Fiction«)

Ian Russell McEwan (b. 1948) is one of the »highly respected professional« (Malcolm 6) contemporary British novelists. He has already »established himself as one of the world's most celebrated writers in English« (Wells, »Ian McEwan« 250). McEwan's writing career began in the 1970s and has undergone profound thematic and technical transformations. His earlier works—*First Love, Last Rites* (1975), a collection of short stories; *The Cement Garden* (1978), McEwan's first novel; his second short story collection *In Between the Sheets* (1978); and his second novel *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981)—are mainly concerned with the effects of instinctive desires and socio-cultural pressure on human behaviour. Their subjects include: »sexual abuse« in early adolescence; the »desire to destroy« inherent in human nature; familial relationships with »dislocated children« whose uncontrolled behaviour threatens the established social as well as domestic patriarchal units; and the »perversion and psychosis operating« in the absence of a »social context« (Cochran 391, 398, 392, 400). Because of these themes, critics, according to Wells, labelled early McEwan »one of the *enfant terribles* of the British literary scene« and nicknamed him »Ian Macabre« (»Ian McEwan« 250, 252).<sup>1</sup> In his later works, however, McEwan deals with mature characters, giving up the »exploration of grotesque and disturbing themes« (Groes 1) as well as the »exteriorized narration of events« (Wells, *Ian McEwan* 17).

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Childs also points out this, »at the start of his career, Ian McEwan appeared to reviewers to be one of the *enfants terribles* of a new kind of writing that was emerging in the 1970s« (*The Fiction* 1). McEwan, however, could »hardly complain about the »Ian Macabre« tag« (»Journeys« 130).

McEwan's second phase of writing<sup>2</sup> began with the publication of his third novel, *The Child in Time* (1987), »hailed as a turning point in McEwan's career« (Wells, »Ian McEwan« 250). It marked »a point of change« in his fiction »with its positive, adult ending« (Malcolm 5). The novel is also considered as a »radical shift in stylistic posture« (James 81). In an interview with Lynn Wells, McEwan himself points to the importance of what Wells calls his »evolving literary techniques« (Wells, *Ian McEwan* 18). His interest in the novel as a moral or ethical form, he states,

has certainly changed from the work I did in the 70s and early 80s. Then I was more interested in the surfaces. I thought it was almost cheating to let the reader know what a character was thinking. It seemed antiquated, a dead aesthetic, to provide paragraph summaries of someone's states of mind: I thought a subjective state had to be conveyed through observed details or simply by what people said and did. Later this existential kind of writing came to seem very self-limiting, and my fiction began to change around the time of *The Child in Time*. What fiction does better than any other art form is present consciousness, the flow of thought, to give an interior

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<sup>2</sup> As central concerns of his works written after 1987 McEwan recently pointed out the »representation of consciousness« as well as his recognition of the possibility that the novel as a genre provides in order to »access to the minds of others«:

I fall in and out of love with things. There was a kind of writing, for example in the 1970s, that I adored and tried to imitate. It had a kind of existential quality. I thought that you broke your own rules if you ever thought you could describe someone's thoughts. I thought that is against rules. What people said and what did, and then I described physical details to generate a kind of mood, a kind of ... a penumbra of consciousness around things, but never would I say *He turned away and thought to himself she is not for me*. Then I realized, when I came too late, by the time I was thirty, I thought there is a warmth and richness to the literary tradition that has given us, especially since Joyce, access to conventions to convey the flow of consciousness and how can you deny yourself this. You who walk around with thoughts and why not let your characters walk around with your thoughts. So, I drew away and in the last novel I wrote like that was *Comfort for strangers*, 1981 or 1982. And when I came back to the novel, there was a five-year gap when I did other things, with *The Child in Time*, it was much more informed by something which seems to be warmer and richer and more entangled with the presentation of consciousness. So that was a falling out of love and at the same time a falling in love with the greater possibilities. [...] We have not yet invented another art form that allows us such access to the minds of others and to the nature of consciousness, movies cannot do it, even the theatre cannot do it, that it has to remain on the outside of things. That interior sense the novel gives, only poetry also can excel in. (»On Making«)

narrative, a subjective history of an individual through time, through every conceived event, through love, or moral dilemmas. This inner quality is what I now value. (*Ian* 126)

