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Diplomová práce

London in Contemporary British Fiction
Londýn v dílech současných britských autorů

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Anotace

Práce se zabývá romány předních současných britských prozaiků Iana McEwana a Martina Amise, kteří svá díla situovali do hlavního města Spojeného království. Práce nejprve v teoretické části představí Londýn jako multikulturní centrum i jako dějiště významných historických událostí a dále se zaměří na pojetí prostoru velkoměsta v románech Iana McEwana *Sobota* a *Pokání* ve srovnání s autorovými dřívějšími díly, která se v Londýně odehrávají. Další kapitola porovná obraz Londýna v díle Iana McEwana s románem Martina Amise *Londýnská pole* a pokusí se definovat poetiku a odlišnost ztvárnění prostředí v pojetí obou autorů. Teoretickým základem studie prostoru a prostředí bude titul *Urban Space and Representation* (Balshaw, Kennedy). Teoretická východiska budou v jádru práce aplikována na dílo Iana McEwana, případně na román Martina Amise *Londýnská pole*.

Abstract

The thesis deals with the novels of leading contemporary prose writers Ian McEwan and Martin Amis who set their works in the capital of the United Kingdom. The work first introduces London as both a multicultural centre and a scene of important historical events. Then it focuses on the concept of urban space in Ian McEwan's novels *Saturday* and *Atonement* in comparison with the author's earlier works that take place in London. The next chapter compares the portrayal of London in the work of Ian McEwan with Martin Amis's novel *London Fields* and tries to define the poetics and differences of the depiction of the environment in the context of the examined literary works. Balshaw and Kennedy's *Urban Space and Representation* serves as the theoretical basis of the study of space and environment. The theoretical part is applied at the core of the thesis to the work of Ian McEwan, alternatively to Martin Amis's novel *London Fields*.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. London	3
2.1. The Depiction of the City	3
2.2. A Brief History of the City	6
2.3. London's Current Biggest Issues	10
2.3.1. The Housing Crisis.....	10
2.3.2. The Standard of Living	11
2.3.3. Crime and Violence.....	12
2.3.4. Immigration	12
2.3.5. Discrimination.....	13
2.3.6. Transport	14
2.3.7. Brexit	14
3. London's Authors	16
3.1. Celebrated Writers of London	16
3.1.1. Born Between the 14 th and the 18 th Century	16
3.1.2. Born in the 19 th Century	17
3.1.3. Born in the 20 th Century	19
3.2. Contemporary Writers of London	20
4. The City in Fiction	23
4.1. Urban Space	23
4.2. Importance of a City in Fiction.....	24
4.3. London in Fiction	27
4.3.1. Works Published in the 19 th Century	28
4.3.2. Works Published in the 20 th Century	29
4.3.3. Works Published in the 21 st Century	31
5. The Life and Work of Martin Amis	33
5.1. London Fields.....	34
6. The Life and Work of Ian McEwan.....	37
6.1. Atonement.....	38
6.2. Butterflies	40

6.3.	Conversation with a Cupboard Man.....	40
6.4.	Dead as They Come	41
6.5.	Saturday.....	41
6.6.	Two Fragments: March 199-.....	42
7.	Analysis of Martin Amis’s London	43
7.1.	The City.....	43
7.2.	Crime and Violence.....	46
7.3.	Traffic.....	48
7.4.	Weather.....	50
7.5.	Different Nationalities	52
7.6.	Au Pairs.....	53
8.	Analysis of Ian McEwan’s London	55
8.1.	The City.....	55
8.2.	Crime and Violence.....	61
8.3.	Traffic.....	62
8.4.	Weather.....	64
8.5.	Different Nationalities	65
8.6.	Environment	66
8.7.	Wartime London.....	68
8.8.	Terrorism Threats	70
9.	Comparison of Amis’s and McEwan’s Portrayal of London	72
10.	Conclusion.....	75
	Resumé.....	77
	Bibliography.....	79
	Primary Sources	79
	Secondary Sources.....	79
	Internet Sources.....	81

1. Introduction

My paper focuses on two celebrated contemporary British authors, Martin Amis and Ian McEwan, who are considered to be two of the greatest writers of the present day. The main aim of the thesis is to analyse the setting of the authors' selected significant literary works set in the United Kingdom's capital, London. Once the analyses are completed, the paper will attempt to compare their portrayals of the metropolis among both authors, confronting the differences and pointing to the similarities.

This work would not probably come into existence if it were not for Ian McEwan and his acclaimed novel *Atonement* as it is the main reason I decided to delve into hundreds of pages for the needs of this thesis. I first encountered *Atonement* in the film form. Despite being a primary school student at that time, I was strongly impressed with the film, especially with the moving aspect of the sorrowful story. Not being able to stop thinking about it because of the emotional impact it had on me, I decided to read the book. Unsurprisingly, the novel affected my feelings evenly.

For that reason, *Atonement* was a clear choice for my thesis. While McEwan set more of his works in London, I opted for *Saturday* as it is one of his relatively recent novels and depicts the city fearing terrorism, something the whole world has been currently dealing with. I also included several short stories from his collections as they represent his earlier work. To contrast McEwan's depiction of Great Britain's capital, I employed my supervisor's idea to include Martin Amis as well and analyse his *London Fields* novel to be able to perform a comparison.

The theoretical part of the thesis introduces London as a city, explores the metropolis's history and presents the city's urgent issues, many of which are addressed in the works of both authors. The subsequent chapter celebrates prominent writers connected to London throughout history up to the present. The following chapter can be considered the most crucial as it defines the concept of urban space, explicates the essential role of cities in literature and mentions acclaimed and principal literary works set in London. The following pages introduce both authors, their lives and works. The examined works are presented separately and given a more detailed description.

The practical part offers in-depth analyses of Ian McEwan's selected works and Martin Amis's *London Fields* novel. The main aim of the last chapter of the thesis is to briefly compare London's portrayal amongst both authors, commenting on both the similarities and differences between the two writers.

To prevent any misunderstanding, it should be noted that McEwan's and Amis's studied works were read in the form of e-books, book publications available in digital form. The electronic format often does not contain numbered pages; therefore, I was not able to provide direct bibliographic references with the page number. As there are no official rules for direct bibliographic references regarding e-books, I omitted the page numbers but mentioned the digital format of such books and provided the link to the digital version in the list of cited literature at the end of the thesis.

2. London

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the pivotal subject of the thesis, London itself. The following lines offer necessary information about the city as well as a concise look at the capital's history. Most importantly, the last part of the chapter presents the city's current weighty problems that can be often reflected in contemporary works set in Great Britain's capital.

2.1. The Depiction of the City

London is the capital city of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, *'a country in north-western Europe on the island of Great Britain and the northeastern part of the island of Ireland in the North Atlantic Ocean and North Sea'*. (Cybriwsky, 2013, p. 162) The United Kingdom is a union consisting of four countries, specifically England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Island, each having its own capital city. Apart from being the capital of the country as a whole, London is also considered the capital city of England. The U.K. is a unitary parliamentary constitutional monarchy led by a monarch, currently Queen Elizabeth II since 1952, who is simultaneously the Head of the Commonwealth and the head of state of 16 Commonwealth countries. (Cybriwsky, 2013) With an area of 243,305 square kilometres (The Commonwealth, 2019) and 66,435,600 inhabitants as of 2018 (Office for National Statistics, 2019), the United Kingdom is rightfully one of the biggest European countries.

