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CRONOTOPUL PUTERII ÎN OPERA DE FICȚIUNE A LUI MCCARTHY ȘI A LUI MCEWAN

THE POWER CHRONOTOPE IN MCCARTHY'S AND MCEWAN'S FICTION

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Key words: power, chronotope, space, time, identity, literary cartography

Introduction

The current doctoral dissertation is meant, by its examination of significant works by Cormac McCarthy and Ian McEwan, to assess the relevance of power-related debates in the “scholarly borderlands” linking contemporary literary and cultural studies. The adopted theoretical framework acknowledges the contributions of critical voices from the various fields of the humanities and the social sciences in examinations of literary representations of space, time and identity. Starting from them, I have articulated the explorations made in this doctoral dissertation with the use of what has been called here the power chronotope. The usefulness of inventing this term had to do with stressing the dynamic relationship between identity, space and time in literature, dynamics here obviously indicating the centrality of the power component. This terminological invention was based on important statements made by Mikhail Bakhtin (the chronotope), Michel Foucault (the ubiquity and pluri-dimensionality of power relations as part of what is here called the power chronotope), as well as on the intersections between identity in crisis and power (Erik Erikson), the importance of spatial studies, of literary cartographies (Bertrand Westphal, Robert T. Tally Jr) in representations of the chronotope.

In order to stress the political dimension of the spatial and temporal nexus, the current dissertation uses the phrase “power chronotope” to integrate the various dimensions and configurations of power, identity, place, space and time at various levels. It involves intradiegetic and extradiegetic power relations, individual and group, local, regional, national identity, place and space both in terms of the literary cartography of the texts and as external frames. Such external frames may include the cultural space in which the text was published and the relevance of subsequent constructions of space in which the text has been received by critics and larger audiences. The power chronotope accounts for the complexity of the configurations displaying power relations between and among concrete places and more abstract, constructed spaces, between and among identities at homodiegetic, heterodiegetic and authorial levels, inside the text and in relation to the outside world.

Therefore, the theoretical framework accommodates such landmarks as Foucault’s ideas about the pluri-directionality of power and the creation of subjectivities, Bakhtin’s dialogism and the importance of the chronotope in literature, Erik Erikson’s theories on the critical stages of identity formation and development. The dissertation also includes due acknowledgment of and reference to significant research and seminal ideas coming from Identity Theory (Stryker 1968) and Social Identity Theory (from Tajfel 1959 onward) as applied to the various actors involved in the processes of literary communication both inside the fictional world (character interaction and narrative perspective in relation to space and time) and outside it.

The *self-concept* from Social Identity Theory is relevant to the narrator or focalizer in literary narratives, having to do with how tensions arise in the dynamic processes of inner-group categorization. From Identity Theory, from an equally power perspective, such aspects as the perceived salience of one particular identity in the self of a focalized character or I– narrator can shed light on the construction of specific literary chronotopes. Of particular interest is new research in spatial literary studies and geocriticism, in the wake of Bertrand Westphal and Robert T. Tally Jr. This research elucidates processes and results of space, place, mapping within the literary texts having relevance to the articulation of power in what is here called the power chronotope that works of fiction such as the literature of McCarthy and McEwan display. It is significant, among other aspects stressing the power of space inside the chronotope and the justification of the phrase promoted by this dissertation (power chronotope) that in his volume *Spatiality*, Robert T. Tally Jr explores genre in relation to the literary chronotope (Tally Jr 2013: 54-58).

While Bakhtin's ideas and Foucault's view on power relations provided a relative drift for this investigation, the starting point and the focus were more dependent on the impact of some of the works by the two novelists under investigation here. In addition to being great masters of style, McEwan and McCarthy, still active, have had long careers. The two have engaged artistically and often very critically with the dynamics of literary and cultural discourse in ever changing contexts.

