

现代英语语言文学论丛·新锐系列

移情视阈下的 伊恩·麦克尤恩小说研究

A Study of
Ian McEwan's Novels
from the Perspective of Empathy

罗媛◎著



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序

伊恩·麦克尤恩是当代英国优秀作家，1987年出版的长篇小说《时间中的孩子》为作者赢得声誉，《阿姆斯特丹》1998年获得布克奖，奠定麦克尤恩在20世纪英国文学史上的重要地位。

麦克尤恩擅长编织故事，他的小说情节发展扣人心弦，叙事艺术娴熟，其逼真的心理刻画往往能产生一种令人震撼的艺术效果。麦克尤恩继承并超越了英国文学的现实主义传统，清晰有力地描摹现代人在当代社会的生存状态。国内外学者从多个角度研究麦克尤恩的小说创作，有关他作品的道德、伦理问题引起人们的关注，其相关的争论一直以来都渗透到麦克尤恩研究的各个阶段。罗媛的《移情视阈下的伊恩·麦克尤恩小说研究》从“移情”(empathy)视角审视麦克尤恩的小说，观点新颖，阐释得当。麦克尤恩认为小说是对人性的探寻，将移情视为是人性的核心和道德的起点。罗媛通过自己的阅读，发现移情在麦克尤恩的多部小说中占据重要的位置，决定在伦理批评的框架内从移情切入系统考察小说中的移情问题，进而考量麦克尤恩对多维人性的探寻，揭示麦克尤恩小说深邃的伦理内涵。

《移情视阈下的伊恩·麦克尤恩小说研究》比较系统地探究多种移情类型，涉及麦克尤恩小说中的历史书写、人性残暴与移情之关联、两性疏离关系与移情之关联、自我与移情他人之伦理关系等诸多问题，较为全面地剖析了麦克尤恩创作的主题，凸显作品的思想深度。引入心理学移情研究的新成果应用于文学伦理批评是此书创新之处。在现实意义上，有关移情问题的讨论已经日益成为当代社会的重要议题，无论是在私人领域还是公共领域，对于小

到家庭还是大至全球性的社群，移情都可以发挥建设性作用，在此语境下，罗媛研究麦克尤恩在其小说中所提倡的自我对他人的移情关怀伦理对于构建充满温情的和谐社会具有现实意义。

罗媛在 2007 年考入南京大学外国语学院攻读博士学位，她充分利用这一宝贵的学习机会，刻苦用功，认真研读麦克尤恩的作品以及有关伦理与移情的理论，建构起论文的框架和论点。在南京大学读博期间，罗媛曾到英国格罗斯特大学研究中心访学一年，了解麦克尤恩国际学术研究前沿，并在英国牛津大学读书节上向麦克尤恩本人请教。经过 5 年的学习，她于 2012 年顺利通过论文答辩，获得博士学位。罗媛毕业后回到苏州科技大学外国语学院任教，又于 2014 年 9 月到哈佛大学英文系访学一年，回国后继续认真做学问，脚踏实地开展英国文学的研究，完成了教育部人文社科青年基金有关麦克尤恩的研究项目。

罗媛始终如一地坚守在当代英国小说研究园地里，正如本书所示，她以扎实的文本细读为基础，运用近年来心理学界有关移情研究的新成果，在麦克尤恩研究上提出独到见解，为文学伦理批评开辟了新的跨学科的研究路径，在题材和内容上拓展了麦克尤恩研究的深度和广度。作为罗媛的导师，我为她取得的进步感到高兴，衷心祝愿她在学术研究中不断取得新成绩。

王守仁

2017 年 11 月于南京大学

前 言

当代英国小说家伊恩·麦克尤恩(Ian McEwan 1948—)是20世纪70年代以来活跃于英国文坛的最具影响力的作家之一。麦克尤恩坚信小说是对人性的探寻,“移情”是人性的核心和道德的起点。他对个体移情能力的重视契合文学批评界自“伦理转向”以来的学术背景,伦理批评成了麦克尤恩研究的热点。但是,学界对麦克尤恩小说中的移情问题却缺乏深入系统的研究。早在18世纪休谟和亚当·斯密就强调同情(移情)于道德生活的作用,现象学领域的哲学家、部分心理学家以及关怀伦理学家等都关注移情的功用,移情在自我与他人之间是否能构筑起伦理关系发挥重要作用。本书在伦理批评的框架内以“移情”为切入点,系统考察麦克尤恩六部主要小说中自我与他人之间的多种移情类型以及相关的伦理道德问题,进而深入研究麦克尤恩对复杂人性的探寻。