The city is situated not only in the southeast of the United Kingdom but in the southwest of both England and the island of Great Britain as well. London famously lies on the Thames River that flows into the North Sea. (Cybriwsky, 2013) Due to the surface area of 1,572 square kilometres, London is also the largest city of the U.K. (London Datastore, 2019) The Greater London area consist of twelve inner boroughs (Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth, Westminster) and twenty outer boroughs (Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Havering,

Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton, Waltham Forest). Outside the boroughs stands the City of London that is not a borough itself but is governed by the City of London Corporation instead. (London Councils, 2019)

According to the data obtained in 2018, London has a population of 9,046,000, which is approximately 5,754 citizens per square kilometre. At the turn of the millennium, London had a little less than two million less inhabitants, and the rapid growth is to continue. By 2030, London's population is expected to grow by more than 1,1 million. (The World's Cities in 2018, 2018) London is undoubtedly one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the whole world. The 2011 census revealed that nearly 60 per cent of London's citizens are of white ethnicity, more than 18 per cent belong to the Asian ethnic, more than 13 per cent are of black colour, and approximately 5 per cent are of mixed or multiple ethnic groups. The rest claims to belong to different ethnic groups. The census also showed that over a third of London's residents were born outside the U.K. The top non-UK countries of birth were India, Poland, Ireland, Nigeria, Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, the capital of the United Kingdom is home to many Arabs, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans or Turkish as well. (Office for National Statistics, 2019) According to the Embassy of the Czech Republic in London, approximately 40,000 Czechs live in Britain with 35,000 of them living there only temporarily. About half of the total is said to live in Greater London area. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, 2013) More than 41 per cent of non-English speakers in England and Wales live in the capital. The most spoken non-English main languages are Polish, Bengal, Gujarati, French, Urdu, Portuguese, Turkish, Spanish and Arabic. (London Datastore, 2019)

Speaking of the U.K.'s climate, it is well-known for being quite rainy. While spring is described as often calm and dry, it can be interrupted with heavy April showers. Summers bring hot temperatures and sunny days, sometimes making it a very dry season, but rainfall varies a lot in the summer months and can lead to flash flooding. Weather in autumn gets stormy, and winters add frontal snowfall and strong wind to it. The provisional mean value in 2018 was 8.1°C for spring, 15.8°C for summer, 9.8 °C for autumn and 3.6 °C for winter. (Met Office, 2019)

According to an expert survey released in 2019, London takes 23rd place in the ranking of the world's most expensive cities to live. That is an improvement in comparison with previous years. However, the gladdening fall on the chart was caused by a current straightening of the U.S. dollar against the pound, not by any efforts making the city more accessible. Another 2019 study named London the world's leading wealth centre, a title earned by a number of individuals worth more than 30 million dollars, their volume of property investments and lifestyle. (Forbes, 2019)

The inner London's economy focuses mainly on the scientific and technical industry, the financial industry and the information and communication industry. Being popular with workers and tourists, London also heavily supports jobs in accommodation, food, arts or entertainment services. The outer London is more concentrated on sectors serving the local population, e.g. healthcare, education sectors, business administration or industrial sectors. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

'Greater London is a major auto, truck and rail transportation hub, with motorways and rail lines extending from London to all regions of Britain.' (Ness, 2016, s. 373) However, the British government managed to reduce absolute levels of car use by high investments in the public transport. In a 15-year time frame, private transport dropped from 47 per cent to 36 per cent and should decrease to 30 per cent by 2041. Londoners increasingly rely on buses, the Underground, railway, trams, local trains or bicycles. (Greater London Authority, 2019) The citizens are not afraid of walking either; more than 35,000 runners participate in the London Marathon every year. (Cybriwsky, 2013) London is also known for vast seaport and fishing facilities but most importantly for two world-famous airports, Gatwick, situated in the south, and Heathrow, located in the west. Heathrow is the world's busiest airport as measured by the number of passengers. (Ness, 2016)

London is said to have the most educated labour force in the nation, *'with more than one in five residents possessing a postsecondary or higher degree'*. (Ness, 2016, p. 374) The city delivers a world-class education system, and its goal is to maintain the position of a global centre of innovation, culture and economic activity. London set several goals that need to be accomplished over the next years, e.g. performing better than the national average at all key stages, building capacity in London's education

system, providing a good school place for every child and, last but not least, giving the opportunity for continuous improvement, especially to the most vulnerable pupils. (Greater London Authority, 2019) Among London's famous educational institutions are the University of London, the London School of Economics, the Royal College of Art or the Royal Academy of Music. (Ness, 2016)

London attracts millions of tourists every year. The city boasts four UNESCO World Heritage Sites, namely the Tower of London, Kew Gardens, the area of Westminster Abbey and the district of Greenwich. (Cybriwsky, 2013) The capital is known for many iconic buildings and palaces, beautiful parks or world-famous landmarks. London is without any doubts a leading global centre for culture, music and arts, as evidenced by approximately 170 museums, more than 230 theatres and many famous films that used the city as a backdrop, e.g. Sherlock Holmes, Harry Potter or James Bond. The capital is also an undeniable fashion destination, a shopping paradise and a food-lovers' centre. (Visit Britain, 2019) Major landmarks include Buckingham Palace, Kensington Palace, Tower Bridge, Trafalgar Square, St. Paul's Cathedral, Hyde Park, the Houses of Parliament, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum, the National Gallery etc. More recent landmarks are the London Eye, the Tate Modern, City Hall, the Millennium Bridge or St. Mary Axe. (Cybriwsky, 2013) Favourite tourist destinations are also the Shard, ZSL London Zoo, Madame Tussauds, Science Museum and many others. (Visit London, 2019)

2.2. A Brief History of the City

In 43 AD, when the Celtic tribes of south-eastern Britain were defeated by the Romans under the Emperor Claudius, the city was founded under the name Londinium. Romans built a bridge across the River Thames and a network of straight roads. Nevertheless, the city was burnt to the ground a few years later because of a revolt led by a famous warrior, Queen Boudicca. Romans managed to rebuild the city, making it not only a prosperous financial centre but also the capital of England. The Roman rule ended in 410 AD since they were not able to defend themselves from the Saxon raiders. Romans' efforts were put in vain as the built city was depopulated and left to decline. The Anglo-Saxons decided to build a new city

in the near area, but they only managed to make a simple farming town. Luckily, London soon became an important market town. (Family Guide London, 2012)

Not even London could escape the Vikings' attacks in the 9th century. Alfred the Great managed to defeat them and the city was returned to the Anglo-Saxons who decided to finally move the people to the more secure and developed old Roman city. In 1066, the Normans invaded England and William of Normandy claimed the throne after the death of the Anglo-Saxon king. Despite the claim, there was suddenly a new ruler whom William managed to defeat at the Battle of Hastings. Then William forced the city to accept him as the new king by besieging it. Under William the Conqueror's rule, London thrived and was enriched by the Tower of London and the Palace of Westminster that were built on his command. (Family Guide London, 2012)

The 13th century saw London support the Magna Carta Libertatum which would limit the king's powers. (Family Guide London, 2012) The City of Westminster was made the seat of government, while the neighbouring City of London became a popular commercial centre which resulted in the city's population reaching the number of 100,000. (Cybriwsky, 2013) However, the 14th century was not very fortunate for the city as the plague, also known as the Black Death, appeared and killed about a third of its population. A revolt of peasants led by Wat Tyler followed, being suppressed after a couple of days. In the 15th century, London's support of Edward IV was crucial to restoring stability in England. (Family Guide London, 2012)

A century later, the Tudors took over England and transformed it from a state of minor importance into a world superpower. London's economy continued to grow exceptionally, and its population quadrupled. Mary I, better known as 'Bloody Mary', restored Roman Catholicism and had famously executed hundreds of Protestants. Her successor, Elizabeth I, was heavily supported by the Londoners during her reign that lasted 45 years and made the city a centre of European trade. In the next century, the Stuart kings expanded the city's boundaries but not even that helped them to become popular with the common folk. People's disgruntlement resulted into the English Civil War that ended when the Stuart king Charles I was beheaded and England became a Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell. After his death, people

angered by the Puritan restrictions supported the restoration of Charles II to the throne. (Family Guide London, 2012)

The year 1605 is known for a failed attempt to assassinate King James I. Guy Fawkes, an English conspirator and a Catholic convert, was found in the cellar of the House of Lords guarding tens of barrels of gunpowder that he was supposed to set off. To celebrate the King's safety, bonfires were ignited that night, and since then, November 5 is known as Bonfire Night, commemorated by bonfires and fireworks across the country. (Jones, 2019)

Another plague epidemic erupted in 1665 and within a year, the Great Plague killed 100,000 citizens, a fifth of London's total population of that time. (Cybriwsky, 2013) While 1666 brought the longed-for end of the contagion, it also delivered probably the city's biggest catastrophe, the Great Fire of London. The fire originated in a bakery and spread to the surrounding narrow streets, devastating the medieval wooden city. Sixty per cent of London was burnt to the ground, and the original St. Paul's Cathedral was destroyed as well. The fire was beneficial at least in one thing, and that was freeing the city of rats that carried the deadly plague. The 17th century's reconstruction ensured that all buildings were made of stone instead of wood and that the streets were broadened and less dense. The new St. Paul's Cathedral was built by Sir Christopher Wren who provided the city with 51 more new churches. (Family Guide London, 2012)

By the half of the 18th century, London fully recovered and its population reached approximately 675,000 people. However, regarding children born to the poor, only one in four lived beyond the age of five. Only the second bridge over the Thames bearing the name the Westminster Bridge was opened, neighbouring villages were attached to the capital, and new areas were created, e.g. Greenwich, Mayfair or St. James's. In 1730, No. 10 Downing Street became a home of prime ministers, a tradition that lasts. The 19th century let emerge Buckingham Palace, Regent's Park or Regent Street and also established the Metropolitan Police force. (Family Guide London, 2012)

