McEwan's and Wright's *Flight from Dunkirk*

Ensaio

Laura Bulger | **Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro**

Abstract

Such elusive concepts as Englishness and Britishness are reinvented in moments of national crisis, when patriotism demands a collective sense of unity and sacrifice to fight the enemy, as in the epic of the British at War, namely in World War II, during the evacuation of the British troops from the Dunkirk beaches, in June 1940. The reconstruction of such a critical moment of British history through fiction is part of a self-conscious attempt not only to question the official historical narrative, but also to reinvent a British identity in a post war post-imperial Britain. The purpose of our paper is to examine how Ian McEwan's rendition of the Dunkirk retreat, in Part II of *Atonement* (2002), was adapted to the screen by British film director Joe Wright, taking into account the technical aspects inherent in the transference to a different medium as well as the ideological implications in it. The war section, both in the novel and in the movie, enlarges the personal drama of the protagonist, accused of a crime he did not commit, and rescued from prison to fight in the World War II against his will. The section raises questions about traditional concepts of patriotism, national identity and ultimately about Englishness and Britishness.

> And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of his freedom
> A few thousand will think of this day
> As one thinks of a day when one did something slightly unusual
> W. H. Auden, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats" (d. Jan. 1939)

The *spirit of Dunkirk* still leaves British people lost in nostalgia. However, the evacuation of the troops from the beaches, in June 1940, was anything but Britain's *finest hour*, Winston Churchill's famous words during the speech delivered to the House of Commons. Despite the soldiers' endurance, heroism in certain cases, they were a defeated army. Military experts blamed the ill-equipped, poorly trained British Expeditionary Force and the RAF, the latter for not showing up in time to prevent the losses caused by the German air raids. The mutual recriminations, even among the Allies, only underlined their impotence to stop the mighty Luftwaffe. Looking further back, historians would blame

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London's dithering policies in between wars before taking a stand against the rise of Nazism in Europe.[1]

Britain's aloofness, or isolationism, in the interwar years was partly the consequence of her lost status as a superpower, no longer capable to protect either her former worldwide empire, or, as it was later demonstrated, her own shores. In *Modernism and World War II,* Marina MacKay comments on the ironically pitiful commemorations of Britain's "national vulnerability": "Such nostalgia magnets as 'the Blitz' and 'Dunkirk' commemorate nothing more than the pathos of passive defence and a horrifically outnumbered retreat. This is the war as scripted by modernism: post-imperial, anti-heroic and totally unwanted" (MacKay 2).

Nonetheless, those soldiers who survived the ordeal and crossed the seas off Dunkirk, frequently in the famous *little ships,* were greeted, on their arrival, by the WVS women with a proud *well done*, a bun and tea, all in keeping with a patriotic stiff-upper lip.

Rather than patriotism, survival runs as the main theme in Part Two of Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001), where the British writer reconstructs the *horrors* lived by the troops while waiting for embarkation. *Atonement* can be read as a whodunit and love story with the World War II as a setting. But McEwan's novel is much more than that. It is, above all, the author's self-reflexivity on the process of fiction making, a view shared by most critics.

In 2007, film director Joe Wright adapted the book to the cinema, based on a screenplay by playwright Christopher Hampton.[2] Theirs was certainly an ambitious undertaking, considering that McEwan's novel, retrospectively narrated, is built on internal and external focalizations, *analeptic* and *proleptic* segments (Genette 82), different writing techniques and discursive registers that range from a highly refined prose to a journalistic, colloquial style.[3] Alistair Cormarc describes Part One, the longest in the book, as a "virtuoso display of

modernism" (Cormarc 74). On the other hand, certain reviewers insist on reading *Atonement* as an "essentially realist novel that at the end inappropriately resorts to a modish self-referentiality", equivalent to a "postmodern gimmickry" (Finney 69, 70).

Actually, *Atonement* is not a *modernist* novel, nor is it a *realist*, or a *postmodernist* one. It does borrow, though, formal and thematic traits from them all. The novel's many literary connections, among them, with Austen, James, Forster, Woolf, Lawrence, Lehmann, Bowen, Leavis, named as the "touchstones" by Dominic Head (156), and frequent textual allusions to other great authors, demonstrates that, rather than a *realist* novel, *Atonement* is a real "literary artifact" (Finney 74). The upshot of a such a heterogeneous intertextuality is an aesthetic *fusion* demanding special attention from the reader who, caught by various narrative entanglements, misses, at least on a first reading, the premonitory hints spread along the text, which, like in a puzzle, help "to piece the correct picture together" (Head 163). For the late Frank Kermode, *Atonement* was Ian McEwan's "finest" novel (Kermode 8), and, one might add, the most unsettling one so far. Our paper will focus on the *flight from Dunkirk*, as told by McEwan in Part Two of *Atonement*, later shown in Joe Wright's filmic reinterpretation of it.