Shifting from the »surfaces« to »interior narrative[s]« is the most outstanding characteristic of McEwan's later work. Further, representing a »world beyond the trauma of violence and the cynicism of public life« and plumbing the »depths of individual subjectivity« (Cochran 402), McEwan in *The Child in Time* was inclined to »be rather dark, rather interior and rather more concerned with the pathology of the mind« (qtd. in Cochran 400), he told the (London) *Sunday Times*. Such characteristics are recurring tendencies in McEwan's later narratives too. There, he mainly represents symbiotic relationships between exterior factors (embedded in the social contexts) and interior ones or the subjective (re)constructions of them. In other words, the novels written in his second phase are, in his own words, »the representation of states of mind and the society that forms them« (qtd. in Brooker 54). Moreover, what is highlighted more in McEwan's later writing period is the vulnerability of the seemingly safe urban life because the works written in this period are »noted for the revelation of psychological and emotional disturbances beneath an ordered social veneer« (Head, *The Cambridge* 217). In *The Child in Time*, McEwan, as Cochran says, uses new narrative techniques and subjects: »The central calamity« in this narrative, »occurs at the beginning of the work rather than at the climactic moment near the end« and its main concern is »human suffering« (402). Moreover, events in this narrative, according to Brooker, are »subjectively experienced« (202).

Set against the historical backdrop of European and global history of World War II, McEwan's next two novels are primarily considered explorations of the central characters' selves. The self in these narratives, however, is mostly determined by the historical forces and the exploration of the interdependent relationship between them is their main concern. *The Innocent* (1990) »develops tunnelling into a motif for Leonard's gradual exploration of his own potential. [. . .] [He] begins to unearth aspects of his personality that before his journey he could only have guessed at« (Cochran 403). In *Black Dogs* (1992), the main narrative concern is »a deep-seated connection

between the personal and the political« (Cochran 403). In his next novel, *Enduring Love* (1997)—hailed as an »ethical turn« (qtd. in Wells, *Ian McEwan* 11)—McEwan left political and historical themes and instead concentrated on human relationships. The central concern in this novel is the »difficulties of conveying the truth in narrative form« (Wells, »Ian McEwan« 251). Alan Palmer, in his article »Attributions of Madness in Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love*,« explores how Jed's madness affects »the perfectly sane intermental unit of Joe and Clarissa« (291). Moreover, the central characters in this novel are »almost entirely removed« from the historical, political and social »determinant« present in McEwan's early novels. Such factors are »of secondary importance to the novel's presentation of Joe's and Jed's minds« (Malcolm 8). Possibly, it is in consideration of this fact that the critic Andrew Gaedtke writes: »Among the most formally ambitious examples of contemporary literature's engagement with cognitive science is McEwan's *Enduring Love*« (187). Analysing third-person narratives only, this study, however, does not include a discussion of *Enduring Love*.

Likewise, McEwan's focus in his last novel in the twentieth century—*AM*—is »on the present and on certain psychological states« (Malcolm 8).<sup>3</sup> In his interview with Jon Cook et al., McEwan, referring to the period when his four previous novels were published, states that:

During that period, before I actually started work, many of the notes, the messages I sent to myself were about finding dramatic or sensual ways in bringing ideas to life rather than about characters or settings or plots. In other words, I set out to make a novel of ideas [. . .] But then I abruptly fell out of love with that notion. When I wrote *Amsterdam*, I had no specific »ideas« in mind. [. . .] *Amsterdam* was a form of farce—I abandoned myself purely to the possibilities of its characters. Although I gave them ideas [. . .] they seemed subsidiary. *Amsterdam* was light-hearted, and it liberated me from abstraction. (»Journeys« 7)

