

Humanity Biologised: The Re-definition of Human Ethics in Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love*

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates how Ian McEwan's Enduring Love (1997) re-defines human ethical qualities within a Darwinian framework. McEwan's Enduring Love from the very beginning to the end abounds in Darwinian images and passages, thereby, it forms a Darwinian lens through which the events of the novel are scanned and interpreted, from the helium balloon gone out of control to a shared happiness resulted from seeing a familiar face at the airport. Within the Darwinian worldview the novel sets, it tries to subvert the traditionally-considered human ethical actions, like heroism, cooperation, courage, and love and therefore re-define them. To prove its claim, this paper, first, explores the Darwinian framework Enduring Love develops, benefiting from the ideas of literary Darwinists and other biopoetical theorists; then, it tries to show how the novel applies the same Darwinian principles to those human ethical qualities mentioned above which results in their redefinition.

Keywords: McEwan; Darwinism; re-definition of human ethical qualities; Enduring Love

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to explore the re-definition of human ethics in Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love*, via approaching the novel from the interpretive framework of literary Darwinism. Although *Enduring Love* is filled with many action scenes with which the reader is very likely to find him/herself seriously concerned, the ethical dilemmas, as the offshoots of the ballooning accident of the novel, thoroughly dominate the narrative. Indeed, the novel is largely occupied with the reason(s) behind some basic human ethical qualities such as cooperation, heroism, courage, and love, resulting in the re-definition of some of them and discarding others.

Enduring Love, mainly through the character of Joe, puts forward a Darwinian worldview, in which the origin of existence, human beings, and their relations are reduced to material entities. Based on this ontological standpoint *Enduring Love* embraces, the traditional-humanistic ethical qualities are challenged and re-defined. To substantiate their claim, the researchers, first, explain literary Darwinism and the value system it engenders (as their literary toolkit) in the image of the 19th century classical Darwinism; second, they discuss the ontological stance of the novel; finally, they approach the dominant ethical qualities and dilemmas of the novel from a literary Darwinian point of view.

LITERARY DARWINISM AND ITS VALUE SYSTEM

Literary Darwinism is an approach to literature which developed and entered the field of literary theory and criticism in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Among the most important figures of the movement one can refer to Joseph Carroll (who in some sense can be considered the pioneer of literary Darwinism), Brian Boyd, Jonathan Gottschall, Nancy Easterlin, John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, David and Nanelle Barash. There are, also, other figures who were indirectly engaged in this movement and have more acted as a source of inspiration for the literary Darwinists; of this latter group, names like E. O. Wilson, known as one of the founders of "sociobiology" (Ruse 2008, p. 682) and Steven Pinker, a well-known figure in the field of evolutionary psychology, deserve mention.

In its simplest sense, literary Darwinism is "the application to literature of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution" (Abrams 2012, p. 74). Although speaking about the link existing between literary Darwinism and the 19th century classical Darwinism seems nearly needless, perhaps since the name of the approach by itself is expressive enough in this regard, the closeness and depth of this link prevents its clarification from being just labouring the obvious and makes the attempt quite worthwhile.

Within the field of arts and literature, one of the points literary Darwinists and evolutionary theorists most emphasise is that literature is a product of human mind and its understanding, analysis, and appreciation is bound to an accurate understanding of human mind, which itself is due to a true understanding of human nature; since human mind is part of human nature. Having developed an unshakable faith in the Darwinian evolutionary theory, the Darwinian art theorists see Darwinism as the worldview possessing that true understanding of human nature. In consequence, as they stress, all artistic works and expressions, literature included, are to be seen within the limits and borders of Darwinian evolutionary theory. Meaning that all aspects of a work of art, from the very mechanism through which it works to the very reason behind the artist's intentions in creating it, are looked upon through Darwinian lenses.