第一章以小说《无辜者》《黑犬》和《赎罪》为主,分析移情匮乏和暴力历史之间的关联。麦克尤恩将普通个体置于特定历史政治情景下,探讨了移情匮乏与人性残暴面的呈现之间的密切关系。在特定历史背景下,移情匮乏具体表现为移情腐蚀、移情脆弱性和移情枯竭。麦克尤恩探究个体如何在特定历史、政治情景下遭遇移情腐蚀、经历移情脆弱性和移情枯竭,从而呈现出人性的残暴面。他从细微的个体层面书写宏大的欧洲暴力历史,将暴力历史书写与人性的残暴面的探究有机地结为一体。麦克尤恩把《无辜者》的背景置于“冷战”鼎盛时期,描摹主人公在特定意识形态下遭遇移情腐蚀后从一位内敛、单纯的英伦青年变成残忍暴徒的过程,既揭示了人性潜存的暴力冲动,也批判了“冷战”意识形态、军事暴

力对普通个体的移情腐蚀作用。《黑犬》以审美逾越的方式间接再现大屠杀事件,探析大屠杀后人类移情脆弱性的表征并曝光人性阴暗的暴力欲望。在《赎罪》中,麦克尤恩对敦刻尔克大撤退中战争暴力的生动再现颠覆了民族记忆里关于敦刻尔克奇迹的叙事,杀戮肆虐的战场使士兵们的移情濒临枯竭并显露出“平庸的恶”,个体在集体病态的癫狂下显露出潜伏于人性深处的暴力习性。麦克尤恩严肃地书写暴力历史,在他看来,人类只有直面暴力历史并正视自身阴暗的暴力欲望,才能从残暴历史中吸取教训,逐步完善人性,最终走向和平的未来。

第二章分析个体间移情理解的障碍如何导致两性关系的疏离。麦克尤恩小说中的男女主人公们尽管相爱,但是他们往往囿于各自的性别身份、思维范式、价值取向,没有践行以“视觉换位”为特征的移情理解,即使对伴侣表现出了移情,但是在很大程度上受到自我中心主义认知框架的束缚,在情感和认知方面都没有理解和包容对方的异质性存在,故双方产生种种误解和冲突,最终情感趋于疏离状态。在《爱无可忍》里,男主人公经历道德自我的考验后,没有向伴侣袒露自己内疚的脆弱情感,试图重新建构自己的男性气质来获取对方的认可,虽然伴侣曾一度对他表现出了移情理解,但是没有得到他的移情回应,其封闭的男性自我妨碍了彼此之间的移情理解和沟通。《黑犬》中叙事人的岳父母双方都囿于各自的认知范式和价值取向而否定对方的他性存在,造成多年的情感疏离。麦克尤恩揭示了个体间移情理解障碍所折射的以自我为中心的人性弱点:人们往往将他人纳入自我中心主义的认知框架内,对他者施以同一化的暴力,对异质性他人缺乏尊重和包容,即便是夫妻、伴侣这样亲密的两性关系也概莫能外。

第三章以《时间中的孩子》《赎罪》和《星期六》为主,讨论个体移情他人与自我之伦理存在的关系。麦克尤恩探究小说主人公如何经历了对他人缺乏移情关切嬗变至对他人的移情能力增强的过程,这些主人公通过不断移情理解和移情关怀他人行走在通往伦

理存在的旅途中。《时间中的孩子》的主人公遭遇创伤后曾陷入自我中心的关切，他最终移情关怀亲人和朋友，创伤才得以愈合。《赎罪》的主人公自幼缺乏移情关怀的滋养，年少无知的她将他人纳入自我中心主义的阐释框架而误解他人，让无辜者遭受牢狱之灾。随着年岁的增长，她的移情能力不断增强，最后以移情书写他者的形式加深对他人他性的理解，以此来赎罪，实现自我伦理意识之反思。《星期六》的主人公沉浸于自我中心主义的隔离性自我而忽视了对边缘他者的移情关怀，经历了他者外在性的闯入后将移情关怀对象扩展至陌生人，对异质性他人的召唤做出了伦理回应，趋近了列维纳斯所说的作为责任存在的伦理主体。麦克尤恩肯定这种人之为人的伦理性也就是肯定和颂扬人性中为他人的光明面，试图为“9·11”后的当代西方社会寻求一条走出自我与他者暴力冲突困境的伦理出路。