Despite David Malcolm's wonder in 2002—»How this aspect [presentation of the characters' psychological states in *AM*] of McEwan's fiction will develop in the new century is far from clear« (8)—it is now obvious that the

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Childs also argues that *AM* »shows McEwan's continuing skill at providing macabre twists to debates over contemporary social issues« (*The Fiction* 5).



primacy of fictional minds (consciousness) and their psychological presentation increasingly continues in McEwan's narratives published after 1998, particularly in *AT* and *CB*.

McEwan's novels written after 1998—*Amsterdam (AM)*, *Atonement (AT)*, *Saturday*, *On Chesil Beach (CB)*, *Solar* and *Sweet Tooth*—reveal a particular concern with the presentation of the characters' internal or psychological states. Dealing with the characters' mental workings strongly cues the reader's scripts and world models. In this way, it firmly anchors the reader's experiential repertoire to the fictional models. The result of such a technique is a narrative with high degrees of narrativity or fictionality and worldmaking. These features are both textual and thematic. The main characters' mental functioning are largely presented in these narratives such that the reader encounters fictional event sequences mostly through the experiencing characters' or focalisers'<sup>4</sup> consciousnesses. Despite this, an omniscient narrator orients the transfer of information whenever the focalisation shifts. In such a representational mode of consciousness and through following the characters' thoughts and actions, the reader also gets to know the ways characters come to terms with their own pasts, with the others, the way their minds bring self and other together and finally their (mis)interpretations and (mis)readings. At the centre of *AM*, *AT* and *CB* a mind in action is presented dramatically—a socialised consciousness or centre of consciousness heavily busy with the social and familial relationships—and a mind interrelated

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<sup>4</sup> This is a debatable term in English language narratology since, according to Margolin, there are many terms for it each designating a particular aspect of the concept:

- mirror, screen, reflector, filter, prism stress the mediating role;
- angle of vision, point of view, origo, focus, vantage point, window and perspective stress the specific situatedness of the agent: spatial, temporal but also conceptual, cultural and epistemic;
- viewer, perceiver, cogniser, and experiencer point to aspects of the mental activity involved;
- (finally) center of subjectivity, awareness or consciousness and mediating consciousness remind us that a human or human-like mind is behind most focalisations in literature. (»Focalization« 45)

In this study, the concept of focaliser, and hence focalisation, refers to the »aspects of the mental activity« in Margolin's list.

with the other fictional minds through regular visions and revisions.<sup>5</sup> Further, the narrators of these narratives are extradiegetic or non-character narrators who recount the story from outside the fictional world applying variable focalisations.

*AM*, one of the three main subjects of this study, »has strong elements of the psychological novel« which is the »traditional genre in British fiction« too (Malcolm 192). It is focalised intermittently from an eminent composer's, Clive Linely's, as well as from the professional editor's, Vernon Halliday's, perspectives. The central concern in this narrative is a personal or private issue. It presents the way the two friends Clive and Vernon are deteriorated by their own »greed, corruption, self-interest [...] masculine egotism that is in direct contrast to the principles of compassion and generosity« (Wells, »Ian McEwan« 251). Pursuing an intramental way of thought without »compassion« for others brings about their final calamity. Their destiny mainly derives from their orientation to break down any potential intermental unit with each other throughout the storyworld or the world evoked by the narrative. Moreover, the communication among them fails because the intramental side of their mental functioning overcomes the intermental one. Helga Schwalm illustrates this with the following scene: »in the key scene of the novel set in the Lake District, when the composer Clive witnesses the assault on a woman, he fails to overcome his egoistic concerns and decides not to help a female stranger« (175).