To transmute such a piece of self-reflexive writing to a medium like cinema was no easy task, aggravated by budget restrictions, as explained in Christopher Hampton's "Introduction" to the screenplay.[4] To do it in such a way as to meet the expectations of large film audiences, going generally for the *story*, would be risky forcing the change, even the elimination, of novelistic strategies regarded as non-adaptable, or difficult to adapt to film, like time shifts, important, however, for the understanding of the *plot*, or *plots*, in McEwan's book. Besides, to make a profit should not be a filmmaker's sole preoccupation, nor should it be a "high-minded respect" for the writer's words, either extreme compromising

their translation into pictures (McFarlane 384). As with most British literary texts, the filmic adaptation of *Atonement* and its reception, particularly by American viewers, were a gamble from the start, the chances of becoming a blockbuster like J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, far-fetched.

As to the Second World War theme, once considered to be "a money-spinning staple of the British cinema industry" (Mackenzie 1), it had to be handled tactfully not to bruise susceptibilities particularly among those who, still alive, had fought the war.

Film critics' opinions diverged. While Roger Ebert considered Wright's version of Dunkirk to be "more of a bloody mess than legend would have us believe" (*Chicago Sun Times*, Dec. 7, 2007), A. O. Scott wrote that the war sequences had "an empty, arty virtuosity" (*NYT*, Dec. 7, 2007), and Liza Schwartzbaum used her wry humour to say that Wright settled for "a disconnected *wow, bloody awesome camera work*" (*Entertainment Weekly*, Dec. 2007).

Some reader-viewers thought that Joe Wright oversimplified McEwan's reconstruction of the Dunkirk retreat, turning it into an emotionally detached, spectacular long shot. The *fidelity issue*, as Brian McFarlane calls it, would inevitably come up, as it often does with film adaptations from literary texts. The bias, explains McFarlane, is "no doubt ascribable in part to the novel's coming first, in part to the ingrained sense of literature's greater respectability in traditional critical circles" (McFarlane 386). One can always argue that film "appropriations" (Andrew 373) of literary texts, cannot, and should not, be mere copies of the original and, more to the point, that the *spirit of Dunkirk* was rekindled in either *Atonement*, with a different allure, though, by the odyssey of Robbie Turner and his fellow soldiers trudging back to the beaches.

Before starting off to Dunkirk, it might be useful to retrieve some of the events narrated in the novel prior to Robbie Turner's arrest, on the grounds of

the Tallis's *ugly* country-house. Part One ended with Robbie handcuffed and shoved into the back seat of a car while Cecilia Tallis and Grace Turner watched him being driven away in the Humber for police interrogation, the latter shouting at the constables: "Liars! Liars! Liars!" (*A* 186-67).[5] Cecilia, the Tallis's eldest daughter, was Robbie's lover, Grace Turner, a servant in the Tallis's household, his mother.

Class helps to understand the social atmosphere depicted in Part One, set in Britain's interwar years. Fatherless Robbie Turner was raised together with the Tallis children, Leo, Cecilia and Briony. Jack Tallis, their father, a high civil servant, had paid for Robbie's education at Cambridge, where he read English Literature. Mr. Tallis was prepared to continue supporting him through medical school against the family's opposition, particularly his wife's. Emily Tallis would rather have the charwoman's son tend their gardens.

Regardless of the Tallis's pride and prejudice, Robbie and Cecilia fell for each other making the circumstances leading to his arrest so much more dramatic. Thirteen-year old Briony, Cecilia's younger sister, had accused the gardener of having raped her cousin, Lola, slightly older then herself. Actually Briony never saw the rapist's face. It was pitch-black and the *vertical* figure she confused with a bush *faded* into the darkness leaving a "darker patch on the ground" (*A* 164). The *patch* turned out to be Lola who, like the true rapist, whose identity is disclosed only in Part Three, became Briony's accomplice. But it was Briony who accused Robbie Turner by repeatedly telling the police inspector "it was him, I saw him" (*A* 186-87).