Such an all-inclusive look literary Darwinism exerts upon the arts to a large extent is due to the direct influence it has received from the field of sociobiology, where E. O. Wilson, the founder of the field, introduced the concept of *consilience* or "the unity of knowledge," emphasizing that all branches of knowledge, from the humanistic to exact sciences, must be unified under evolutionary biology. Indeed, Wilson thinks "the assumptions and method of Darwin, being objectively accurate and true, ought to be imported wholesale into the humanities" (Hawkes 2011, p.18). With such a grand policy, literary Darwinists came to consider many a phenomenon, say culture, mind, consciousness and the arts, as simply products of the material nature. Hence, among the most key goals they define for themselves is investigating "how evolution has shaped human bodies, minds, and behavior; how culture has emerged out of nature; and how culture has equipped us to modify our behavior" (Boyd, Carroll, & Gottschall 2010, p. 3). As obvious, literary Darwinists do consider a room for culture and related phenomena, but they see them all rooted finally in the crude material nature.

Since Darwinian evolutionary theory lies at the heart of literary Darwinism so do the former's basic concepts and principles: natural selection, struggle for existence, adaptation, survival, and reproduction. Accordingly, Wilson proposes a survival-related and reproductive cause for the existence and emergence of the arts:

Early humans invented them [the arts] in an attempt to express and control through magic the abundance of the environment, the power of solidarity, and other forces in their lives that mattered most to survival and reproduction. The arts were the means by which these forces could be ritualized and expressed in a new, simulated reality.... The arts still perform this primal function, and in much the same ancient way. (Wilson 1999, p. 246)

Steven Pinker, an important figure among literary Darwinists who is specialised in evolutionary psychology, also finds "survival" and "reproduction" as the basic driving forces in human beings throughout the ages for their attraction towards fiction (2010, p. 132). Brian Boyd deems "sexual selection," another Darwinian principle, responsible for the existence and development of the arts and literature, thereby, reducing the arts as mere means of gaining advantage in mating competition; Boyd believes that "art's very uselessness, its ornamental extravagance, shows that it has arisen not because of any survival advantage but because it appeals to members of the opposite sex (2009, pp. 73-74).

It is within the same line of thought that Boyd sees literature nothing but a means to win the race of sexual selection. Boyd looks at literary works as "striking colors or forms," "songs," and "dance" which excite the female sensory biases during the mating season. Accordingly, he somehow outrageously concludes that the history of art is permeated with the "male urge to display" as a means of winning in the process of sexual selection; Boyd then continues that the history of human art "shows a preponderance of males among leading artists, and the evidence of musicians, classical, rock, and jazz, suggests that they are at their most productive in their most sexually fertile years" (p. 74).

When comes to analysing and interpreting the characters of a literary work, literary Darwinists again move within a Darwinian paradigm, reducing all motives behind an action to either survival or reproduction. And this is due to the application of the Darwinian evolutionary theory to the field of ethics, which generally may be taken as "beliefs and presuppositions about right and wrong, good and bad, justified and unjustified" (Lannone 2001, p. 182). Charles Darwin, in *The Descent of Man* (1871), which is actually the application of his concepts developed in *The Origin of Species* (1859) to human life, dedicates a whole chapter to the moral principles and social dispositions of human beings. Darwin believes that human moral qualities and social inclinations all have reasons in the evolutionary principles like natural selection, struggle for existence, survival, and adaptation.

In this regard, while presupposing social and communal life as a positive factor in the survival of a species, Darwin, about the existence of the social moral values among human beings, maintains that "in order that primeval men, or the ape-like progenitors of man, should have become social, they must have acquired the same instinctive feelings which impel other animals to live in a body" (p. 161). And because of being advantageous to the higher animals' survival, "they would have felt uneasy when separated from their comrades, for whom they would have felt some degree of love; they would have warned each other of danger, and have given mutual aid in attack or defence" (p. 162). From this, Darwin concludes that human moral qualities are to be explained within the same paradigm in which other animals' moral behaviour is explained. To Darwin, as he maintains in the above quotation, human social and moral qualities like "sympathy," "fidelity," and "courage" all have been resulted through the key Darwinian process of natural selection and were later developed and passed on to future generations through the principle of inheritance: "Such social qualities, the paramount importance of which to the lower animals is disputed by no one, were no doubt acquired by the progenitors of man in a similar manner, namely, through natural selection, aided by inherited habit" (p. 162).