The difficulty of constructing intermental units in the first part of *AT* seems to be this novel's main concern too. Briony Tallis's (imaginary) relationship with Robbie Turner and his relationship with Cecilia Tallis are strongly under the influence of their primarily intramental behaviours, which bring about the ensuing disintegration. Briony Tallis spends her life trying to reconstruct the breakdown and compensate for the terrible lie<sup>6</sup> with which she ruined her sister and Robbie's lives. She seeks her atonement and act of repentance in fiction, which is hardly recognisable from truth. All

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<sup>5</sup> Palmer calls this kind of mind »social mind« (*Social* 39–63).

<sup>6</sup> »Briony wilfully misidentifies Robbie Turner as her cousin Lola's rapist« (James 93).

in all, the narrative, as Bentley points out, »deals with ideas of memory, historical truth and the fictionalizing of the past« (128). Further, in *AT* everything begins with an initial misreading which leads to deadly consequences. The whole narrative can be summarised in Bentley's words:

After misreading the first stages of a love relationship between Robbie and Cecilia, Briony mistakenly accuses Robbie of attacking Lola by the lake in the grounds of the country house. She has observed Lola's attacker in the half-light and because of her feelings toward Robbie at this time mistakenly assumes that he is the culprit. (150)

Thus, the central narrative concern in *AT* is, as David K. O'Hara points out, »The same uncertain relationship between selves and others. [. . .] Over the course of McEwan's perspective-shifting narrative, we find characters, again and again, realizing that they are bounded by otherness, by other minds with their own plans, their own interiorities, their own ways of perceiving the world« (75). From this perspective, the first part of *AT* is a rich narrative. Therefore, in this study the focal character's, Briony's, mental functioning and its impact on the emerging intermental unit between Cecilia and Robbie are analysed.

This study does not include McEwan's next novel *Saturday* (2005), although it »is uniquely placed to enable us to know ›what it is like‹ to experience the mind of another« (Green 58–59). The narrative has been so far the subject of some studies in terms of consciousness and the intermental breakdown as its focal concern. Caracciolo regards it as »a brilliant example of internally focalized narration« (»Phenomenological« 62). Having been »consciously about consciousness [...and] a critical participant in the quest to understand the mind« (Green 58), the narrative during twenty-four hours pursues the social events that construct or affect the central character's consciousness. In other words, consciousness in *Saturday* »has central stage« (»Phenomenological« 61). Perowne fails to communicate whenever he becomes a »subjective first« character. The omniscient narrator represents the way Perowne reacts to the exterior threats represented by mentally ill street-thug Baxter. Perowne's reflection on his wife, children, Baxter and the social events are suggestive of the way his mind functions in different situations.

In *CB*, McEwan's next novel and the second narrative analysed in this study, Florence Ponting's and Edward Mayhew's mental workings derive from their socio-cultural contexts. Their intramental or subjective first mode of mental functioning, however, brings about their separation eventually. Applying an omniscient narration, internal mode of focalization is pursued in this narrative through representing two central characters alternately. Florence and Edward are unable to consummate their marriage because of different reasons since above all their attributions of mental states—such as intentions, beliefs and desires—to each other are not congruent with their true feelings and thoughts. As mentioned by Wells, »as it is common in McEwan's work, there are self-reflexive elements in *On Chasid Beach*, with couple's dilemma paralleling the difficulties of ›reading‹ the other, and of communicating adequately with language« (»Ian McEwan« 252). Furthermore, although the manner of Edward's and Florence's mental functioning, among the other factors, basically derives from the defining discourse of the time they live in, the early years of 1960s, it is in fact their intramental or subjective first side of mental functioning that at last brings about their separation. This is also the main reason of their inability to construct a shared, communion or intermental unit. Moreover, this narrative, like *AM*, anchors itself strongly to the reader's world models by presenting a worldly known script—the difficulties of a wedding night. Narrative reader's initial expectations and inferences of the subject, however, are reconstructed through the progression of narrative sequences. Thus, this study investigates the two central characters' mental states or functioning as well as the impact of the particular moments on their consciousness.