本书考察了麦克尤恩小说中从移情匮乏到移情理解的障碍再到移情他人能力的不断增强和移情关怀对象的不断扩大的过程。当自我对他人移情匮乏或移情完全缺失而陷入巴伦所说的零度移情水平时，将他人视为实现自己暴力欲望的非人对象并显露出残暴的人性则无任何道德可言。两性之间的交往通常会表现出一定程度的移情，如若缺乏具有伦理内涵的“视角换位”，则妨碍彼此之间的移情理解和沟通，无法肯定和包容对方异质性的存在。当移情他人的能力随着认知能力的提高而逐渐增强后，移情理解和关怀的对象逐渐地从亲人、朋友、熟人扩展至陌生人，自我将在他者“面容”的感召下无条件地对异质性他人承担起无限责任，从而建构起伦理的主体性。通过移情视阈透视麦克尤恩的小说创作，我们可以看到个体自我如何经历从对他人移情的缺失、到移情理解的障碍、再到移情关怀他人并对他人承担无限责任的转变。麦克尤恩既揭示人性中潜存的残暴欲望、以自我为中心的弱点，也肯定了人性中为他人的光明面。麦克尤恩对人类未来充满了希望。

麦克尤恩以娴熟的叙述艺术展示了不同境况下人的行动和心

灵世界,展示了人物行为和动机的复杂性,但从不在创作中给读者以某种明确的道德指引。他在小说创作中所实践的是对存在于世界中的人的可能性和人性的可能性的开放式探寻。在移情视阈下透视麦克尤恩对这些小说人物的探寻过程,我们看出麦克尤恩对人与人之间移情的重视以及对人的伦理存在可能性的憧憬。

ABSTRACT

Ian McEwan, one of the foremost contemporary novelists in Britain, believes that the novel is a mode of enquiry into human nature. He insists that empathy is at the core of humanity and the beginning of morality. McEwan's concern for empathy and morality finds its expression in his novels. However, so far little research has been systematically carried out on empathy among characters in McEwan's novels. The emphasis on the moral function of empathy can be dated back to David Hume and Adam Smith in the 18th century. Since then some philosophers in phenomenology, psychologists and theorists of the ethics of care have stressed the importance of empathy in human life. This book launches a critical study of McEwan's works from the perspective of empathy in the framework of ethical criticism. Through a systematic examination of various types of empathy demonstrated among the characters in McEwan's six major novels, and of the relevant ethical problems between self and others, it aims at revealing McEwan's insights into human nature.

Chapter One explores the relations between deficiency in empathy and the emergence of violent behaviour. Positioning individuals in their specific political and historical situation, McEwan explores links between empathy deficiency and violence through analyzing the ways in which characters reveal their violent human nature as a result of empathy erosion, empathy fragility and empathy exhaustion. He approaches the grand European history through subtle descriptions of individuals in their

historical context, thus fusing his exploration of human nature with the violent history of the 20th century. In *The Innocent*, which is set in Berlin in 1955 at the height of the Cold War, McEwan exposes the violent potential hidden in human nature and criticizes the ideology and military violence which contribute to an individual's empathy erosion through portraying how a gentle and introverted young Englishman becomes an extremely cruel man. *Black Dogs* explores empathy fragility after the Holocaust and reveals the dark violent desire of human beings by indirectly representing prison camp atrocities through aesthetic transgression. In *Atonement*, McEwan subverts the beautifying narrative of the Dunkirk retreat in national memory through the vivid description of war violence from a soldier's perspective. The soldiers who witness violence in the battlefield tend to suffer from empathy exhaustion which makes them reveal the "banality of evil", with human nature's violent potential reflected in the pathological madness of warfare in the battlefield. McEwan believes human beings should confront violence in history and admit the potential for violence in human nature so that we might strive for a better, peaceful future for all humankind.