Therefore, Darwin rejects any degree of autonomy and extra-biological reason for the existence of moral qualities, stressing that the existence of moral qualities is due to the benefit and advantage they bring to the biological survival of the organism. For example, he holds that within the context of tribal life, the one tribe which enjoys the greater number of "courageous, sympathetic, and faithful members who were always ready to warn each other of danger, to aid and defend each other, this tribe would without doubt succeed best and conquer the other" (Darwin 1981, p. 162). As a result, according to Darwin, the emergence and diffusion of the moral qualities, especially among human beings, have adaptive and

survival-related evolutionary reasons. Indeed, as Michal Ruse, the prolific philosopher of science specialised in philosophy of biology, stresses Darwinian ethics excludes any extra-biological foundation for ethics and morality and instead limits all ethical and moral intentions within human material-biological nature:

The same is the case for normative ethics, except that—rather than an individual illusion—here we have a collective illusion of the genes, bringing us all in (except for the morally blind). We need to believe in morality, and so, thanks to our biology, we do believe in morality. There is no foundation 'out there', beyond human nature.

(Ruse 2005, p. 247)

Therefore, in Darwinian value system "the good" is that which proves advantageous to the survival of the organism and "the bad" is that which either brings no advantage or is deleterious to an organism's biological survival. As a consequence, in Darwinian evolutionary ethics, while on the one hand, courage, fidelity, and sympathy can be considered as ethical values (as stated by Darwin in the above quotations), on the other, it is quite possible and even more probable for such traditionally-considered vices like cheating, betraying, lying, killing, and stealing to be equally justified and seen as moral values. This is because the deciding criterion in Darwinian ethics is whether an action is reproductively advantageous and beneficial to an organism's survival, and values are not determined by any metaphysical autonomous and extra-biological factors. It is equally noteworthy that laying the foundation of ethics on biological grounds, endangers the *objective* position with which the majority of evolutionary thinkers identify themselves, since "the nature" on which they depend for objectivity has been the result of the process of natural selection. For the same reason, the Darwinian valuation system, or simply ethics, in a sense is not objective and only conveys the illusion of objectivity, since human nature as the arbiter of ethical and moral qualities does not rest on solid ground. In this regard, Ruse and Wilson in "Moral Philosophy as Applied Science," building on the same argument maintain that based on a Darwinian evolutionary ethic the most repugnant of deeds like cannibalism, incest, and eating of faeces become ethical:

These rules [the ethical obligations] are in turn the idiosyncratic products of the genetic history of the species and as such were shaped by particular regimes of natural selection.... It is easy to conceive of an alien intelligent species evolving rules its members consider highly moral but which are repugnant to human beings, such as cannibalism, incest, the love of darkness and decay, parricide, and the mutual eating of faeces. Many animal species perform some or all of these things, with gusto and in order to survive. If human beings had evolved from a stock other than savanna-dwelling, bipedal, carnivorous man-apes we might do the same, feeling inwardly certain that such behaviours are natural and correct.

(Ruse and Wilson 1986, p. 186)

As a point of fact, proponents of Darwinian evolutionary theory go so far as to "biologise" the whole realm of the humanities, including the realm of ethics. In this respect, E. O. Wilson, after emphasizing that ethics as a field of study in the humanities must be removed from the hands of the philosophers and be biologised, sets the ontological ground on which sociobiology justifies and rationalises ethics. Believing that "that self-knowledge is constrained and shaped by the emotional control centres in the hypothalamus and limbic system of the brain" and that these brain components "floods our consciousness with all the emotions—hate, love, guilt, fear, and others" Wilson remarks that all the emotions and ethical inclinations in human beings are rooted in the hypothalamus and limbic system, which themselves are the products of natural selection. Therefore, in Wilson's eyes, ethics is a completely biological phenomenon, for the study of which the biologist is responsible not the philosopher, who thinks extra-biologically (Wilson 2000, p. 3). In accordance with Wilson,

Michael Ruse, in "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," also claims that morality "is just an aid to survival and reproduction and has no being beyond or without this" (1994, p. 20).