McEwan's next narrative, *Solar* (2010), is not also included in this study because it seems that gaining access to the mental functioning of the central characters is not primarily necessary for narrative understanding since there are only few passages of mental readings. Michael Beard, scientist and the noble prizewinner, is a self-oriented character whose mentality is to great extent busy with his own desire. He is revealed to be a symbol of »exploitation« (Wells, »Ian McEwan« 252) since he is mainly concerned with his self-interests leading him to his final destruction. His self-centeredness in pursuing both fame and pleasure, regardless of the other social minds, brings

him finally to a deadly consequence. His mind dominantly functions intramentally without considering a possibility of communication with the other social minds in the fictional world. Likewise, the study does not include McEwan's last published novel, *Sweet Tooth* (2012), for the simple reason that it is a first person narrative and the study's priority is third-person narratives. The study, in this case, agrees with Palmer's distinction between homodiegetic narratives (where narrator is a character in the story being narrated) and heterodiegetic ones (where narrator is not a character in the story being narrated). As Palmer says, »there are various complexities inherent in this apparently simple distinction« (Fictional« 25).

This study, thus, explores the manner of central characters' »mental functioning« (Palmer, *Fictional* 25) as well as »the impact of [narrated] situations and events on the minds experiencing them« (Herman, *Basic* 147) in Ian McEwan's three narratives—*AM*, *AT* and *CB*. The processes through which these narratives engender »experience« (Herman, »Cognitive« 30) in the interpreter's mind as well as the nature of this experience will be explored. In other words, this research applies the terminology of cognitive narratology (CN), a subdomain of postclassical narratology, to the analysis of some *cognitive* aspects of the characters in *AM*, *AT* and *CB*. The term ›cognitive‹ in this approach has no connection with a »neurological description of the reader's brain«; rather, it refers to the »reader's subjective experience« during the reading act (Bernaerts et al, 3, 8). »Readers,« as cognitive narratologist Monica Fludernik understands, »do not see texts as having narrative features but read texts as narrative by imposing cognitive narrative frames on them« (»Narratology« 926). Related to this, Alan Palmer's terminology explains how the reader's mind (re)constructs fictional minds and how fictional minds operate. He defines fictional minds as »semiotic constructs that form part of an overall narrative pattern. They are elements in a plot as well as centers of consciousness« (*Fictional* 191). Narrative readers mentally simulate such experiencing consciousnesses within the storyworlds in order to understand or experience narrative events and situations. Moreover, to experience narrative, a typical reader undergoes the some mental processes in order to reconstruct fictional minds based on textual (semiotic) cues. In a similar manner to Palmer, David Herman explores how fictional characters'

lived experiences influence their thoughts and behaviour and how narrative experience takes place in the interpreter's mind. Concerning the construction of fictional minds, both cognitive narratologists allow for some similarities between real or actual minds and fictional minds. That is mainly because, as Palmer points out, »Just as in real life the individual constructs the minds of others from their behavior, so the reader infers the workings of fictional minds and sees these minds in action from observation of characters' behavior and actions« (*Fictional* 246).

This study specifically applies Palmer's and Herman's theories of fictional minds and narrativity in order to explain the manner of central fictional minds mental functioning in McEwan's *AM*, *AT* and *CB*. The study, furthermore, analyses the way they experience particular events and situations and their impact on their thoughts and behaviour. To this end and before discussing the narratives, the following theoretical issues are examined at first: the cognitive approach to literature or CN; the role of the reader in narrative understanding; intermental (joint, group, shared, or collective) thought / intramental (individual or private) thought; the modes of presenting fictional minds in narrative; and narrativity (or narrativeness). This is preceded in the following section with a review of the role of mind or consciousness representation in McEwan's fiction.