While incredibly rich and powerful, the Victorian era also saw London become an overcrowded, foul and stinky place which caused an epidemic of cholera that killed thousands of inhabitants during the 30-year time frame. (Family Guide London, 2012)

On the other hand, *'London became one of the first great industrial cities in the world'* (Cybriwsky, 2013, s. 163) in that time, having no competition in trade, science or industry. The U.K.'s railway network was built, London's first Underground line was launched, and a sewage system was installed. All the inventions had an indisputable impact on the quality of people's lives. The city kept improving in the early years of the 20th century as well, expanding the public transport, which resulted in spreading the city's area. (Family Guide London, 2012)

World War I demanded women to replace men in many of London's public services. Reinforced by their importance, a group of women known as the suffragettes successfully fought for the women's right to vote in public elections. The years 1940 and 1941 were especially tough for London as the city was directly bombed by German planes during World War II. During the wars, immigration heavily increased. (Family Guide London, 2012) After severe air pollution in 1952 referred to as the Great Smog, the government started to deal with cleaning the air and turned its attention to environmental issues. (Cybriwsky, 2013) The same year, King George VI died following a prolonged illness and his daughter Princess Elizabeth acceded to the throne. The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place in Westminster Abbey in 1953. In September 2015, Queen Elizabeth II became Britain's longest-reigning monarch. In February 2017, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to mark their Sapphire Jubilee, celebrating 65 years since acceding to the throne. (The Royal Household, 2019)

The present time is characterised by an increasing number of terrorist incidents and political instability. Terrorist attacks have been occurring in London since the 1970s, and while all the incidents from the previous century were accomplished by using a bomb device, the 21st-century attacks show different strategies. On 7 July 2005, four suicide bombers attacked central London. Their target was the city's transport system during its rush hour. The detonated bombs, three on the underground and one on a bus, killed 52 people and injured more than 770 people. Exactly two weeks later, there was an attempt to set off four more bombs in the transports system again, but the devices failed. In May 2013, two men brutally stabbed a British soldier in Wellington Street and attempted to behead him. In March 2017, 5 people were killed

and more than 50 people injured by a man who drove his car onto a pavement on the Westminster Bridge and confronted police with a knife after leaving the vehicle. Similarly, in June of the same year, a van drove into pedestrians on the London Bridge before a knife attack, resulting in eight people being murdered. Only a few days later, a van hit a group of worshippers in Finsbury Park, causing one death and nine injuries. At the end of November 2019, two members of the public were stabbed and other three people injured in an attack on London Bridge. (BBC, 2019)

For the last few years, Britain's political scene has been paralyzed by so-called Brexit, a withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union that was approved in a referendum held in June 2016 in which 51.9 per cent supported the country's departure. In 2017, the government invoked Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union and was supposed to leave the EU by 29 March 2019. However, they did not manage to do so. The deadline was then extended to 31 October 2019 but after failing to meet the date again, the country's departure was postponed to early 2020. (BBC, 2019)

2.3. London's Current Biggest Issues

London's 21st-century burning issues include unaffordable housing, homelessness, poverty, insufficient living wage, serious crime and violence, terrorism, uncontrollable migration, racism, discrimination of various minorities, air pollution, amount of traffic and, last but not least, the Brexit situation.

2.3.1. The Housing Crisis

For many Londoners, housing has become unaffordable. Ordinary people do not have enough money to buy their own house in the capital city, and if they can afford to live in sublease, the place is often not of good quality and does not offer stability. Even if people with lower incomes manage to pay the rent, additional fees are beyond their possibilities. Not only does the unbearable cost of housing cause labour shortages in the capital city, it is also a key driver of increasing poverty that can result in homelessness. (Trust for London, 2019)

According to the latest report on homelessness in London, nearly 9,000 people were seen rough sleeping in the streets of London, which is an 18 per cent increase compared to the previous year. 84 per cent of people forced to live on the streets were male, 8 per cent of homeless Londoners were 25 years old or younger. Across the last decade, the number of people without home has risen year on year, with the exception of a single year. 37 per cent of the total had experience of serving time in prison, interestingly, 6 per cent of people served in the armed forces at one point. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

Mayor of London fights the homelessness, beyond other things, by extending access to day centres offering immediate support, sending outreach workers to the streets, or investing approximately 1 billion pounds to fund thousands of council homes. He also appeals to the government to tackle the root causes of homelessness. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

2.3.2. The Standard of Living

The living wage calculated by the government was 8.21 pounds per hour as of April 2019; however, that rate applies to the whole country and disregards the higher cost of living in the capital. An independently calculated wage for Londoners should be more than 2 pounds higher because of the higher financial demands. 41 per cent of London's citizens cannot afford what is considered a minimum decent standard of living. (Trust for London, 2019)

Many work positions are low paid, insecure and unrewarding. Unfortunately, abuse of rights is the norm in a number of industries as many workers lose money in unpaid holiday pay or an hour or two per week in pay. In total, employers withhold billions of pounds from workers every year. That is also the reason why the less lucrative jobs are mostly done by immigrants who came to the United Kingdom to work in hope of a better life. (Trust for London, 2019)

2.3 million Londoners live in poverty, which is 27 per cent of the city's inhabitants. 700,000 of that number are children and 200,000 stands for pensioners; the rest is working-age adults. The above-mentioned cost of housing

is the main factor of London's poverty rate that is higher than the country's. (Trust for London, 2019)

2.3.3. Crime and Violence

Every capital city is a centre of crime. According to London's police's comparison, the crime in London increases each year. Concerning violent crimes, homicide occurred in 135 cases in 2018, the total of violence against a person being more than 211,000. Over 20,000 of sexual assaults were reported that year and about 33,000 armed robberies were committed. 80,000 Londoners experienced a break-in, and more than 221,000 thefts happened in London that year. In addition, nearly 113,000 motor vehicle offences occurred. (Metropolitan Police, 2019)

London is not immune to drug offences either; approximately 36,000 cases were connected to narcotics in 2018. The police also arrested 7,600 people for illegal possession of a weapon. Last but not least, nearly 50,000 of crimes were committed against the state or the public order, including racially or religiously aggravated public fear, alarm or distress. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, London has its experience with the most serious forms of terrorism as well. The total number of crimes in London in 2018 was 840,659 and compared to 2014's 703,102, it is a rapid increase in just a 5-year time. (Metropolitan Police, 2019)

2.3.4. Immigration

The British are afraid of high levels of immigration that, as some of them claim, hurt their jobs, wages and quality of life. Immigration has grown a lot in the last two decades, especially since 2004, when eight East European countries, including the Czech Republic, entered the European Union. In 20 years, the number of people coming to the United Kingdom from other European countries more than tripled, with Poland being the lead country. For these reasons, immigration was a major argument of the campaign to leave the EU so the country would be able to control the flow of immigrants itself again. (Centre for Economic Performance, 2019)

However, according to the data from 2015, the figure of non-EU immigrants is higher than the EU ones. European immigrants are said to be more educated, and some of them even have a higher education than the British people. By being less likely to claim the country's benefits, they in fact help reduce the budget deficit. It was also proved that the immigration did not endanger jobs and pay of UK-born workers. Nevertheless, with a third of European immigrants living in the capital, it is not difficult to understand why the British perceive modern immigration to the U.K. as a problem. (Centre for Economic Performance, 2019)

2.3.5. Discrimination

In 2009, about 50,000 racist incidents were reported to the authorities, one fifth of that number taking place directly in London. However, the actual number of racist violence was said to be four times bigger that year, making it a grave issue in Britain that remains unresolved. Not only are people of colour the target of violence, but they are also frequently discriminated while applying for work. Undoubtedly, they are not the only ones who experience the double standard in the employment sector; the same can be said about disabled people, migrants or women in general. These groups are either less likely to find a job or more likely to be low paid, even when they have required qualifications. (Trust for London, 2019)

The members of the LGBT+ community still experience prejudice, therefore are reluctant to reveal their sexuality to their family, colleagues or mainstream service providers, because they fear the reaction or are anxious about their physical safety. (Trust for London, 2019) On the other hand, London seems to be supportive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals with efforts to stop homophobic hate crime, publishing an LGBT London guide for tourists, supporting police officers of different sexual orientation or holding an annual pride festival. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

2.3.6. Transport

Despite private transport dropping and citizens' higher use of the public one, the roads are still overcrowded and in constant traffic jams. To all of that, heavy traffic joins industrial zones in contributing to air pollution, which is currently actively fought all over the world. For these reasons, London hopes to spark a cycling revolution and make people shift to walking and heavy use of public transport by 2031. The railway network should be expanded, a few of the underground lines should be extended and more comprehensive information should be provided to passengers. The city's goal for its transport system is to become more connective, efficient, integrated, safe and secure. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

