

REPRESENTATIONS OF EXILE IN IAN MCEWAN'S FICTION

Alina Buzarna-Tihenea
Ovidius University, Constanța

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyse several representations of exile in Ian McEwan's fiction. Starting writing and publishing fiction in the mid-1970s, McEwan is an author who gradually became concerned with historical, political and social issues, and with their impact on individual identity. In his fiction, the political chaos of contemporary society, social mentalities and taboos, weaknesses and faults affect the individual, sometimes leading to his or her exile from the rest of the world. Dominant political ideologies of 1980s Britain (The Child in Time), post-war British communism (Black Dogs), the horrors of World War II and its legacy of (Black Dogs, Atonement), the fall of the Berlin Wall (Black Dogs) - all act upon individual identity, changing and corrupting it. Moreover, in certain situations, they induce individuals a state of inner exile or even send them away from their environment; for instance, after the death of their parents, adolescent and apparently "normal" children isolate themselves from the world and become incestuous (The Cement Garden); a young 13 years old imaginative girl destroys a genuine love and sends an innocent young man to prison and then to war (Atonement); later, in order to make amends, the same girl changes her future plans and exiles herself from her family. And because "exile from a homeland can bring a writer into a fruitful, or at least a usefully problematic, relationship with an adopted language", this girl turns to be at the end a successful writer. However, in McEwan's fiction, exile also negatively affects individuals, corrupting their identity and leading to disastrous consequences.