Starting chronologically, I saw a parallel endeavor by both McEwan and McCarthy to move from the exploitation of what has been called in this dissertation "shock-and-awe" techniques and an almost clinical and detached examination of violence and depravity and a gradual movement toward more complex, sometimes self-conflicting and contradictory power chronotopes involving remarkable characters. This led to the determination to try to encompass as much of this parallel creative progress across the pages and the ages, the corpus thus dealing with a multiplicity of power, space, time, identity configurations. These include some unexpected aspects of the impressive Manifest Destiny ideology in mid-19th century America (McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*), the decline of the patriarchal myth of the heroic and resourceful cowboy and of his frontier dreams of autonomy in the mid-20th century in the same area of the US, the borderlands of the Midwest (*The Border Trilogy*), consequences of the Cold War on power relations at international and personal level (McEwan's *The Innocent*), and in the same British author's work, aspects of Thatcherite and post-Thatcherite Britain as represented in the articulations of such works as *The Child in Time* and *Amsterdam*, to note only a few of the major issues.

There is space and place for both novelists as very significant writers straddling the two millennia, a claim that appears to support both the spatial and the political dimension of their work, and Bertrand Westphal, Robert T. Tally Jr., Adam Barrows, Yi-Fu Tuan, and some important others, are bound to authoritatively territorialize the theoretical space of the current doctoral enterprise. The choice of the literary corpus in relation to its attending theoretical framework will also be a matter of power

being exerted on the “coexistence” of the two sets of texts brought together by the author of this dissertation, an undertaking which, in turn, has largely depended on the power of the distinguished scholars having engaged with the theoretical framework as well as with the scrutiny and assessment of the two authors’ work.

The first chapter traces the theoretical framework in which the current examination of the configuration of the power chronotopes mapped and articulated in the two authors’ work is to be undertaken. The starting point is the definition of the importance of power-related debates in the interwoven literary and cultural studies today, acknowledging the contributions of important theorists from the various fields of the humanities and the social sciences in examinations of space, time and identity and their articulations in what has been called in this doctoral dissertation the power chronotope. Foucault and Bakhtin, the former in a very straightforward way, are the central points of reference in the conceptualization of the power chronotope, with the latter laying stress on the centrality of the dynamic relationship between space and time in literature.

Illustrating the inevitable contradictions and ideological differences in the field of cultural studies, attention was paid to the divergent opinions on power expressed by Michel Foucault and Stuart Hall. The former insists on the ubiquity and multi-directionality of power, the latter on a clearer distinction between hegemonic power and resistance to it in terms of the clash between the oppressor, owning power, and the oppressed. Considering the complexity of the literary text and the variety of changing relations within it and outside it that shape it, preference has been given to Foucault’s vision of the fluidity and multi-directionality of power in the articulation of the power chronotope.

Attention has been paid to how significant developments can be detected not only within the text, but also within the general frame of the author’s work across the years. This has been related to what have been identified as three distinct, yet interrelated stages in the careers of Cormac McCarthy and Ian McEwan. Within the articulation of the power chronotopes, ideas by the sociologist Erving Goffman, supported by such theorists as James C. Scott, have given a better contour to power relations as previously defined by Foucault and Hall, introducing in the context of resistance to hegemonic power relations, hidden transcripts (Scott) and the dramaturgical perspective of playing one’s already assigned power role (Goffman) with a degree of agency and idiosyncratic performance within the overall chronotope that society offers and imposes.

Stressing the interrelatedness between views on power and identity in the social sciences and the humanities, the dissertation accommodates Erich Auerbach’s by now classical redefinition of mimesis, which draws attention to human problems and human complications in the mimetic representations of literature, with Anthony Easthope’s arguable claim that literary studies are not related to, but part of

cultural studies in their preoccupation with power and its dynamics. It also pays attention to Roland Barthes contribution to seeing the apparent “innocent” connotation as context-bound and therefore affected by power games, therefore instrumental in the construction and management of power chronotopes, both in language and human experience in general and in literature, stressing “the rhetoric of the image,” as his famous seminal text bearing this title conveys.

The theoretical chapter also acknowledges indebtedness, starting from Freud’s identity theory of psycho-sexual development to Erik Erikson’s theory of psycho-social development, to ideas having to do with identity crises as stages in the formation and development of the self. Certain stages, such as Erik Erikson’s “eight ages of Man” have been found particularly useful for the examination of the emerging chronotope of the central character. Thus, in early Ian McEwan’s fiction, stage five - Identity vs Role Confusion - has been relevant in the examination of the troubled teenagers and of a mentally-challenged killer, while in Cormac McCarthy’s work, both stages five, six and eight have been relevant to the early fiction, to the so-called middle fiction of the selected canon, as well as to the last section.

Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory have also been instrumental in the formulation of the framework in which identity and power relations are to be dealt with. More specifically, attention is paid to the mechanisms and the relative salience that individuals in real life and characters in fiction attribute to the roles they play and also power in terms of the interactional commitment and affective commitment being activated.

The realization of the power chronotope at the broadest level is also to be traced to Zygmunt Bauman’s identity in the contemporary world in which the dynamic transformations and uncertainties lead to the idea of a general, “liquid modernity.” This will be particularly useful in the middle and late sections of the corpus of Ian McEwan’s fiction, in which national and then international, global coordinates become important dimensions in the articulation of vaster power chronotopes (*The Child in Time*, *The Innocent* and *Black Dogs*).

Henri Lefebvre’s distinction between abstract space and social space also draws attention to the realization that the latter, social space, results from human interaction and subject to conflicting, power processes. Space is organized according to definite power requirements of the actors involved in these processes. Following up on Lefebvre’s observations, Edward Soja’s “trialectics of spatiality” refers to the processes that lead to the formation of spaces and the different attitudes to these spaces which are part of the dynamic interaction. Space is definitely related to power and, through the human involvement it presupposes, human identity. The section on gender, power, identity stresses the already obvious in contemporary cultural debates: gender is a central dimension involved in power management and circulation. Contributions by several leading feminists are to be taken into account in the definitions which are currently moving away from more straightforward distinctions toward more problematic ones.

Gender complications will be more relevant to Ian McEwan's work and less so to Cormac McCarthy's, whose Westerns and anti-Westerns are mainly inhabited by troubled and troubling men.

Class, power and culture and Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* is also considered in the theoretical chapter as related to key issues in the processes of identity, class and power definitions. His ideas in cultural studies are more important in terms of a point of debate, as Foucault's ideas of power not as social capital but as a vast network of pluri-directional relations provide an alternative and more productive framework for the explorations of culture and power in general, of specific chronotopes in particular.

Chapter 2 of the dissertation, through its very title, announces what it is concerned with: Narrow Power Landscapes and the Shock-and-Awe Approach to McCarthy's and McEwan's Early Fiction. McCarthy's *The Orchard Keeper* and *Child of God*, like McEwan's *First Love*, *Last Rites* and *The Cement Garden*, appear to follow a shock-and-awe rhetoric in the articulation of power chronotopes apparently highlighting gratuitous violence, to be explained by both ideological fractures and by internal identity crises of the adolescents at the center of the four volumes of early McCarthy and early McEwan..

The first part of the chapter explored what has been found in this doctoral dissertation to be a hybrid version of a Faulknerian chronotope as a literary response to both Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha and to the attending Agrarian ideology of the South in the inter-war period in McCarthy's early fiction. The other shock-and-awe approach undertaken by Ian McEwan in his early fiction was examined going from the initial elegant detachment and stylish morbidity that critics initially noted toward establishing aspects announcing a wider power chronotope, aspects which are already here in perceptible form. The texts were shown to display glimpses of a more comprehensive world than the claustrophobic, narrow scope apparently focused upon in the short stories of *First Love*, *Last Rites*.

McCarthy's *The Orchard Keeper* has a lot in common in terms of its overall rhetoric with McEwan's early fiction, especially the collection *First Love*, *Last Rites* and the novel *The Cement Garden*. This led to the inclusion of these McEwan and McCarthy texts within this particular section of the dissertation. Both authors appear to prepare the ground for more comprehensive power games in their subsequent works, initially focusing on narrower fictional landscapes where extreme violence is meant to draw attention through its shock-and-awe approach.

Both McEwan's early fiction with its almost gratuitous violence and McCarthy's first novels may be discussed in terms of the global, apocalyptic vision of the power of destructive war in the years following the Cuban Missile Crisis of the early 1960s and its possibility of bringing about total annihilation of humankind. Their specific responses to prevailing ideologies might be both similar and divergent, as it will be seen. In terms of the artistic representation of shock-and-awe spaces and strange

characters set in these apparently stifling constraints, they are equally similar and different, in the natural play of sameness-and-difference visions on particular chronotopes.