New technology should also be incorporated into London's transport sector in the near future. The most significant change will concern connected and autonomous vehicles, so-called driverless cars, hitting London's roads, probably in the form of autonomous buses. Thanks to the widespread smartphone technology, important transport information is planned to be shared with passengers via phone applications. It was also suggested that drones would be used for freight delivery and ground-based drones would transport goods along pedestrian spaces. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

2.3.7. Brexit

On 23 June 2016, people of the United Kingdom decided in a referendum to leave the European Union, which they have been a part of since 1973. The process of the country leaving the union is commonly referred to as Brexit. In March 2017, the country gave official notice to the European Union of their intention to leave the alliance. The country was not able to leave the union by the set date of March 2019 and was equally unsuccessful with meeting the postponed date of October of the same year. At the time of completing the thesis, the latest date of the United Kingdom's departure was set to the end of January 2020. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

To a certain extent, Brexit destabilised the country, causing uncertainty, chaos, fear among immigrants, economic decline, media hysteria, incitement to hatred, political instability and, primarily, dissatisfaction of society that led to dozens of massive demonstrations. It is still unclear under what conditions the country will leave and if it will leave at all. While the government assures no one has to fear the outcome, the impact of the United Kingdom's withdrawal is expected to be radical not only for its inhabitants but for the entire world. (Greater London Authority, 2019)

3. London's Authors

The following text presents the most significant writers connected to London; the ones who were either born there or they decided to spend their lives there. The chapter is divided into several parts to make the list of authors more understandable. The end of the chapter focuses on London's most prominent contemporary writers.

3.1. Celebrated Writers of London

London has always been rightfully considered one of the main, if not the main, contributors to the world's best literature that shaped generations. Regardless of being born in the capital or a completely different country, many authors proudly perceived London as the place where they belonged. The following text looks back at the most outstanding authors connected to the United Kingdom's capital city.

3.1.1. Born Between the 14th and the 18th Century

Geoffrey Chaucer was born in 1340, probably in London. The extraordinary English poet witnessed the Black Death and also participated in the Hundred Years' War in France. After that, he entered a king's household, serving both Edward III and Richard II as a comptroller of customs. Thanks to several diplomatic missions, he travelled to France, Italy, Spain or Flanders. His literary works are often divided into three periods; the first one was influenced by France, the second one by Italy. The final period saw his greatest work *The Canterbury Tales* come into existence. Though incomplete, the stories give an insight into living in the Middle Ages. Chaucer's life work was also one of the first major works to be printed in the second half of the 15th century. (Jones, 2019)

Francis Bacon was born in 1561 in London into a wealthy and privileged family. He studied at Cambridge but being discontented with the school's reliance on classical texts he soon entered politics to reform education. King James I made him an attorney general which enabled Bacon to make more than 100 reforms. Most of his writings were not published during his life; many of them were even left unfinished. His most famous works are the *Essays* and *New Atlantis*. (Hager, 2005)

William Shakespeare, a legend among English writers, was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. He moved to London approximately 20 years later, drawn by the appeal of life in the city. He became an actor, writer and also probably a director with The Lord Chamberlain's Men, later renamed to The King's Men to honour King James I. One of Shakespeare's earliest plays was *Richard III*, soon followed by *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. At the beginning of the 17th century, *Hamlet* was performed for the first time with *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth* coming shortly after. A famous collection of 154 sonnets was published in 1609 and his last completed play *The Tempest*, a farewell to the theatre and London, premiered in 1611, 5 years before his death. Shakespeare enriched the English language with 2,035 new words, 170 of which were used in *Hamlet* alone. (Jones, 2019)

William Blake was an English poet and painter. Despite his education, he lived most of his life in poverty and was celebrated for his contribution to literature at a later time, long after his passing. His first books of poems were *Poetical Sketches*, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. He is known for engraving and publishing his later works himself; he even made engravings and drawings for Dante's *Divine Comedy*. (Krueger, 2003)

George Gordon Byron, also known as Lord Byron, was born in 1788 in London. His childhood was not very happy as his father deserted the family soon after his birth. In addition, he was born with a lame foot which had a lasting effect on his life. In 1798, he inherited the title and soon left to study at Cambridge. His first poetry collection was heavily panned by critics to which he reacted by writing a satire titled *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Byron is best known for his semi-autobiographical *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, a poem influenced by his travels to Greece and Albania. After moving to Switzerland, he worked on a satirical poem *Don Juan* but did not finish it due to his death. (Krueger, 2003)

3.1.2. Born in the 19th Century

After moving to London, Charles Dickens did not have childhood as carefree as other children because he had to work in a factory in order to earn money

after his family was imprisoned due to his father's debt. A few years later, after having worked as a parliamentary reporter, he started to incline to journalism and soon began to contribute to periodicals with his stories that were divided into parts. Dickens is celebrated mainly for *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations* or his partially biographical *David Copperfield*. Many of his works were set in London and made use of his experience; many of them explored the theme of poverty or powerlessness of children. Due to a brain aneurysm, he did not finish his last novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Dickens, buried in Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey, strongly influenced both the reading public and popular culture not only in the Victorian era but beyond. (Krueger, 2003)

Thomas Hardy was strongly influenced by his parents. He inherited the love for architecture and music from his father, and his mother aroused his interest in literature and local folk tales. When he left to London to work as an architect, he spent his free time studying languages, visiting museums and reading on his own. Despite his love for poetry, Hardy '*felt he was more likely to be able to make his living as a novelist than as a poet*'. (Hager, 2005, p. 154) Having become financially secure thanks to novels like *Far from the Madding Crowd* or *Return of the Native*, he published six volumes of poetry, a few of those written many years before. While his two-volume biography was said to be written by his wife, it is believed that Hardy dictated his memoirs to her before his death. (Krueger, 2003)

London-born Virginia Woolf allegedly suffered from depression, especially due to the loss of her parents and two siblings. Soon after she married an aspiring novelist, Leonard Woolf, they both became members of the Bloomsbury Group, a fellowship of writers, intellectuals and philosophers. Woolf caught the public's attention by shifting inner thoughts typical for her characters, a so-called stream-of-consciousness technique. She was not only celebrated for her short stories and novels, e.g. *Night and Day*, *Mrs Dalloway*, *Kew Gardens* or *To the Lighthouse*, but also for her critical essays or being a fighter for women's rights. (Stade, 2003) Woolf '*is widely acknowledged to be one of the greatest literary essayists in the English language and one of the most important feminists of the 20th century*'. (Stade, 2003, p. 409)

Although Thomas Stearns Eliot was born in Missouri in 1888 and studied at Harvard, his further studies brought him to Europe, specifically to Paris and then to Oxford. Later, he moved to London where he taught at Birkbeck College, worked in Lloyd's Bank and then became a director in the publishing firm Faber and Faber. In 1927, he converted to the Church of England and gained British citizenship. The Anglo-American poet, critic and playwright is remembered for *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *The Waste Land* or *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* which was later dramatized in Andrew Lloyd Webber's famous musical *Cats*. (Jones, 2019)

Agatha Christie studied music in Paris but worked as a volunteer nurse and pharmacist in London during World War I. In 1920, Christie wrote *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, her debut novel featuring Hercule Poirot, her most famous creation according to critics. Apart from more than 30 other books of the Poirot series, including the famous *Murder on the Orient Express* or *Death on the Nile*, Christie was not only an author of many novels and short stories but plays as well. The queen of detective fiction also wrote six romantic novels that were published under her pseudonym, Mary Westmacott. Nevertheless, they never reached a level of popularity similar to her detective novels. Christie died in 1976, 5 years after being made Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire. (Stade, 2003)

3.1.3. Born in the 20th Century

Despite the fact that George Orwell was born as Eric Arthur Blair in India, he was raised in England and spent the majority of his life in London. His early days as a writer were not very successful and he had to work as an occasional teacher in order to avoid poverty, a theme he explored in his novel *The Road to Wigan Pier*. After World War II, he wrote probably his most famous work called *Animal Farm*, an antitotalitarian fable. He continued to express his political views in newspapers essays with *Politics and the English Language* considered by many the best political essay ever written. *Animal Farm's* popularity was only matched by *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, his equally celebrated work. Orwell died of tuberculosis in 1950 shortly after publishing the book famously set in a future totalitarian state. (Stade, 2003)