The presentation of the characters' mental workings and the impact of narrative events and situations on their minds as observable from their actions and behaviour, are central to *AM*, *AT* and *CB*. Accordingly, applying the terminology of CN to the analysis of these narratives seems appropriate since, as David James points out, the »McEwan we have seen emerging over the past fifteen years is a complex figure requiring rigorous narratological focus« (81). The present narratives have been chosen for this study, because the characters' mental workings as well as the impact of some decisive narrative moments on their consciousness seem to be their central concern. Furthermore, these are the basic characteristics for a cognitive approach. Avoiding generalisations and following a slow analysis methodology, the present study mainly focuses on the passages of internal focalisation within the selected narratives in order to examine the manner of fictional minds' mental functioning.

Critical approaches to McEwan's novels demonstrate the growing importance of character, fictional minds and consciousness throughout his writing career. It is believed that socio-historical (external) circumstances and their pernicious impact on children's and young adults' behaviour are central concerns in his earlier novels. Moreover, the representation of the impact of narrative events and situations on the fictional minds' consciousness appears to be the crucial concern in McEwan's later narratives published after *The Child in Time* (1987). After a discussion of these issues, the cardinal questions of the present study, the approach it applies in order to examine and explore the mental workings of the chosen fictional minds are given at the end of the following section.

### 1.1 Reading McEwan as a Cognitive Novelist

McEwan's fiction has evolved thematically and technically during the nearly four decades of his writing career. He »has been considered [a] shocking« writer in his early career and a »serious and contemplative novelist« (Childs, *The 2*) with respect to his later work. In his later novels, McEwan has paid close attention to the presentation of fictional minds. He uses the omniscient third person narrative mode in *AM* (1998), *AT* (2002), *Saturday* (2005), *CB* (2007) and *Solar* (2010) as well as diverse consciousness (re)presentation<sup>7</sup> methods—direct thought, indirect thought and particu-

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<sup>7</sup> In relation to »consciousness representation« and »fictional minds,« Marco Caracciolo criticises Herman and Palmer, respectively, for two different reasons. He criticises Palmer, as well as Lisa Zunshine, for not discussing the »consciousness proper« in narrative in their analyses of fictional minds. Likewise, he criticises Herman for his argument over the »representation of consciousness« primarily based on the textual cues. Caracciolo argues that Palmer in *Fictional Minds* and Zunshine in *Why We Read Fiction* never use »representation« in tandem with »consciousness,« instead what they focus on is »the reader's attribution of mental states to the characters; they do not seem to devote special attention to consciousness proper« (»Fictional« 42). In other words, applying a functional approach and relying on the characters' actions and focusing on »the reader's attribution of mental states to the characters,« they did not »devote special attention to consciousness proper.« (»Fictional 142). Therefore, according to Caracciolo, they only explore »what [David] Chalmers