Briony is portrayed, both in the book and in the movie, in her pre-adolescence (Saoirse Ronan), early adulthood (Romola Garai) and old age (Vanessa Redgrave). Unlike Joyce's, McEwan's Briony is the *artist as a penitent,* following the development in the *Kunstleroman*. In Part One, a series of erotically charged misunderstandings and misreadings were made to happen,

perhaps too forcefully, so that a naïve otherwise precocious Briony was led to imagine Robbie as a *sex maniac*. As Catherine Morland, in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Briony is a victim of too much fiction reading, the quote, in the beginning of the novel, a hint for the reader about what was coming. Briony's rich imagination, or *deluded perception,* as a would-be-writer is eventually to blame for her lie, or crime, the thesis put forward along the novel. The reader cannot help questioning McEwan's motivations to use a thirteen-year-old as a sort of literary pawn. The blame on the girl's creative imagination becomes a rather devious way of exposing the evil side of fiction, and so call attention to the "novelist's predicament", an ethical/aesthetical matter too difficult to be translated into filmic language. Despite Ms Redgrave's outstanding performance in the role of old Briony Tallis, the writing persona about to free herself from her guilt-ridden conscience, ironically through fiction, or the close-ups of the actor's still beautiful sensitive face while delivering her long soliloquy, the novel's "ethical dilemma", as Domenic Head puts it (171), is diluted, if not lost, in Wright's *Atonement*.

Returning to Part Two, purportedly five years after Briony's accusation, we find out that her lie had thrown young Robbie into prison, from where he was later released to fight, whether he wanted to or not, in World War II, his dreams of becoming a medical doctor and marrying Cecilia Tallis further shattered.

In the first sequences of Wright's Dunkirk section, a haggard Robbie Turner, in uniform, tells his hosts, in French, about the Panzer attacks that separated him and his army companions from their unit, the doomed BEF, while they headed for the coast in the hope to be evacuated with the other troops, and sent back home. Turner, played by actor James McAvoy, omits having been seriously wounded, as the viewer is about to see. With him, but shadowed in the back, are corporals Nettle and Mace who, impressed by Turner's manners and fluency in French, ask him why "a toff" like him ended up "a private". Turner,

who denies being an upper class, also tells them not to be "eligible for officer training" due to his criminal record. His past does not seem to bother the two soldiers, who, "with increased respect", address him as *Guv'nor*.

Later, amidst cries of *Vive l'Angleterre!,* and *Vive la France!,* the three *Anglais* are fed and wined by the hospitable Frenchmen, who regret not having crushed the Germans in the first war to avoid having them, once more, occupying their country. Turner promises to return one day to chase out their common enemy. "On va revenir. On va les chasser", he says, not that convincingly, though.

In the movie, the politically correct rendition of the Anglo-French comradeship overlooks the view, held among the British troops, about the French unwillingness "to fight for their country". In addition, scenes where the soldiers' mutual antipathy is verbally expressed are avoided, as in this instance: "… the tommies swore, and taunted their allies with shots of 'Maginot!'". For their part, the poilus must have heard rumour of an evacuation. And here they were, being sent to cover the rear. 'Cowards! To the boats! Go shit in your pants!'" (*A* 234). Should old wounds be forgotten and never brought to mind? They should, at least, be left off the screen, or so it appears in Wright's version of Dunkirk.

A cut back in time brings the viewer to the Joe Lyons tea house, where Robbie and Cecilia had briefly met before his being sent to France. They had not seen each other since their torrid encounter at the Tallis's library, followed by Robbie's arrest that same dark night. In a sequence of beautifully shot close-ups of Cecilia and Robbie, her facial expressions change from bewilderment to happiness, his, from awkwardness to pain almost. Both Keira Knightley, as Cecilia, and James McAvoy, as Robbie, were given the difficult job of making their characters' *thoughts readable on their faces*, writes Hampton, each conveying, rather persuasively, the wide range of emotions required from their respective

parts. Their uneasiness is further reinforced by the elliptical dialogue exchanged between them, at the table, against an Ivory/Merchant type of setting. Cecilia, who had become a war nurse, tells Robbie of having cut herself off from her snobbish family. They had refused to support his innocence. The two lovers plan on meeting again at a cottage in Wiltshire, the picture of which becomes a leitmotif in the love story, together with the playback of Cecilia's softly whispered words, *I'll wait for you. Come back to me*, and the slow tracking shot of herself in the dark green evening gown watching him been driven away from her.