London-born Ian Fleming started his career as a journalist and during World War II served as an assistant to the director of Royal Navy Intelligence which provided him with a lot of inspiration for his character of the secret agent of the British Secret Service with licence to kill, James Bond. Fleming wrote 14 iconic novels and many short stories featuring the 007 agent, including *Casino Royale*, *From Russia with Love*, *Dr No*, *Goldfinger*, *Thunderball* or *The Spy Who Loved Me*. Fleming is said to have created one of the most famous Britons of all time. (Stade, 2003) 24 successful films based on the famous character have been made so far, each being an ultimate cultural event as is the case of the latest instalment that will be released in spring 2020. Fleming's outstanding legacy lives on as the Bond novels are continued by other authors to this day, with a 32nd post-Fleming novel published in 2018. By coincidence, the first Bond novel not bearing Fleming's name was written by Kingsley Amis, Martin Amis's father. (The James Bond Dossier, 2019)

Sylvia Plath was born in 1932 in Boston but moved to England as she was given an opportunity to study at Cambridge by winning a scholarship. She soon got married to Ted Hughes, but seven years after the wedding, Plath, aged only 30, decided to commit suicide by gassing herself in her London flat. Her death enraged many feminists who believed her husband was partially responsible for her decision. Plath was known for her poetry published in *The Colossus and Other Poems* and *Ariel*. However, in the year of her death, she wrote an autobiographical novel called *The Bell Jar*. 20 years after her death, Plath was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. (Jones, 2019)

3.2. Contemporary Writers of London

Zadie Smith was born in 1975 in London to an English father and a Jamaican mother. Three years after graduating from Cambridge, Smith finished her first novel, critically acclaimed *White Teeth*. Her subsequent novels *The Autograph Man* and *On Beauty* proved her to be an outstanding author, winning all sorts of literary awards. Soon after that, Smith became a professor of fiction at New York University and lived both in New York City and London. She later expanded her bibliography with novels *NW*

and *Swing Time* novels as well as with several short stories and pieces of non-fiction. (British Council, 2019)

Peter Ackroyd was born in London in 1949. Having graduated from Yale, he worked for a magazine as a literary editor and film critic, which brought valuable experience enabling him to become a chief book reviewer in *The Times* newspaper. Ackroyd is acclaimed for both his fiction and biographies. His non-fiction works shed light on lives of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, Charles Dickens, William Blake, Thomas More, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Charlie Chaplin or Alfred Hitchcock. Ackroyd has also taken advantage of a few famous writers and used their names in his fiction novels, e.g. *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* or *Milton in America*. His non-fiction is not only concerned with people; a few of his books also deal with Ancient Egypt, Greece or Rome, England's history, the Thames River or London itself, from 800-page *London: The Biography* to 2017's *Queer City: Gay London from Romans to the Present Day*. (British Council, 2019)

After her studies, Dame A. S. Byatt taught at London University and later became a full-time lecturer at University College in London. However, she soon left her position to concentrate on writing exclusively. Her first novel *Shadow of a Sun* was published in 1964 but her most successful act came in 1990 in the form of *Possession: A Romance*. Her most recent works of fiction are *The Children's Book* and *Ragnarok: The End of the Gods*. She is also widely known for many short stories and critical studies. (British Council, 2019)

Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Japan in 1954, six years before his family decided to move to Great Britain. After graduating from the University of Kent, Ishiguro started as a residential social worker in London. Later, he signed up to the University of East Anglia where he studied creative writing. Since 1982, he has been writing full-time as evidenced by a couple of screenplays, a collection of short stories and many novels, e.g. *Never Let Me Go*, *When We Were Orphans* or *A Pale View of Hills*. In 2017, Ishiguro was honoured with the Nobel Prize in Literature. (British Council, 2019)

Hanif Kureishi studied at King's College in London. He has written many plays and screenplays, his *My Beautiful Laundrette's* script earned him a nomination

for an Academy Award. The half-Pakistani author is best known for his novel *The Buddha of Suburbia*, but he is also popular for many short stories, essays and non-fiction pieces. His other novels are *The Black Album*, *Intimacy*, *Something to Tell You* or *The Last Word*. His short stories appear in *Collected Stories* and his later ones together with essays were published under the name *Love + Hate*. (British Council, 2019)

4. The City in Fiction

Firstly, the chapter deals with urban space and its definition. The main aim of this part is to introduce the city as an important setting of all literary works and explain the significance of an urban environment. The text further concentrates on London's role in fiction and mentions the most notable literary works in which the United Kingdom's capital served as a significant setting.

4.1. Urban Space

According to Pleßke (2014), urbanity can be understood as quantitative dimensions of a city. It is comprised not only of architecture or products but of social lifestyles, norms or values as well. She suggests people can perceive it as an art of living in a city as it influences one's thinking, feeling or imagining. Interestingly, she states that a person that displays urban values does not have to be a resident of the city and vice versa, an inhabitant does not have to evince patterns of urban thinking.

Urban space is real, symbolic and imaginary at the same time. It is also believed that the urban space creates a material environment, visual culture and psychic space. (Balshaw and Kennedy, 2000) Henry Lefebvre defines urban space as *'the place where people walk around, find themselves standing before and inside piles of objects, experience the intertwining threads of their activities until they become unrecognizable, entangle situations'*. (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 39)

Lefebvre advocates that the urban is always set in space, but the space does not always need to be a space within the city. (Duff, 2014) *'The urban is a process, and a flashpoint, where social interaction and activity occur and where 'centrality is always possible.'* (Duff, 2014, p. 10) Duff continues to explain Lefebvre's assumption, explicating that the process is related to all inhabited areas, not just big cities. *'The urban, or urbanization, can thus be understood as always happening in the inhabited city centre, as it is also always happening in the suburbs and other populated areas.'* (Duff, 2014, p. 10)

Malcolm Bradbury believes that urban experience probably influenced both the form and the content of fiction and was thus responsible for the birth of a new literary form. *'(...) one might argue that the unutterable contingency of the modern city has much to do with the rise of that most realistic, loose and pragmatic of literary forms, the novel.'* (Bradbury, 1991, p. 99)

4.2. Importance of a City in Fiction

'There has always been a close association between literature and cities. Here are the essential literary institutions: publishers, patrons, libraries, museums, bookshops, theatres, and magazines.' (Bradbury, 1991, p. 96) But Bradbury does not stop there and names other aspects of the city that many writers find attractive. *'Here, too, are the intensities of cultural friction and influences, and the frontiers of experience: the pressures, the novelties, the debates, the leisure, the money, the rapid change of personnel, the influx of visitors, the noise of many languages, the vivid trade in ideas and styles, the chance to artistic specialisation.'* (Bradbury, 1991, p. 97) The city, therefore, seems to function as author's indispensable assistant that helps to create the story.

According to Chalupský (2009), the city provides the writers with many opportunities, from the conditions for their artistic vision to the possibility to show the world their literary talent. It has always served as a source of inspiration and motifs for writers, journalists, essayists and other artists. *'The city's specific environment and atmosphere have provided themes and attitudes that run deep in literature, where the city has both appeared as the actual setting as well as become a metaphor rather than a place.'* (Chalupský, 2009, p. 8) Often the city is depicted as a sort of a character, seemingly having its own life and looming over the people who live in it. (Howe, 2014) Furthermore, like literary characters, cities usually find themselves in a narrative movement heading towards the desired end as well. (McClung, 1988)

Writers started to make use of the modern city in their literary works with the rise of novel as a genre. The growing role of the city was most apparent in the times of realism, naturalism and, most definitely, modernism. (Bradbury, 1991) The modern

city first appeared in its entirety in the works of Dickens and Gogol who dealt with the shock of urban horror from which the myth of the modern city emerged. (Howe, 2014) While one, for example Pike (1981), might argue that city in literature is not a modern phenomenon and that its appearance goes far back to early epics and myths, e.g. *Gilgamesh*, the *Iliad* or even the Bible, it is crucial to realize that there is a difference between a modern city and a city in the form of the first settlements. Chalupský (2009) affirms that cities have been present in literature since the first urban societies were settled. Nevertheless, it is not only literature that adapts the image of the city. Film, architecture, painting, tourist guides, postcards, photography or city plans depict the experience of urban living as well. (Balshaw and Kennedy, 2000)

Rapid social, political, economic or cultural changes connected to the process of urbanisation immediately elicited diverse responses from writers who are known to be very observant of such changes. While some of them were hesitant or even rejective of modern times, others welcomed it and celebrated it in their works. (Chalupský, 2009) The consequence of setting a story into a modern city was that the characters started to be modern as well, the writers were following lives of social scientists, journalists or underground workers, something unprecedented until then. (Bradbury, 1991)

For a long time, cities meant just the capital or the country's biggest cities. Such cities were not only seen as independent but as a kind of a state within a state. Those cities represented a minimised model of the whole country and its society; a well-known example is London which long was the most frequent, if not the only, setting of whole England. (Chalupský, 2009) This also partly explains people's desire to live in the capital or a similarly large city, especially when one realises that books were the only source of people's knowledge in past centuries.