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calls ›the psychological mind‹‹ which is involved with ›the mind's role in influencing behavior‹ (qtd. in Caracciolo, ›Fictional‹ 42); so, they leave ›the issue of fictional consciousnesses unsolved.‹ Nevertheless, modifying their approaches, Caracciolo (›Fictional‹ 43) states that ›defining fictional characters in functionalist terms has yielded deep insights, well exemplified by Palmer's and Zunshine's books. And yet, it is important to remind ourselves that readers do not just attribute mental states to fictional characters—they attribute to them mental states with a qualitative aspect. I'd like to see the original text of this quotation in full. In short, they attribute to them a consciousness‹ based on the textual cues. Therefore, Caracciolo argues that ›we should not view characters' consciousnesses as ›things in the text.‹ Readers can enact a fictional consciousness, they can perform it on the basis of textual cues [...] I will call (this phenomenon) consciousness-enactment.‹ Following that, Caracciolo's chief complaint against Herman is that ›consciousness (be it fictional or not) cannot be represented‹ (›Fictional‹ 43) but it can only be ›enacted‹ or performed. Accordingly, he concludes that ›Palmer, and Herman have proposed an excellent representational model of how readers conceptualize characters' psychological states and traits, but that they miss the mark when it comes to consciousnesses. [...] fictional consciousnesses cannot be represented (neither in the text nor in the reader's mind), since consciousness and subject experience seem to be largely impervious to representationalism‹ (›Fictional‹ 46). Moreover, Caracciolo argues that in a similar manner to consciousness which is not representable in the text, experience also ›cannot be subsumed under the framework of representationalism‹ (›Fictional‹ 59). Instead, it is narratively constructed since ›narrative texts are experiencing-providing machines,‹ therefore, the ›experiential direction of flow is not only from the reader to the text, but also from the text to the reader [...] the characters' experiences cannot be represented—they are not *things in the text*. These new experiences are undergone by readers, and by no one else‹ (›Fictional‹ 54–55). Thus, according to Caracciolo, in an imagining process, readers, based on their actual world experiences and the textual cues, not only attribute consciousness to fictional minds, but they also enact or perform the consciousness itself. Therefore, consciousness-enactment, according to Caracciolo, ›is always complemented by consciousness-attribution: our consciousness merges with the consciousness attributed to the fictional character, and we experience a fictional world through the narrow gap between being ourselves and not being ourselves‹ (›Fictional‹ 59). In other terms, we, through imagining, firstly attribute an independent consciousness to the characters and then gradually ›shape our own consciousness until it merges with the consciousness we attribute to the character. It is through this reshaped consciousness that we experience the fictional world‹ (›Fictional‹ 57). Accordingly, the nutshell of Caracciolo's hypothesis is that characters are not only ›as psychologically ›minded‹ beings (functionally analogous to humans), but also as beings capable of having conscious mental states, or of undergoing subjective experience‹ (›Fictional‹ 58). It follows that according



larly free indirect thought (FIT). These techniques allow him to report focalised characters' inner perceptions in order to involve the reader in the mental functioning of the fictional characters. With their high degrees of fictionality and narrativity,<sup>8</sup> moreover, these narratives are potential to anchor themselves firmly to the readers' real world knowledge, experience and mental models, or to their so-called frames and scripts. Therefore, McEwan can be considered as a cognitive novelist.

McEwan's central narrative themes and techniques, according to Angus R. B. Cochran, should not be analysed apart from

a tradition of twentieth-century European novelists who took it upon themselves to expose the cynicism and corruption of government, patriarchy, class division and nationalism. Furthermore, his influences—Kafka, Woolf, Joyce—proposed that individual psychology was inextricably bound up with such large-scale social forces. (407)

One should also include in this list of influences Henry James as »something of a mentor.« McEwan, however, as Brooker adds, has »imaginatively engaged with the politics of the present« (53, 54) in his works. Exploration of the individual psychology becomes central in McEwan's later fiction in which he primarily »illuminates the cavernous makeup of the mind by using his own instrument, his penetrating prose. The place he discovers there is both dark and elegant« (Cochran 407). Even though this statement by Cochran predates the novels discussed in this study, it fits them as well. They are predominantly concerned with the representation of the fictional

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to Caracciolo, reader, not the textual cues, should be considered as the focal point in the realization of narrative experience and fictional minds since, based on his/her actual experiential repertoire, s/he can both attribute and enact or perform consciousness to characters. For example, it is only based on the dialectic exchanges with the presented experiences within *AM*, *AT* and *CB* that the fictional minds such as Clive, Vernon, Edward, Florence and Briony are shaped in our minds. Nevertheless, following Palmer's and Herman's discussion, fictional minds and consciousness-related issues in this study are used respectively in tandem with »presentation« and »representation«.

<sup>8</sup> Herman defines the term narrativity as »what makes a story (interpretable as) a story« or »what makes a narrative a narrative« (*Basic* x, 1)