The London scene is suddenly interrupted to show Robbie, back at the French barn, lying awake at night, watched by an ominous owl, while composing, in his thoughts, a letter to Cecilia, their correspondence a sort of epistolary lovemaking. Next, another cut brings the two back to London. The place is Whitehall and they are shown kissing passionately before Cecilia boards the Balham bus. This time, it is Robbie who watches her being driven away from him. Unable to catch the following bus to join her, he is left, as if lost, in the middle of the street.

The back and forth cuts, allowing for the alternation between flashes of Robbie's selected past experiences and images of his equally selected experienced present, was the technique found by the filmmakers to capture the inner time fluidity rendered in Part Two where, through Robbie's consciousness, the reader is shown segments of his past life, in alternation with his thoughts, feelings and perceptions of his present in a burning Dunkirk.

They also selected the episodes more relevant in terms of plot development, Briony, a key to the action in the novel, central in them. After all, it was her lie that triggered the whole process of crime and punishment. In addition, a character like Briony would certainly move "the story and engage the audience" (Seger 148). The dramatic episode by the river provides Robbie with a

plausible motivation for her grudge against him. Briony, then a precocious ten-year-old, risked drowning in order to be rescued by Robbie, on whom she had a crush. Three years later, the girl would have felt betrayed, once she realized that he was in love with her sister. According to Robbie's theory, *rancour* was behind Briony's odious lie, or crime. His feelings towards her, a mixture of resentment and pity, are further exploited in the movie by having him cry at the sight of the corpses of the girls, each a thirteen-year old Briony look-alike.

In the novel, it is the gory sight of a child's leg hanging from a tree that will haunt Turner throughout the Dunkirk section, the leg becoming a leitmotiv in the war story. The *limb*, evidence of the war brutality, belonged to the corpse of a boy whose *vanished life* Turner compares to his own. Already sliding into a hallucinatory state of mind, Turner wants the remains of what was once a "nice-looking kid" to have a "decent burial" (*A* 263). The macabre image of the "disembodied leg" also appears in other parts of the novel, notices Domenic Head, as one of the "subtle literary devices" pointing to Briony's "process of self-laceration" (165).

Wright's compressed "visual transliteration" (McFarlane 385) of McEwan's Dunkirk culminates in the one-take, over-five-minute Steadicam shot. It brings to the screen, filled with troops, ghastly torn masts, battle ships ablaze and piles of wreckage, the "phantasmagorical landscape" of the war, writes Christopher Hampton in the "Introduction" to the screenplay. Barely missed by German bombs and Stuka machinegun fire, Turner and his companions stagger along looking for a place to rest amidst the chaos and carnage, the whole scene enhanced by the equally arresting film soundtrack. Dario Marinelli's elegiac score with the choir of soldiers, gathered on the bandstand, fading in and out in a stirring rendition of *Dear Lord Father of Mankind*, is followed by the jolly sing along of the troops, in the bar, and the melancholic humming of *The White Cliffs of Dover*, the hymn and the wartime songs striking sentimental patriotic chords.[6]

The nostalgic evocation finishes off with the sight of the poppies, this time in a French field, in remembrance of the soldiers dead in the Great War.[7] The epic tableau shown on the screen, brushed here and there with patriotic strokes, fails to convey the cynical embittered portrait of Dunkirk, drawn in the literary text. Either "purposely or inadvertently", Wright's "commentary" (McFarlane 388), one of the strategies open to filmmakers, enhances, instead, the soldiers' undaunted Britishness, as in the official script.

McEwan's novel is a self-conscious meditation not only on the devious process of fiction writing but also, to quote Natasha Alden, on what "fiction *can* do with history that history *cannot*" (59). And what postmodernist fiction *can* do, and has been doing for some time, is to "unmask fictional constructions of the past" by defying the conventions of historical narrative.[8] The highly metafictional Part Two, curiously the most spontaneously written section in terms of sources and style, throws some doubt into the view of Dunkirk as a patriotic landmark of British history.[9]

Following closely Robbie Turner's inner thoughts while on the way to the beaches, one realizes that there was also plenty to be atoned for, from unmotivated bored soldiers "with nothing to do for hours on end" (*A*: 211), and to whom the purpose of the war was never explained, a shortage of "heavy weaponry", mutual recriminations among the troops, vented through shouts of "Where's the RAF?", to complaints about the Allies' cowardice. Ashamed of it all, Turner thinks of "the full ignominy of the retreat" (*A* 201), and, in a premonitory insight, interprets it as a symptom of a civilization "about to fall" (*A* 202), or already "dead", referring to the European civilization. Violent imagery and decadence are also present in Auden's poem, written on the death of W. B. Yates, January 1939. Cecilia had enclosed it in one of her letters, and Robbie evokes Auden's poignant verses: "In the nightmare of the dark/All the dogs of Europe bark, /And the living nations wait, /Each sequestered in its hate."