The early novels were set in McCarthy's native Tennessee, so they share one definite space. They dramatize, in an almost hyperbolic, shock-and-awe way, the turmoil of the central teenage characters undergoing serious identity trouble. That happened against the background of the equally serious tumultuous clashes between an isolated rural community and its way of life and the irruption of the negative consequences of the modern world. In addition, there were intimations of an ideological clash between a harsher view of the South and the milder, Agrarian view of an idealized version of the same, but differently conceived, South.

The scope of the equally shock-and-awe fiction of early McEwan was also deliberately narrow, allowing the author to explore deranged psyches of young central characters at the same age as those of McCarthy. Most of the power imbalances were located either within or within the very narrow scope of these characters' selves, at exactly Erik Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development, a teenager's identity vs. role confusion. The confusion of the adolescent characters in the early work of both authors had led to the terrible, and horrible identity reassessments at the core of the narratives.

Chapter 3, Extending the Perspective: McCarthy's and McEwan's Middle Work, investigates the development of the process already examined in the previous volumes of the two authors. Regarding Cormac McCarthy, a significant change in the configuration of the power chronotope was identified. It involves the spatial and cultural transition from the parochial, narrow spaces of the Appalachian cartography of *The Orchard Keeper* and *Child of God* toward the vaster spaces of the borderlands of Texas and Mexico in *The Border Trilogy*.

In what has been called here the "middle work" of the corpus under examination, McCarthy's novels of *The Border Trilogy* are equally easy to chart in terms of the geography they map. They follow somehow in the footsteps of Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), dealing with crossings and exchanges between Mexico and Texas at a time when the frontier is still fluid, violent, but not as apocalyptic as the "borderland novels" set in mid-19th century (*Blood Meridian*) and late 20th century (*No Country for Old Men*). Anzaldua sees the area as an open wound: "The U.S. - Mexican border *es una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldua 3). Unlike Anzaldua's direction of her crossings in her cultural cartography, McCarthy's central characters, once they have lost their status north of the border, go south to preserve their "cowboy consciousness," with pathetic outcomes as a rule in a world in which old traditional values are on the wane. For them the open wound is north of the border, and crossing into Mexico is seen as providing new opportunities and solutions to the critical situations they are in. As for Ian McEwan's middle novels, *The*

Child in Time, *The Innocent*, *Black Dogs*, they appear to explore, unlike the perversion and depravity of the earlier adolescent protagonists, the possibility of preserving one's innocence in more mature ages. The consequences are comparable with McCarthy's characters' attempt to preserve their self-esteem and their lost cowboy status in their native Texas.

In addition to the exploration of unexpected aspects of innocence in a world gone all too cynical, McEwan's *The Innocent* and *Black Dogs* also broaden, more than *The Child in Time*, the scope of their chronotopes to cover the fates of the protagonists against the vaster historical background of the Cold War and of the ghosts of the past coming from even earlier ideological sources. However, the power chronotope as a distinctly political chronotope is already making progress in *The Child in Time*, foreshadowing even more distinct developments of it in one of the novels associated with the last section of the corpus, *Amsterdam*. Thus, *The Child in Time*, although the earliest text in the middle section of the corpus, is probably the most obvious link to the very comprehensive chronotopic developments of both *Amsterdam* and *Atonement*, with this tendency going beyond the selected volumes for this dissertation's examination, such as *Saturday*.

The examination of these novels revealed the articulation of a specific kind of borderland consciousness in crisis and an engagement with the declining representations of loss linked to the chronotope of the Western in the mid-20th century, especially in the last volume of the trilogy, *Cities of the Plain*. In Ian McEwan's middle work, the exploration of the power chronotope revealed images of loss and their associations with more extended cartographic designs, going from the individual to the national levels, with the second of the two novels showing an even more significant broadening of the fictional scope. Thus, in *The Innocent*, the fate of the individuals represented as central characters are enmeshed in a vaster geopolitical web. This happens at a critical moment in the development of the Cold War, with the British innocent surrounded by the problematic German divorced couple and by his patronizing American friend, Bob Glass.

Chapter 4 includes the exploration of what has been called "the closure of the chronotopic power circle" of the two sections of the corpus, what were seen as the most prominent two novels by each of the authors, Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* and *No Country for Old Men* and Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam* and *Atonement*. This closure, it turned out, involved the marking of boundaries in which the power chronotopes are circumscribed, but also a further step toward enlarging, broadening their scope, in a general conversation between the inner and outer worlds that they facilitate.