DISCUSSION

Enduring Love begins with a ballooning accident; continues and ends with its offshoots. Joe Rose and Clarissa, the former a science journalist and the latter a literature professor, are picnicking that all of a sudden hear cries of help. Joe Rose and four other men, either picnicking or local farmers (who were also around) start running towards the balloon which is out of control. All of them hang themselves to the balloon basket and its ropes so as to prevent it from going away with that young boy, Harry, in it. Finally, all of them except one let go of the ropes. Then the balloon takes the only person, John Logan, hanging to it (to save that child) with it very high until Logan cannot hold anymore and lets go of the rope and drops.

What happened on that day: the balloon gone out of control and the reactions it sparked in the individuals present at the scene provides material for the novel up to the end. Indeed, the novel seems to be interpreting the incidents of that day and the reactions of the individuals involved; for example, Logan's keeping the rope and his death, Joe and others' letting go of it and their "survival" reverberate in the novel from the beginning to the end; once showing itself in the form of serious debates between Joe and Clarissa affecting their relation, or either in Joe's interaction with Jed Parry, or even in Joe's encounter with Logan's bereaved wife and orphaned children.

Despite the fact that McEwan's parallel treatment of the roles of Joe and Clarissa renders it quite sound to consider *Enduring Love* an attempt to show that literature and science "share a common element in narrative" as Carbonell does (2010, p. 3), to the researchers of the present study what seems to be of prime importance is the ethical concerns and challenges which result from such a parallel treatment between naturalistic sciences (Darwinian evolutionary theory) and human beings. The starting event, as summarised above, shaped and lead to many ethical complexities. For example, why, in the first place, did the nearby people run to help the child in trouble? Why did they tend to cooperate with each other to get out of the predicament they were caught in? Why did all the men but one let go of the rope? What were the motivations of the man (Logan) who did not let go of the rope? Which one was sounder: letting go of the rope or sticking to it? What can Logan's sticking to the rope and then losing his life be called: sanity or insanity? Courage or stupidity? In what follows the present study attempts to investigate how the novel treats such issues. In doing so, some basic ethical issues occupying the main interest of the novel are chosen and are then discussed. However, before delving into the issue of how *Enduring Love* approaches these ethical questions, it seems necessary to draw upon the ontological standpoint the novel maintains.

THE NOVEL'S ONTOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* puts forth a Darwinian ontological worldview. At times this is done quite indirectly, through interpreting the actions of the characters, but there are times when direct and manifesto-like statements are given. For instance, while running toward the out-of-control balloon and thinking to himself about the mechanism that keeps it high in the sky, Joe Rose states an ontological statement regarding the origin of life, universe, and human beings:

It was an enormous balloon filled with helium, that elemental gas forged from hydrogen in the nuclear furnace of the stars, first step along the way in the generation of multiplicity and variety of matter in the universe, including our selves and all our thoughts. (2003, p. 11)

Here, Joe explains the origin of universe by resorting to the hypothesis of "abiogenesis" which basically is the "idea that life arose from nonlife more than 3.5 billion years ago on Earth" (Rogers "abiogenesis"). Moreover, in the above quotation, Joe does consider human thoughts and probably feelings as phenomena formed within the same material cycle which has hydrogen as its starting point. A couple of paragraphs below, Joe interprets human beings universal reaction to a similar scene at an airport as result of a human being universal nature on which the qualities and dispositions are "genetically inscribed" (pp. 11-12). Although in that part of the novel Joe passingly mentions the name Darwin, later in the novel, he directly explains that by universal human nature he means a nature resulted from the Darwinian evolutionary theory, which, as he states, is capable of explaining and justifying the human characteristics from "our foot shape" and "eye color" to "our social and sexual behavior":

We do not arrive in this world as blank sheets, or as all-purpose learning devices. Nor are we the "products" of our environment. If we want to know what we are, we have to know where we came from. We evolved, like every other creature on earth. We come into this world with limitations and capacities, all of them genetically prescribed. Many of our features—our foot shape, our eye color—are fixed, and others, like our social and sexual behavior and our language learning, await the life we live to take their course. But the course is not infinitely variable. We have a nature. The word from the human biologists bears Darwin out: the way we wear our emotions on our faces is pretty much the same in all cultures, and the infant smile is one social signal that is particularly easy to isolate and study. It appears in !Kung San babies of the Kalahari at the same time it does in American children of Manhattan's Upper West Side, and it has the same effect.