Robbie Turner is no war hero, as made to appear through the filmmakers' lens. For Turner, the war, alternative to his wasted time in prison, is also a "collective experience" that ruined his life and "everybody else's" (*A* 217), the "private-public link" running through the novel signalled by critics such as Head (157), Marcus (84) and Finney (77).

Turner's only desire is to survive, return to England and, once cleared from a crime he did not commit, "find Cecilia and love her, marry her, and live without shame" (*A* 228). He has given up dwelling on notions such as guilt and innocence. His own trial, in England, as well as the war made him understand that everyone was guilty and, as he puts it, "no one was" (*A* 361). Faded the idealism learnt at Cambridge, where poets' "free, unruly spirits" were revered, Turner questions: "But what did poets know about survival?" (*A* 264). He has come to realize that literature and experienced life are after all two separate things. Disillusioned, as much as disturbed by the *horrors* he witnesses, Robbie Turner conveys what Dunkirk is about, and so does his author by showing to the reader what goes through his character's mind. After the reverie on the *secret* shared with Cecilia, that is, their physical intimacy at the Tallis's library, a delirious Turner promises not to speak, or *think*, another *word* ever again, Part Two stopping right there.

With the final Part of the novel, "London 1999", comes the shocking discovery that the Dunkirk episode was not told from Turner's perspective, the reader duped, like the viewer, in the movie. A seventy-seven-year-old Briony, by then a renowned fiction writer about to lose her memory due to dementia, reveals that the war section, as everything else, was the last draft of *Two Figures by a Fountain*, a novel-within-the-novel signed, at the end of Part Three, by BT, Briony Tallis's initials. It had been rewritten several times not only to atone for a crime committed sixty-four years before, but also to comply with Cyril Connolly's suggestions. Both the real life editor and the real life author Elizabeth Bowen thought that Briony's novel lacked "the backbone of a story" (*A* 314), and "owed

a little too much to the techniques of Mrs. Woolf" (*A* 312), a criticism of the *Woolfian* modernism in Part One of *Atonement*, where style and experimentation were given priority over moral issues.

As if Briony's disclosure about herself as a fiction-maker were not enough to jolt anyone, her next revelation about Robbie and Cecilia, who were never reunited, leaves the reader dumbfounded. They were already dead before the war was over, explains Briony:

> All the preceding drafts were pitiless. But now I can no longer think what purpose would be served if, say, I tried to persuade my reader, by direct or indirect means, that Robbie Turner died of septicaemia at Bray Dunes on 1 June 1940, or that Cecilia was killed in September of the same year by the bomb that destroyed Balham Underground station (*A* 370).

She had made up the happy ending in the love story, where the two lovers, whom she had separated, were finally brought together. Their fictive happiness might have appeased Briony's conscience as well as her creator's, McEwan, whose ethical concerns over fiction writing prompt a further interpretation by Alistair Cormac. In the critic's opinion, McEwan does not exactly condemn a creative imagination, but warns against the dangers of a morally disengaged literary aesthetics, referring obviously to a certain modernism and postmodernism. Cormac believes that, with *Atonement,* McEwan returned to the "Leavisite aesthetics", that is, to "the heart of the 'Great Tradition' of English novelists" (Cormac 79). If so, Briony's, or, rather, McEwan's final *twist*, as James Wood calls the turnabout in the last Part, conforms to the moralistic bent in the English novelistic tradition. On the other hand, the idea of a postmodern *twist*, or *gimmickry*, should not be discarded, despite a few critics' "realist expectations" (Finney 70). Briony's *tidy finish* looks more like a prank played on the reader, who

feels disappointed, if not cheated, when told of herself as the putative narrator, and the lovers' deaths.

Briony's final self-serving "act of kindness" (*A* 371) also brings attention to the despicable power of fiction to change life, or death, as it sees fit, truth and veracity, the raw materials for a *realist* writing, therefore, out of question. For instance, no one can be sure of how much was made up either by Briony, represented all along as a very unreliable witness and narrator, or by "old Mr. Nettle", whose "dozen long letters" about Dunkirk she claims to have used as her source (A 353, 359), together with the lovers' correspondence, supposedly in her possession, before entrusted to the Imperial War Museum library.