Pike (1981) sees the city as the man's most impressive and visible creation that has ever been achieved. Its streets, buildings, cemeteries, inhabitants and even its history make it a curious artefact. The city is depicted as a place where the pulse of all life is most evident. Since the beginning, the city has always been represented as the idea of community. However, the Renaissance changed the perception of it, and the idea of an individual became the focus of the city's image. That changeover brought

the theme of an individual against the city into the spotlight with characters now observing the urban community.

Even though many authors know the city they describe in their books very well, Pike (1981) thinks that by reducing the city's description into words they only create another fictional city or a said city set in a parallel universe. Balshaw and Kennedy (2000, p. 4) lesser that statement by saying that *'the production of urban space is simultaneously real, symbolic and imaginary'*. Pike (1981) argues that while many authors have been praised for a realistic urban depiction, they do not present the reality. His reasoning for that belief is that the writers describe a city set before the actual time of writing, therefore they provide us with a past scene while pretending it is a present one.

According to Howe (2014), the presence of a city in literature brought significant changes in narrative patterns, specifically a multiplicity of narrative points of view, and, additionally, it enabled the birth of a new genre, surrealism. The rise of the city was beneficial mainly for minor characters whom the city gave enough space, which they would not have received in smaller settings. The city also created a whole series of new character types, e.g. the clerk, the cultivated woman or a so-called underground man, a creature of the city without a settled place. Without a modern city, the reader simply could not meet these characters.

The city appeals to writers as it is a place where life gets naturally more attractive. In past centuries, many novels recorded travels of the youth who were leaving countryside in order to live in a city where they can experience pleasure, encounter adventures and become free. The city was seen, and still is, as a place that offers endless possibilities for a high civilisation. (Howe, 2014)

When fiction started to use big cities as its settings, they were seen as both inimical and threatening. (Howe, 2014) That corresponds with Balshaw and Kennedy's (2000, p. 6) thought that *'literary and visual representations of urbanism map the fears and fantasies of urban living, within which – through practices of reading and seeing – we all dwell'*. In former times, the city was portrayed as a place where one can safely get lost, a kind of a geographical maze beyond escape. The city's vastness also allowed

for a more complex system of social relationships. People became estranged, relationships started to lack warmth, family began to lose its importance. People had to travel to visit their relatives, explore near neighbourhoods; they also started to encounter the street argot or unfamiliar accents. The city also provided writers with an ability to contrast, e.g. using slums reflecting the decay in their stories. (Howe, 2014)

According to McClung, the city in literature is either portrayed in a utopian way or an arcadian one. The first vision sees the city full of political, philosophical and architectural features. The second image introduces a mythical and harmonic city. McClung is convinced that all literary cities are rightly called mythic as *'they are recognized as images not of cities but of ideas about what cities might be'*. (McClung, 1988, p. 35) He supports his opinion by saying that the primary function of every fiction is not to tell the truth but to tell a story, so the city's accuracy is something that is not expected. McClung perceives cities, towns, countryside and even wilderness as arenas of expectation and that, in a way, influences their actual design and use in fiction. To summarise his thoughts, if the purpose of literature is to tell stories, then *'purpose of [the] urban components (...) is to bring the story about'*. (McClung, 1988, p. 35)

New visual technologies, forms and texts of the 20th century had an impact on how the urban space is both represented and inhabited. Nowadays, a growing number of writers, artists and filmmakers concentrate on the concerns of migrant communities, providing them with space and making their identities visible. Besides its resonance with the world, this approach also redefines deep-rooted ideas of territory, place, community and culture in urban space. (Balshaw and Kennedy, 2000) Lately, a new trend has emerged, marketing the city as *'a metropolis, at once a national centre and a nodal point of the new globalism'*. (Balshaw and Kennedy, 2000, p. 18)

4.3. London in Fiction

Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* from the late 14th century follows a group of pilgrims who travel from London to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. On their way, they engage in a storytelling contest.

However, Chaucer did not finish the collection as all the pilgrims do not tell their stories and are not described on the way back. Another example worth mentioning is also 1722's novel *A Journey of the Plague Year* where Daniel Defoe recounts the Great Plague of London. His *Moll Flanders* of the same year is based on a London criminal whom Defoe once met. The book was originally published without the writer's name, and the authorship has been assigned to Defoe since the late 18th century.

To make the overview clearer, the rest of the chapter is divided into three sections, each representing one century up to the present time. To clarify, a few parts of the following subchapters are not cited as the presented works were compiled from various lists (e.g. *London Fictions*, *Londonist*, etc.) celebrating novels set in London. Brief plots of said works are also not cited since they can be considered common knowledge.

4.3.1. Works Published in the 19th Century

Charles Dickens's love for London caused that he chose the city as a setting for many of his works. *Oliver Twist* (1839) describes the lives of orphans roaming through the streets of 19th century's London after the titular character escapes from an apprenticeship to the capital. Dickens's famous novella *A Christmas Carol* (1843) takes place in London on Christmas Eve when the main protagonist undergoes a transformation from a miserly man into a much kinder one. London is also featured in *David Copperfield* (1850) or *Bleak House* (1853) but plays a much more prominent role in 1859's *A Tale of Two Cities* where it takes turns with Paris. In *Great Expectations* (1861), Dickens's penultimate completed novel, the city becomes the main character's prison as he feels very lonely and disillusioned there.

In Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873), England's capital is the place where the remarkable adventure both starts and ends. George Gissing was concerned with London's poverty, drawing the public's attention to severe social problems and the need for reforms. He expressed such views in his books *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), *The Unclassed* (1884) or *New Grub Street* (1891). The year 1892 saw Israel Zangwill's *Children of the Ghetto* describe the life of East European Jewish children. In 1886, Henry James wrote a purely London

impressionist novel *The Princess Casamassima* in which a young bookbinder gets engaged in radical politics as well as terrorism. (Chalupský, 2009) James's another work making use of the United Kingdom's capital is 1888's *A London Life*, a novella related to a collapsing marriage and its effects on people around.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) portrayed the city's polarity of open, lit places and dark, narrow streets, contrasting honourable social life with crime and violence. Arthur Conan Doyle perceived London similarly as he often used the city's darker aspects in his immensely popular detective stories starring Sherlock Holmes, London's famous detective occupying the famous 221B Baker Street, an address that can only be matched, famous-wise, with the popular Downing Street. (Chalupský, 2009) The end of the 19th century brought Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), a horror classic where London plays its part as well.

4.3.2. Works Published in the 20th Century

Jack London explored slums beyond London's centre in his novel *The People of the Abyss* (1903). G. K. Chesterton provided the readers with the futurist vision of the city in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904) and London's surreal and metaphysical image in 1908's *The Man Who Was Thursday*. (Chalupský, 2009) Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) is set in post-war London while her penultimate novel *The Waves* (1937) goes through the history of a particular family from the 1880s to the 1930s. The year 1934 saw the birth of Mary Poppins, a famous magical London nanny. The series consists of eight novels; P. L. Travers published the last one a year before her death, aged 95.

Another author who put London and Paris into a single book was George Orwell with his non-fiction piece *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) that described his economical struggles. In 1949, Orwell published his dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* where London appears as a capital city of Airstrip One, a province that was formerly Britain. (Chalupský, 2009) In C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950), the first book of *The Chronicles of Narnia* series, four siblings are sent to the countryside in order to escape the bombing

of the capital during a world war. *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) by Samuel Selmon was probably the first multicultural novel set in London, following lives of West Indian immigrants after World War II. Post-war London was also the setting of Muriel Spark's iconic works *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960) and *The Girls of Slender Means* (1963). (Chalupský, 2009)

The city plays a supportive role in John Fowles's well-known works *The Collector* (1963) and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969). While the latter depicts the city in the Victorian era, David Lodge's comic novel *The British Museum is Falling Down* (1965) captures London during a cultural revolution known as the Swinging Sixties. (Chalupský, 2009) William Golding's *Darkness Visible* (1979) is celebrated for its opening scene 'suggestively describing burning streets full of desperate, helpless people during and after an air raid on London during' World War II. (Chalupský, 2009, p. 21)

The 1970s also witnessed the birth of an English superhero, Captain Britain. The fictional character first appeared in bookstores in October 1976. Marvel Comics originally intended the hero only for the British market but he was later introduced to the American audience as well. To celebrate Captain Britain's 40-year anniversary, *Captain Britain: Legacy of a Legend*, a collection of selected issues, was published in 2016. (Albion British Comics Database, 2019)