Chapter Two analyzes how barriers to empathic understanding have caused estranged relationships among lovers or married couples. In McEwan's novels, though the lovers or couples love each other, they fail to practise empathic understanding in their relationships as a result of their narrowed view related to their respective gender identity, cognitive paradigm and value orientation. Some protagonists try to empathize with their partners, but they fail to have access to the alterity of their partners emotionally or cognitively due to the limitations of the self-centered cognitive framework related to their pseudo-empathy, which finally leads to their emotional estrangement. In *Enduring Love* the male protagonist Joe, after the emotional and moral trial of a traumatic

accident, is unwilling to reveal his fragile feelings of guilt to his lover Clarissa. Instead, he is obsessed with his self-concern to reconstruct his masculinity in the hope of impressing Clarissa. Though Clarissa once tries to approach Joe in the manner of empathic understanding, she does not get an empathic response from Joe. Joe's closed male self hinders the empathic understanding and communications between him and Clarissa. In *Black Dogs* the narrator's parents-in-law, who have different cognitive paradigms and value orientations, suffer from years of emotional estrangement as the result of each one's negation of the other's alterity. McEwan exposes the self-centeredness in human nature implied in the failed empathic understanding and failed communications among the protagonists. Usually people tend to approach others from their own self-centered cognitive perspective with insufficient respect or tolerance for the alterity of the Other, trying to reduce the Other to the same in a violent way. Even the intimate relationship of couples and lovers is no exception.

Chapter Three discusses the relationship between empathizing with others and the ethical existence of the self by focusing on *The Child in Time*, *Atonement* and *Saturday*. McEwan in these novels explores the way that the characters transform from a lack of empathic concern to the enhancement of empathy for others. These protagonists are on their way to approaching an ethical existence by showing the empathic understanding and empathic care of others. The protagonist in *The Child in Time* becomes trapped in narcissistic concerns after experiencing the trauma of losing his child but ultimately recovers from this trauma by showing empathic understanding and care for relatives and friends. The adolescent protagonist in *Atonement* suffers from not being empathically nurtured since childhood by her parents in a dysfunctional family. Based on her arbitrary interpretation of others in her self-centered

interpretative framework, Briony causes an innocent person to suffer years of imprisonment as a result of her false accusation. As she grows older, her capacity for empathy becomes stronger and she tries through writing a novel both to make atonement and to get an empathic understanding of others' alterity, increasing her ethical awareness. The protagonist in *Saturday*, first obsessed with concern for a separated self in Levinas's words, and indifferent to the marginalized, finally extends his empathic care to strangers, thus approaching the ethical subjectivity of a responsible agent. What McEwan affirms is the possibility of an ethical existence for human beings through the care of others. In other words, McEwan celebrates the positive side of human nature trying to seek an ethical solution to the violent conflict between self and others in the contemporary post-"9·11" world.

This book explores different types of empathy in relation to complex moral and ethical issues in McEwan's novels. There is moral failure when individuals regard others as objects to realize their violent desire, revealing violence in human nature that results from empathy deficiency, or lack of empathy toward others. Usually empathy finds its expression to some degree in intimate gender relationships. However, there are barriers to empathic understanding in the ethical implications of a lack of perspective taking. Thus the couple or lovers fail to affirm or tolerate each other's alterity. When a person strengthens his empathy as his cognitive ability develops, extending the empathic care beyond his relatives, friends, and acquaintances to strangers, he assumes the infinite responsibility towards others as an ethical response to the call of the face of the Other, which constitutes ethical subjectivity in Levinas's terms. Approaching empathy in McEwan's novels, we catch a glimpse into how individuals experience the development from a lack of empathy toward others, to an empathic understanding, to the assumption of an

infinite responsibility for others. McEwan exposes human nature's violent potential and the weakness of self-centeredness, while he also celebrates the side of human nature that shows care for the interest of others. He is optimistic about the future of humankind.

Hailed as the most technically accomplished of all modern British writers, McEwan portrays human beings' actions and thoughts under different circumstances to reveal the complexity of behavior and motivation. However, he never gives readers any clear moral guidance. What he is attempting in his writing is to investigate the possibility of human potential and human nature in an open-ended way. What McEwan repeatedly stresses as ethically important is individuals' empathy towards others, and consequently we find an emphasis on the open possibility of human beings' ethical existence throughout his novels.

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