In a novel like *Atonement*, built on a psychologically dense characterization, different focalizations and layers of narrative levels, truth is impossible to grasp. Historical truth is also baffled, if anyone can speak of historical truth these days, postmodernism cautioning not to. Regarding Part Two properly, it does cast a doubt on the Dunkirk retreat as a grandiose epic carried out for the love of *king and country*, or for the sake of a free Europe, ironically, to be rescued from *the nightmare of the dark* only with the help of remote European descendants.

We return briefly to Joe Wright's *Atonement* to say that no matter how faithfully, or inaccurately, it may capture McEwan's own *spirit of Dunkirk*, it will always carry the original author's *aura* with it, to paraphrase Linda Hutcheon (*A Theory of Adaptation* 4), or, rather, Walter Benjamin himself, from whom Hutcheon borrows the *aural* originality. To moviegoers in general, our advice is to see what McEwan's novel really looks like.

Notes

[1] For a military perspective on the evacuation from the Dunkirk beaches, we used Julian Thompson, *Dunkirk, Retreat to Victory* (London: Pan Books, 2008); and Joshua Levine, *Forgotten Voices of Dunkirk*, in Association with the Imperial War Museum, Introduction by Peter Snow (London: Ebury Press, 2010).

[2] Cast: James McAvoy/Robbie Turner; Keira Knightley/Cecilia Tallis; Saoirse Ronan/Briony Tallis, age 13; Romola Garai/Briony Tallis, age 18; Vanessa Redgrave/Briony, age 77; Julia West/Betty; Brenda Blethyn/Grace Turner; /Danny Hardman; Harriet Walter/Emily Tallis; Juno Temple/Lola Quincey; Felix von Simson/Pierrot; Charlie von Simon/Jackson; Patrick Kennedy/Leon Tallis; Benedict Cumbubatch/Paul Marshall. Ian McEwan himself was one of the executive producers.

[3] Brian Finney details here the different discursive registers used in *Atonement*: "In the long Part One, McEwan chose to write in 'a slightly mannered prose, slightly held in, a little formal, a tiny bit archaic' with which he 'could evoke the period best.' In Part Two, writing about Dunkirk, he chose 'to write in a choppier prose with shorter, simpler sentences,' a style that is reminiscent of Hemingway. As he explained, 'on the battlefield the subordinate clause has no place.' In the final coda, he employs a contemporary voice, one that is acutely self-conscious and aware of its own act of narration. For instance: 'I've always liked to make a tidy finish,' says the elderly Briony, simultaneously referring to her life and her life's work'. "Briony's Stand Against Oblivion: The Making of Fiction in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*." *Journal of Modern Literature*, 27.3 (Winter 2004) 68-82: 74.

[4] "A word, finally, about the passage we always referred to as 'the Dunkirk section'. Formally troublesome in itself, it was also the most serious victim of the budget restrictions that had, quite sensibly, been applied to this adventurous project. There were to be no columns of refugees strafed by German Stukas, no Panzers rolling northwards, no carpet-bombing of the retreat armies. Instead, illustrating another old adage about the creativity unleashed by imposing limits, there would be three soldiers tramping north through a phantasmagorical landscape of literal death and dreams and memories of many other kinds of death". "Introduction." Atonement. London/New York: Faber and Faber, 2007: vii.

[5] All references in the text are to the following edition of *Atonement*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2002. Page numbers will be bracketed.

[6] Dario Marianelli was the winner of Best Original Score at the 80th Academy Awards, Best Original Score at the Golden Globe Awards, and Best Music at BAFTA.

[7] John McCrae, a Canadian soldier who fought in World War I, immortalized the poppies in the poem *In Flanders Fields*, written in 1915.

[8] See Elisabeth Wesseling. "Postmodernism and History." *Writing History as a Prophet, Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991: 1-15; and Linda Hutcheon. "Historiographic Metafiction: 'the pastime of past time'." *A Poetics of Postmodernism, History, Theory, Fiction*. New York/London: Routledge, 1988: 105-123.

[9] See Elisabeth Wesseling. "Postmodernism and History." *Writing History as a Prophet, Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991: 1-15; and Linda Hutcheon. "Historiographic Metafiction: 'the pastime of past time'." *A Poetics of Postmodernism, History, Theory, Fiction*. New York/London: Routledge, 1988: 105-123.

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