Being primarily known for his non-fiction work *London: The Biography* (2000) that some even consider the best London book ever written, Peter Ackroyd employed use of the city in his fiction as well, e.g. in *Hawksmoor* (1985), *The House of Doctor Dee* (1993), *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994) or *The Clerkenwell Tales* (2003). 1982's *Sour Sweet* by Timothy Mo explores Soho Chinatown where a Hong Kong family tries to fit among London's inhabitants. In 1988, Michael Moorcock published *Mother London* which captures the city's history from the World War II's bombings to the late 1980s through several non-chronological episodes. (Chalupský, 2009)

The last decade of the second millennium saw the release of Hanif Kureishi's critically praised debut, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). The novel tells the story

of a Pakistani boy who lives in an unpleasant suburban area of London and hopes to become an actor living in the charming centre. In 1991's *Wise Children*, Angela Carter portrayed a lively, tourist-free everyday life of Brixton. (Chalupský, 2009)

In 1996, Helen Fielding created Bridget Jones, an awkward Londoner who became a role model for all single women in their thirties. The audience fell in love with her so much that, according to various lists, the fictional character became one of the most famous Britons of all time. The turn of the millennium was dominated by the immensely popular Harry Potter series published between the years 1997 and 2007 and while the J. K. Rowling's series takes place in a wizarding world somewhere in Scotland, there are several fictional London locations, e.g. Ministry of Magic, Platform 9 3/4 at King's Cross railway station or a hidden shopping area in Diagon Alley with Gringotts Wizarding Bank, the only bank of the wizarding world.

4.3.3. Works Published in the 21st Century

Zadie Smith is another author known for incorporating her birth city into her novels. Her award-winning debut *White Teeth* (2000) focuses on two veterans of World War II and their families living in a multicultural suburb of North London. Her 2012 novel called *NW* reveals its setting right in the title as it refers to North West London, specifically to the NW postcode area. Another novel titled *Swing Time* (2016) follows two mixed-race girls and takes place in London, New York and West Africa. Smith's upcoming sixth novel *The Fraud* will be her first piece of historical fiction inspired by real events of the 19th century's North West London.

In 2003, Monica Ali published *Brick Lane*, a novel that bears the name of a street located in London's Bangladeshi community. The book tells the story of a Bangladeshi woman who moved to the city in order to marry an older man.

Current popular books set in London include Paula Hawkins's psychological thriller *The Girl on the Train* (2015) or the Peter Grant's *Rivers of London* fantasy series which consists of nine novels so far. In 2013, J. K. Rowling published a crime fiction novel *The Cuckoo's Calling* under the penname Robert Galbraith. Author's real identity was unintentionally revealed a few months after the book's release,

and while the secret was revealed, it helped the novel to become a great commercial success. Follow-ups *The Silkworm* (2014), *Career of Evil* (2015) and *Lethal White* (2018) contributed to a beautiful depiction of London in the Cormoran Strike series, including many detailed descriptions of the city.

5. The Life and Work of Martin Amis

Martin Amis was born on 25 August 1949 in Oxford to a famous English writer Kingsley Amis, the author of *Lucky Jim*, *That Uncertain Feeling* or *The Old Devils*. He studied not only in Britain but also in Spain and the United States. However, he finished his studies at Oxford's Exeter College. Amis then became an editorial assistant at the Times Literary Supplement and started to work on his first novel *The Rachel Papers*. Amis's debut was published in 1973 and won a Somerset Maugham Awards a year later. After publishing his second novel, *Dead Babies*, Amis took a position of Literary Editor at New Statesmen, a British political and cultural magazine. Simultaneously, he was working on *Success*, his third novel, published in 1978. (British Council, 2019)

The combination of both the critical acclaim and readers' praise came for the first time with 1984's *Money: A Suicide Note*. This piece of work is considered the first part of Amis's loose trilogy of novels set in West London. The trilogy continued with *London Fields* in 1989 and was completed in 1995 by publication of *The Information*. During the 1980s, Amis started to be perceived as one of the most influential and innovative voices in contemporary British fiction. Thanks to that, he is often grouped with Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie or Ian McEwan, British-based authors that emerged in the 1980s. (British Council, 2019)

Another success came in 1991 as his *Time's Arrow* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction. He concluded his novels of the 20th century with 1997's *Night Train*, and he could not have stepped better into the new century as his 2000's acclaimed volume of autobiography called *Experience* won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. The memoir showed Amis's humility and vulnerability and helped the controversial writer to be better perceived by the general public. The literary critics also appreciated a radical shift in Amis's writing style. (British Council, 2019)

Apart from novels, Amis's bibliography consists of many non-fiction pieces and short stories as well. His essays and reviews are collected in *The Moronic Inferno and Other Visits to America*, *Visiting Mrs Nabokov and Other Excursions* or *The War Against Cliché*. His short stories were put together in two collections named *Einstein's Monsters* and *Heavy Water*

and Other Stories. Both essays and short stories can be found in 2008's *The Second Plane* while *House of Meetings* contains a novella and two short stories. (British Council, 2019)

Amis's more recent novels include *Yellow Dog*, *The Pregnant Widow* or *Lionel Asbo: State of England*. So far, his last novel, *The Zone of Interest*, was published in 2014. (British Council, 2019) At the end of 2016, the author revealed that he is currently working on an autobiographical novel about three other writers who also happened to be Amis's close friends – the poet Philip Larkin, the novelist Saul Bellow and the essayist Christopher Hitchens. (Livemint, 2016) The publication of an Amis novel remains a cultural event in contemporary writing to this day. (British Council, 2019)

According to Chalupský (2009), Amis is an excellent urban writer as his best novels are set in the modern city surroundings. Chalupský considers various aspects of the city life one of Amis's major and most important themes and says it is most apparent in his works *Other People: A Mystery Story*, *Money: A Suicide Note*, *London Fields* and *The Information*.

Amis was awarded a Higher Doctorate by the University of East Anglia in 2000. He also won the British Book Awards Literary Fiction Award in 2003 and National Book Award for Outstanding Achievement in 2010. Until 2011, he was employed as Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Manchester. Amis is currently living in Brooklyn, New York. (British Council, 2019)

5.1. London Fields

Martin Amis's *London Fields* was first published in September 1989. It is a murder mystery novel with elements of black comedy, but it is not afraid to dive into darker tones either. Throughout nearly 500 pages, the reader follows three main characters whose lives are closely interwoven. In addition, there is a fourth mysterious character, the narrator, who happens to be an unsuccessful writer at the same time, using and influencing the three characters in order to gain inspiration for his new piece of work. The narrator is seen as unreliable, but so are the narrations of the main characters. The reader, thus, can never be sure of the presented facts and should rely on his or her own judgment.

Set in a 1999 future vision of London, Samson Young who suffers from a writer's block and is slowly dying of an unspecified disease meets Keith Talent at an airport as he has just arrived from the United States. Keith is a low-level criminal who occasionally earns money as a taxi driver. Despite robbing the American by overcharging him for the ride, Keith invites him to his favourite pub where Samson meets Keith's friend Guy Clinch, a wealthy upper-class banker. In the pub, the men meet a femme fatale of the story, Nicola Six. Bored with her own life and also being afraid of getting old, she plans her own murder on the day of her 35th birthday. Samson finds out about her intentions and is fascinated by them. He sees the situation not only as a much-needed inspiration; for him it is a story written by life itself and all he needs to do is just to document it.

Samson meets Nicola on a regular basis to interview her about the progress of her plan. Nicola knows she will be murdered but even she does not know her murderer. At first, Keith is believed to be the one who will end her life, but as the story develops, Guy becomes an option too. Both Nicola and Samson find it extremely exciting to manipulate with Keith and Guy's lives, making them fall in love with her and initiating a feeling of rivalry between the old friends.

Nicola invites Keith to her apartment many times under the pretext of needing help with broken domestic appliances. Instead of repairing, he is forced to watch her homemade pornographic films while she is taking a bath in the next room, provoking him to come and rape her, hoping he would kill her as she would be defending herself. She also made Guy fall in love with her and leave his own family as she fooled him into thinking she is an innocent and inexperienced virgin. On top of it all, Nicola organised everything in a way so one of the men would know about meetings with the other one and conversely.

The story culminates by Nicola publicly dumping both Keith and Guy in the hope that one of them would kill her but instead the men beat each other. After that, Samson realises he is the one who has to kill her. The story's ending is very vague; therefore, the reader can only assume that Nicola dies by the hands of Samson in the end. Whether Nicola manipulated Samson as well and knew the whole time he would be her killer is another thing dependant on the reader's interpretation.