(pp. 76-77)

Another point in the novel where a Darwinian perspective is presented happens when Joe Rose and Jed Parry arrive at the dead body of John Logan. Joe rejects the concept of soul (which he considers as a need in the prescientific age) as the necessary element in human life and explains the process of dying as simply "the closing down of... neural and biochemical exchanges." Right over the dead body, Joe states that "the closing down of countless interrelated neural and biochemical exchanges combined to suggest to a naked eye the illusion of the extinguished spark, or the simple departure of a single necessary element. (p. 31)

As shown above, a Darwinian look permeates throughout *Enduring Love*. In fact, it has been so dominant that Quillen has found the novel systematically Darwinian and philosophically as "an Atheism-as-promotion" (2015, p. 102). Furthermore, while some has deemed *Enduring Love* as too much plot-oriented and so probably not worthy of being reread (Bien, 1998, p. 831), behind the page-turner actions of the novel lie serious ethical challenges. In such ontological context fundamental ethical questions are raised and interpreted; issues as elementary as the motivation behind human beings tendency to cooperate, the rationale behind heroic and altruistic acts and whether they are justified or not, and courage as an ethical quality. The following paragraphs try to show how the novel treats and approaches the ethical issues it raises from a Darwinian point of view.

COOPERATION BIOLOGISED

After letting go of the rope and causing the balloon to wander purposelessly in the air, Joe Rose starts thinking to himself about the reason behind their failure in controlling the balloon. Once he reckons that it has been due to their lack of team work and also lack of a leader to

unite and lead the actions. Continuing his private speculations, Joe concludes that since "there was no team, there was no plan, no agreement to be broken," then, there would be "no failure. So can we accept that it was right, every man for himself? Were we all happy afterward that this was a reasonable course?" (p. 22). However, Joe corrects himself by arguing that since the tendency to "cooperate" is the result of an adaptive process during human beings' hunter-gatherer period and so is a built-in quality within human nature. Like other animals, we become sad and regretful as a result of not cooperating with each other; and, therefore, feel a sort of failure:

We never had that comfort, for there was a deeper covenant, ancient and automatic, written in our nature. Cooperation—the basis of our earliest hunting successes, the force behind our evolving capacity for language, the glue of our social cohesion. Our misery in the aftermath was proof that we knew we had failed ourselves. (p. 22)

This is in the case that Joe's words as to the point that "cooperation" is built in within human beings as an evolved organism, is followed by his statement that "selfishness" is also a hard-wired quality of higher animals: "But letting go was in our nature too. Selfishness is also written on our hearts. This is our mammalian conflict: what to give to the others and what to keep for yourself" (p. 22). This provokes an ethical conflict far more complicated than the one in which Joe Rose is caught. On the one hand, he sees cooperation and cooperative tendencies built in within human nature from the hunter-gatherer period through the Darwinian process of natural selection, on the other, he sees its opposite, selfishness, written on our hearts as well. However, from a Darwinian point of view that very cooperative tendency developed among human beings during the hunter-gatherer period was itself rooted in selfishness. In other words, within the Darwinian ethical framework cooperation becomes meaningful as long as it helps the organism to move forward in the struggle for existence. Otherwise, it is bad and therefore to be shunned. To understand the rationale behind the validity of cooperation in Darwinian paradigm, Michael Ruse's explanation in this regard is revealing. Ruse believes that within the Darwinian worldview morality in general and cooperation in particular cannot have any roots but in survival and reproduction and continues that since "the best path to reproductive success is not necessarily one of bloody combat.... we get much further ahead by cooperating" (1994, p. 14).