The first section of the chapter examined how the conventions of the historical novel and the articulations of the national chronotope ideologically supported by the doctrine of Manifest Destiny are challenged in *Blood Meridian* and the ways in which the literary topography and its attending values and

characters are dealt with in *No Country for Old Men*. The explicit dialog with powerful ideologies of America both in the 19th century, when the novel is set, and in the late 20th century in which it is written and published, leads to complex and comprehensive dimensions of the prevailing power component in the overall chronotope. McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, like McEwan's *Atonement*, acquired particular weight within the structure of this dissertation, thus also justifying the number of sub-subchapters devoted to it. Ironically, it turned out that what is here called the marginal, liminal chronotope of the novel shows the tension between its unacknowledged position in official, mainstream American history as recorded in the 19th century and the extreme and terrible vividness that assumes centrality in the literary cartography articulated inside the novel. The contrast and clash between the two is to be seen as carrying cultural significance in reassessing both the perceptions of the conventions of the Western as a typically American genre and America's "guilty" past, for a long time hidden under the folds of the flag of the Manifest Destiny doctrine.

The "bloodiness" of the complex chronotopic construction is seen as both describing a remarkable fictional world and as a clash between it and some perceptions of America's past with echoes into the present and recent past (at the time McCarthy was writing, the echoes of the Vietnam War were still vivid). The beginning of the novel encourages the reader to expect a kind of Western style *Bildungsroman* in a Manifest Destiny scenario about "the kid," the first of the two central characters, who appears to have been born under some divine influence of the stars. The novel turns out, eventually, to weave in its intricate power structure reassessments of history and ideology, while putting forth distressing questions about progress and civilization at two distinct stages in America's identity narrative.

In *No Country for Old Men*, the cartographic design and what appears at last to be the central character, Sheriff Ed Tom Bell, create the spatial and generic constraints in which the narrative invites the readers to engage with it. The conventions of the Western are again invoked. *Blood Meridian* was also seen partially in relation to the Western, arguably as an anti-Western to put an end to the genre once for all. *No Country for Old Men* starts from the power chronotopic constraints of the Western – an ageing sheriff exercising his duties in a small Texas town within an overall changing culture, but finally transcending the tangible coordinates initially set forth. Moving away from the Western, the narrative weaves threads of crime fiction, of detective fiction, adding the flashes of terror and horror and violent action of the thriller.

Unlike McCarthy's previous novels, as the title suggests, there is no teenage central character, the trio at the core of the novel featuring as its most memorable character a cynical, diabolical serial killer, somehow reminiscent of Judge Holden from *Blood Meridian*, but in a less metaphysical power game as that of the anti-Western. The central power game of the 2005 novel appears to display the most straightforward configuration of the power chronotope of all of McCarthy's novels so far. On the one

hand, the authority of law and order, represented, first and foremost, by Sheriff Ed Tom Bell, on the other hand, the terrible power of murder and crime, whose representative, apart from the more comprehensive network of the Mexican and American drug smuggling gangs acting across the borderlands, is Anton Chigurh, the arch villain.

This apparent confrontation between Good and Evil appears to be a contemporary version of the medieval morality play, with all the complications that an established master of narrative can add to the straightforward recipe. This morality power scheme sets the old sheriff's law-abiding vision and nostalgia for an imagined past of stability, law and order against the ruthlessness and nihilistic fury of Chigurh and of the criminal group that hires him, most vividly expressed in the final dream about the sheriff's father. In it, a possible incursion into myth is suggested, but apparently left outside the overall power chronotope.