Joseph Carroll, in *Reading Human Nature*, also speaks about "cooperation," for which he considers no autonomous status and only finds it definable and justifiable when proven advantageous in conflicts between groups. He says, "humans have evolved distinctive capacities for cooperation within groups, but the larger context for the evolution of cooperation within groups is the conflict between competing groups" (2011, p. 265). Brian Boyd, another literary Darwinist, sees cooperative tendencies as only secondary to and an offshoot of the grand principle of survival:

Other things being equal, selfishness—reaping a benefit without contributing a full share of the cost—pays most in the short term. But in the long term cooperation can often yield more, enabling a group to achieve more than the sum of what its members could achieve individually, whether that be building hives or dams, for bees or beavers, or hunting large prey, for hyenas or humans, and thereby to outcompete other groups. (2009, pp. 52-53)

As a result, within the borders of the Darwinian framework of *Enduring Love*, cooperation or any cooperative activity is only a logical possibility when in the long run it is rooted in the survival of the self. In other words, in Darwinian ethics we only have "selfish cooperators," to use Richard Dawkins' phrase (1998, p. 210).

HEROISM BIOLOGISED

Besides the fact that the six men's rush to help the helpless child in the balloon and their impulsive leaning to cooperate turn into an ethical dilemma in the novel, John Logan heroically holding onto the rope up to the end and his concomitant death turns to an even greater question occupying the course of the novel to its end. In other words, Logan endangering his life begs the question as to why such a heroic and altruistic act becomes possible; or is it sane after all or should it be considered as an example of insanity?

The very first place where Logan's self-sacrificial act reappears retrospectively, is where Joe and Clarissa (mostly the latter) are unearthing the shocking event they had undergone. To Clarissa Logan's action has been quite meaningful and, therefore, she says, "It must mean something" (p. 40); to Joe, however, Logan losing his life to save an unknown child is meaningless: "Logan's death was pointless—that was part of the reason we were in shock. Good people sometimes suffered and died, not because their goodness was being tested but precisely because there was nothing, no one, to test it. No one but us" (p. 40).

The reason for Joe not seeing any moral value in losing one's life over saving another's is that (as it is mentioned in the quotation above) he does not consider any valuation criterion beyond human being, the kind of human being bereft of the metaphysical side and who is defined as a biological organism innately trained to "'fight' every minute of its life for survival" (Mayr 2002, pp. 137-38). In other words, the ethical paradigm Joe Rose lays down has at its heart the human biological existence; in a way that nothing beyond the biological existence of the organism is meaningful, unless it has some contributions to its biological survival. Therefore, actions or inclinations which apparently go beyond the biological realm and appeal to higher ideals are interpreted within the same Darwinian formula of "advantageous to survival and reproduction." Otherwise, acts which do not fit within the Darwinian formula are considered evil. A representative example of such a look takes place in chapter 18 when Joe Rose tries to interpret religion and religiosity within the same formula:

Might there be a genetic basis to religious belief, or was it merely refreshing to think so? If faith conferred selective advantage, there were any number of possible means, and nothing could be proven. Suppose religion gave status, especially to its priest caste? Plenty of social advantage in that. What if it bestowed strength in adversity, the power of consolation, the chance of surviving the disaster that might crush a godless man? Perhaps it gave believers passionate conviction, the brute strength of single mindedness. Possibly it worked on groups as well as on individuals, bringing cohesion and identity and a sense that you and your fellows were right, even—or especially—when you were wrong. With God on our side. Uplifted by a crazed unity, armed with horrible certainty, you descend on the neighboring tribe, beat and rape it senseless, and come away burning with righteousness and drunk with the very victory your gods had promised. Repeat fifty thousand times over the millennia, and the complex set of genes controlling for groundless conviction could get a strong distribution. (pp. 165-166)

Indeed, to Joe, and the Darwinian look he represents, altruistic and self-sacrificial acts can be possible and justifiable under certain conditions. One of these conditions which receive attention in *Enduring Love* is the Darwinian principle of "kin selection." Joe resorts to the Darwinian principle of kin selection to justify his letting go of the rope, and as a result, renders Logan's heroic action irrational and senseless. He reflects that if he, like Logan, had not let go of the rope Clarissa would have been left alone and unprotected: "If I hadn't, Logan and I might have dropped together, and Clarissa would have been sitting here alone tonight" (p. 40). At another point in the novel, Joe argues that since the boy caught in the balloon was no kin to him, risking one's life would be insensible: "Suddenly the sensible

choice was to look out for yourself. The child was not my child, and I was not going to die for it.... Altruism had no place" (pp. 22-23).

Furthermore, Joe doubts the validity and value of Logan's heroism in saving the child's life when he is reflecting on visiting Logan's wife and his two orphaned children. Here, Joe is inclined to interpret Logan's keeping the rope as nothing but an instance of rational miscalculation:

Was it panic, or rational calculation? Had we killed him really, or simply refused to die with him? But if we had been with him, stayed with him, no one would have died.... How was it possible to tell Mrs. Logan of her husband's sacrifice without drawing her attention to our own cowardice? Or was it his folly? He was the hero, and it was the weak who had sent him to his death. Or we were the survivors and he was the miscalculating dolt. (pp. 62-63)

In chapter 14, through the discussion Joe Rose is having with Mrs. Logan the heroic and self-sacrificial act of Logan is reduced, first, to an act arising from habit due to having been a doctor and been on the rescue team and, therefore, had been habituated through his medical trainings to impulsively save his fellow human beings; second, to the Darwinian mechanism of "sexual selection," or specifically "selection of superior mates," as a means of showing himself to his mistress:

He always wanted to be the best, but he was no longer the all-round athlete he once was. He was forty-two. It hurt. He couldn't accept it. And when men start to feel like that...I knew nothing about this woman. I suspected nothing, it didn't occur to me, I don't even know if she was the first, but I know this. She was watching him, and he knew she was watching, and he had to show her, he had to prove himself to her. He had to run right into the middle of the scene, he had to be the first to take the rope and the last to let go, instead of doing what he usually would—hanging back and seeing what was best. That's what he would have done without her, and it's pathetic. He was showing off to a girl, Mr. Rose, and we're all suffering for it now. (pp. 129-30)

However, at the end it becomes clear that Logan was not having an affair with a woman and therefore not showing off his courage. It becomes clear that the scarf found on the front seat of Logan's car was Bonnie's—the mistress of a university professor. They were caught in the rain and Logan had given them a ride that the ballooning incident happened. When this information is revealed, Mrs. Logan somehow feels ashamed and sorry for doubting the integrity of her husband: "There were tears in her eyes. 'But who's going to forgive me? The only person who can is dead'" (pp. 238).

At this moment, Joe Rose's reaction is significant. At hearing Jean Logan's considering her husband a hero followed by her sense of moral remorse due to having misjudged him, Joe retorts, "*this breathless scrambling for forgiveness seemed to me almost mad, Mad Hatterish...*" (p. 238). The question which comes to the mind is that now that the evidence reveals what Logan did was somehow free from any personal use and advantage for himself and his survival, why Joe feels mad and furious? However, still sticking to the grand Darwinian ontological standpoint the novel proposes, Joe's reaction becomes less surprising. Indeed, Joe is nauseated by Jean's "scrambling for forgiveness" because he does not find Logan's heroic act, after all reproductive and adaptive reasons omitted, worthwhile. And seemingly what Logan did the day of the ballooning accident was just a rational miscalculation or neural malfunction. Accordingly, the act of feeling sorry for misjudging a worthless act he finds nauseating and maddening.

COURAGE AND SANITY BIOLOGISED

In line with "cooperation" and "heroism" which, as discussed above, take on a new colour and significance, ethical binaries like "courage/cowardice" and "sanity/insanity" undergo a definitional transformation in *Enduring Love*. In other words, while ethical qualities like "courage" is defined traditionally as a quality associated with risking one's life or properties for what is deemed morally good (therefore, a courageous act is both respected and approved), within the Darwinian ethical framework the same act is seen as an instance of stupidity. Similarly, while "cowardice," is a generally disapproved ethical quality (*Collins Dic.* 2017), within the Darwinian ethics (in numerous cases) it is an ethically recommended act.