In Ian McEwan's *Amsterdam*, it turns out that the emerging power chronotope, whose complete configuration appears only at the end of the narrative, turns out to illustrate an unexpected form of what Scott calls the dialectical confrontation between domination and the arts of resistance, which is an attempt at fusing Hall's theory of power and Foucault's. The denouement shows the power of the arts of resistance and the activation of hidden scripts even at the top of what C. Wright Mills calls the power elites. If, in general, according to Scott, the powerless feign deference and the powerful subtly assert their mastery, a very influential, but initially discreet actor has only revealed his hidden transcript after destroying both a representative of the major media, a prominent figure of the established artistic world, and a major politician. In this very broad satirical approach to the British establishment, the power chronotope has to do with the resonance of a place name – Amsterdam – in one specific context. In this context, it has to do with the legality of administering euthanasia in a special place in Europe at a certain moment. By means of George Lane, the equally dubious, but discreet actor of the power elite, Ian McEwan "puts to sleep" prominent figures of the power elite of his time for their selfishness, greed and amorality. In this novel, the broadening of the scope of the power chronotope was revealed to be accompanied by a considerable satirical engagement with the post-Thatcher power elite. At character level, the initially very straightforward opposition between the ideologically good characters and the main villain, seen as the prominent politician, turns into a more complicated power configuration of the represented fictional world in its relation to Britain in the 1980s and 1990s, with far from reassuring conclusions.

In *Atonement* the power chronotopic vision is far from satiric, but including indirect social critique in the by now established manner undertaken by the author. The vision is far from detached, cold and cynical, as in the early fiction, and remarkably compassionate. The power of fiction to deal with both artistic representations of human experience and with redefinitions of truth and untruth are notable

hallmarks of *Atonement*, a novel which is worthy of closing the overall chronotopic power circle of the current doctoral dissertation.

The dynamics of the special power chronotope acknowledges the novel's conversation with history and with metafiction, dealing with order and disorder and with how characters and a dramatized author try to cope with it. The overall design of this special pattern starts from the initial stage in which an innocent and imaginative prepubescent character with a fascination for solving mystery and drama, with a strong willingness to restore order and meaning thus passes from an ambition to stage her own play towards a "real life" performance in which she is the director and, as the only witness in a summary rape trial, turns out to be the prosecutor for the accusation as well, thus ruining the lives of two of the central characters.

The overall design closes with the initial child troublemaker as character turning into the assumed author of the narrative, thus apparently in absolute control of the power chronotope. She can change time, space, and the fates of her characters, but she cannot change the real stories of the real people who, according to conventions of realism, may be seen as behind the fictional world. Briony thus assumes control over the narrative and her characters, but she cannot change real-life developments, thus both asserting the power and the limitation of her art and of her apparently God-like status. It turns out that Briony's mistakes as a naïve, child character cannot be atoned for by the older, wiser character-turned-author in the final metafictional trick performed at the end of the text. *Atonement* is arguably the most challenging game with the dynamism and complexity of the power chronotope within the corpus under investigation in this doctoral dissertation.

Concluding lines

At a very general level, Briony's final reflections on the power of her art, is also linked to what an author like McEwan sees as the relative power or illusion of power that fiction has to reflect on, and respond to, human experience. It is likely to confirm one – at least the author of the current text – that selecting such a concept is highly instrumental in explorations of the complexity and dynamism of character interaction, thematic concerns and ideological compulsions both inside the literary work and outside it without taking very simple and straightforward positions meant to clarify the "mission" of the artist. Artists set forth the complexity of human experience, rather than straightforwardly militating for a just cause, although aspects of critique of power as part of articulated power chronotopes will set audiences thinking, in addition to audiences responding to memorable narratives. This applies, as it has been seen, to Cormac McCarthy's fiction as well, in which subtle ideological indirection added its significant power dimensions to narratives of fictional characters in fictional temporal, spatial and cultural contexts have an impact on

real audiences in real space, time and culture. The diversity of perceptions and interpretations are largely attributable to different positionings in the wide and diverse scope of the contemporary world.

Good fiction, like good art as a general rule, has been challenging the limits in which art can represent human experience in creative ways. In parallel with other significant developments, the workings of the power of authorities have developed and changed in more or less subtle ways, from the straightforwardness of the brute, unveiled coercive power of the authoritarian regimes of the Middle Ages, as a good example, to more devious ways in which the exertion of power is less obvious, yet much more effective, often leading to the internalization and disciplining of individual bodies, by such general practices as biopower.

The interpretation of such literary texts as McCarthy's and McEwan's, coincidentally emerging about the same time that Foucault's ideas were gaining prominence in the Western world are particularly rewarding. As far as power configurations go, significantly involving space, place and identity coordinates, one may refer to two apparently distinct stages in both McEwan's and McCarthy's imaginative work, reflecting both individual artistic development and wider and wider grasp of the extra-literary social and political coordinates of the world in which they have been writing for a considerable number of decades up to now.

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