In the novel, the courageous act of Logan in keeping the rope up to the end is seen through the Darwinian lens emphasizing that "biology rules out invariably unstinting altruism. Any creature that never, regardless of context, behaved first for itself could be easily exploited by others," as a result the organism "would be unlikely to last long enough to reach the age of reproduction, and if it lasted that far, it would get no further" (Boyd, 2009, pp. 51-52). Therefore, his traditionally-approved act of courage is downgraded and is deemed not reproductively advantageous, hence, an instance of stupidity. Following the same logic, the others' letting go of the rope is not only represented as an embodiment of cowardice and lack of courage, but is justified as an example of sane act, sanity and insanity of an act being defined according to the amount of reproductive success it brings. Defined as such, war-promoting behaviours are very likely to be categorised as sane and approved acts; this quality one can find in the protagonist of McEwan's *Saturday* (Habibi 2013, p. 130).

LOVE BIOLOGISED

Finally, the human ethical quality which is directly present yet not explicitly explored in the novel is the concept of "love," specifically "enduring love." The significance of the concept of enduring love in regard to McEwan's novel is quite evident as to the place it occupies in its title. The concept of love in general is defined as "strong affection for another" (*Webster's Dic.* "Love" p. 737). As it is obvious from the given definition, love is basically an affection or compassion for "another," which traditionally requires getting beyond one's self. However, putting this key element of love's definition within the Darwinian value system the novel establishes, which as explained in detail earlier is fundamentally a survival-oriented system, one notices that within that system having love for *another* person without considering an adaptive advantage for yourself is a logical impossibility. Within a Darwinian evolutionary system the concept of human love is reduced to a mechanism for facilitating the process of "mate choice" (Fisher, Aron, and & Brown 2006, p. 2173). Just as "sex drive evolved to motivate individuals to seek a range of mating partners" and "attraction...to motivate individuals to prefer and pursue specific partners," human romantic love is a "primary brain system that evolved in avian and mammalian species to direct reproduction" (Fisher et al. 2006, p. 2173). Therefore, according to the Darwinian worldview, human love must be defined and located within the same grand Darwinian chart governed by cornerstone evolutionary principles of survival, reproduction, and adaptation. Given what has been said, the concept of love existing at the heart of *Enduring Love* would undergo essential and definitional challenges.

In *Enduring Love*, we see that Logan sacrifices his life for the love of an innocent child, the kind of love which may itself be classified under some higher ideal, say, the greater love of truth. However, the way the novel treats Logan's act of love, depicting it as an

instance of rational miscalculation that ends in the biological destruction of the organism (Logan), and Joe Rose's survival through refraining from risking his biological life, is seemingly an attempt at redefining the traditional concept of love which approvingly emphasises on one's affection for others. Instead, enduring love within the Darwinian value system *Enduring Love* supports is only possible once it is directed and focused on the biological survival of the self and not others. In this regard, Richard Dawkins' idea of "selfish cooperator" is very relevant, since the cooperation done by the "selfish cooperator" can be replaced by any other ethical action like love, hence the "selfish lover" which by definition is in contrast with the traditional notion of love. Accordingly, John Logan's keeping the rope in the hope of saving that helpless child stands at odds with the new definition the novel proposes of the concept of love, in which the biological survival of the organism is the determining factor, excluding all others as secondary and dispensable.

Consequently, it is impossible for the concept of human love defined as such to be basically based on sacrifice and be enduring. It is because within evolutionary theories, actions and deeds are directed to the self (based on the selfish gene theory), excluding all essentially beyond-self ethical qualities whatever. As a result of being based on self-interest, within Darwinian outlook, human love cannot be long-lasting and enduring; as Marazziti et al holds human "romantic love can last 12–18 months" (qtd. in Fisher et al. 2006, p. 2174).

CONCLUSION

Although the plot of Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* is filled with page-turner events forcing the reader towards the end of the narrative, the same events engender serious ramifications and challenges for the human ethics. As demonstrated above, the novel establishes a Darwinian viewpoint from which tries to challenge and re-define human ethical qualities, like "cooperation," "heroism," "courage," and "love". Having been grounded on the Darwinian key principles of survival, adaptation, and natural selection, the value system *Enduring Love* supports, only endorses the acts and decisions that are adaptively beneficial and biologically advantageous to the survival of the organism. This is in the case that such valuation criteria contain elemental contrasts with the traditional definitions of the above-mentioned ethical qualities. Therefore, *Enduring Love*, as argued, can be taken as attempting to challenge and re-define ethical qualities through biologising and animalizing human beings.

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