The book emphasises criminality through violence, theft, alcohol or pornography, all of which is connected mainly to Keith Talent. Amis also deals with social inequality as Guy belongs to upper-class but is friends with indigent Keith and falls in love with someone as ordinary as Nicola. The book received mostly positive reviews, praises of the literature critics published in later editions of the book call it Amis's most ambitious novel that rightly displays his range of talents.

6. The Life and Work of Ian McEwan

Ian McEwan was born on 21 June 1948 in Aldershot. He spent much of his childhood abroad, namely in East Asia, Germany and North Africa. When his family returned to England, he studied at Sussex University and continued his studies at the University of East Anglia. At the age of 27, McEwan published his first literary work, a collection of short stories called *First Love, Last Rites*. The debut consists of tales *Last Day of Summer*, *Homemade*, *Butterflies*, *Solid Geometry*, *Conversation with a Cupboard Man*, *Cocker at the Theatre*, the titular *First Love, Last Rites* and *Disguises*. The year 1978 saw the publishing of his second collection of short stories *In Between the Sheets* that includes stories *Pornography*, *Reflections of a Kept Ape*, *Two Fragments: March 199-*, *Dead as They Come*, the titular *In Between the Sheets*, *To and Fro* and *Psychopolis*. (British Council, 2019)

The Cement Garden, his first and probably most famous novel, was published the same year as the second compilation of stories. Three years later, his second novel *The Comfort of Strangers* earned him a nomination for the Booker Prize for Fiction. It was *The Child in Time*, his third novel released in 1987, that won him the Whitbread Novel Award and strengthened his writing confidence. The last decade of the 20th century was very prolific for McEwan as he published four novels, specifically the love story *The Innocent* in 1990, historical *Black Dogs* in 1992, *Enduring Love* in 1997 and 1998's well-known *Amsterdam* which was awarded the Booker Prize for Fiction. (British Council, 2019)

In 2001, McEwan published, according to many, one of his best works called *Atonement*. The novel was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction and the Whitbread Novel Award and became the winner of the W. H. Smith Literary Award. (British Council, 2019) The book was brought onto the big screen six years later, with the film adaptation getting a nomination for Best Picture at the Academy Awards and winning the Best Picture category at both the Golden Globe Awards and the BAFTA Awards. Screenwriter Christopher Hampton was nominated for all three awards for adapting the novel into a script. (IMDb, 2019)

Four years after the terrorist attack on the United States, McEwan released a novel called *Saturday* which reflected lives of people after the terror act changed the world forever. Two years later, *On Chesil Beach* was published. The British author entered

another prolific period with 2010's *Solar* dealing with climate change. The novel was followed by *Sweet Tooth* in 2012, *The Children Act* in 2014 and 2016's *Nutshell* that retells William Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* through the point of view of the yet unborn child. McEwan's most recent novel is 2019's *Machines Like Me*, a science fiction piece that alters history. (British Council, 2019)

McEwan is also an author of several plays, screenplays and children's fiction. In 2016, he published a novella called *My Purple Scented Novel*. Three years later, he surprised his readers with another novella *The Cockroach* that he describes as a therapeutic response to the Brexit situation. (Penguin Books, 2019)

While urban environment frequently occurs in McEwan's work, Chalupský (2009) does not perceive him as an exclusively urban writer; he seems to be putting more emphasis on the psychology of his characters. However, the city still remains a crucial part of his stories. According to Chalupský, the city surroundings are most noticeable in novels such as *The Cement Garden*, *The Comfort of Strangers*, *The Child in Time* or *Amsterdam*.

Sukdolová (2019) perceives the presence of the uncanny through the portrayal of the environment as something that McEwan's works strongly rely on. He achieves it by constructing the interrelation between the main protagonist and his or her surroundings. McEwan is not afraid of experimenting either as the foetus in *Nutshell* creates a mental map of London by only perceiving its surroundings while being in the mother's womb. Sukdolová further notes that the urban setting belongs among one of the author's significant interests as it helps to reflect human alienation, isolation of individuals and existential crisis in his works.

6.1. Atonement

Ian McEwan's *Atonement* takes place in three periods, therefore the book itself is divided into three parts and the author's afterword. The story's main characters are Robbie Turner, Cecilia Tallis and, most importantly, Briony Tallis.

The first part takes place in the summer of 1935 during a single day. Thirteen-year-old Briony loves making stories and aspires to become a passionate writer. While rehearsing a play she prepared for her family, Briony witnesses a strange encounter

between her older sister Cecilia and Robbie, the son of the family's housekeeper. Although the act was innocent, Briony believes that Robbie was sexually aggressive to her sister.

The young man slowly becomes aware of his feelings towards Cecilia and decides to write her a love letter. Unaware of Briony's animosity, he asks her to deliver the letter. She secretly reads it and is horrified by the lustful language. She is convinced she needs to protect her sister from him. Later that night, she finds the couple making love in a library, thinking Cecilia is being raped. Meanwhile, a few of the invited guests' children left the house and got lost in the night. The whole family is therefore trying to find them, and during the search, Briony's fifteen-year-old cousin gets raped. Without any hesitation, Briony accuses Robbie of the act, telling the rest of the family what she witnessed earlier that day. Despite Cecilia defending Robbie and not believing the accusation, Robbie gets arrested and is put into prison.

The second part takes place five years later. Cecilia left her family and became a nurse. Robbie gets released from prison on the condition that he will join the army and will fight in World War II. Before leaving to France, he meets Cecilia for the first time since the arrest. The memory of the few minutes spent with Cecilia is the only thing that keeps him alive in the battleground. After the army's retreatment to Dunkirk, Robbie gets injured, and his health condition is changing very sharply.

The third part sees Briony studying in London to become a nurse. She now fully understands her guilt and tries to redeem herself by helping the severely injured soldiers. Briony decides to visit her sister whom she has not seen since the dramatic incident. She finds out that Robbie is alive, and the couple is living together. However, they refuse to forgive her. Briony promises to do everything she can to at least acquit Robbie of the blame in order to clear his name.

The last part takes place in 1999 and is narrated by Briony herself. Unexpectedly, she reveals that the three previous parts are written by her as well. Aged 77, the successful writer reveals that not everything on the previous pages is accurate. Tragically, Robbie succumbed to his war injuries in France and Cecilia died during the bombing of London's underground. Briony has never seen either of them since

the arrest in 1935. Writing the book was an attempt at atonement for her crime. Recently diagnosed with vascular dementia, Briony is waiting for her end to come.

Atonement was published in 2001 and is widely regarded as McEwan's best work to date. The novel earned positive reviews and was shortlisted for many literary awards. The book is considered one of the greatest novels of the 21st century.

6.2. Butterflies

Butterflies is one of eight short stories from the collection called *First Love, Last Rites* that McEwan published in 1975. It is an unsettling story of a paedophile and his innocent victim. The story starts with a socially isolated man who is taking a walk and meets a small girl who decides to follow his every step. Surprised but somehow pleased, he decides to buy her a doll and an ice cream to keep her close. He then takes advantage of her naivety and takes her to an abandoned canal as she believes him saying there are beautiful butterflies she wishes to see. There, he makes her touch his genitals. As the abused girl tries to escape, the man catches her and drowns her without any emotion in the water to make sure his disgusting act cannot be revealed.

6.3. Conversation with a Cupboard Man

Conversation with a Cupboard Man is another short story from the 1975's collection *First Love, Last Rites*. It tells the story of a man who was raised by a slightly crazed mother. Unable to have another child, she treated his only son as a baby until he was seventeen. Then she met a new man whom she married, and, as her life was finally fulfilled, she left her son on his own. It was his mother's fault that he was utterly unprepared for adult life. Wishing to return home, he spends the rest of the story hidden in the dark of a cupboard, an act symbolising his wish to come back to the safety of his mother's womb.

6.4. Dead as They Come

Dead as They Come is a short story from McEwan's second collection *In Between the Sheets* published in 1978. It is a simple story of a rich businessman who is enchanted by a wax figure in a clothing shop. After several months of looking at it through the shop's window, he decides to buy it. To hide his odd obsession, he invents a story of the mannequin and its clothes being a gift for his wife. When he brings it home, he names it Helen and treats it as a living woman. At first, they live in a happy relationship but later the man starts to suspect Helen of cheating with his own chauffeur. After three weeks of tension and jealousy, he kills her while raping her. Not only did he lose his beloved, but it is also implied that he lost his mind as well.

6.5. Saturday

The novel takes place on a single day, specifically 15 February 2003 and as the title of the book implies, the date falls on Saturday. In the beginning, Harry Perowne, the main character of the story, sees an aeroplane falling from the sky. The accident foreshadows the event that will interrupt Harry's usual Saturday. After playing squash with his friend and visiting his mother in a retirement home, the neurosurgeon encounters Baxter and two of his henchmen. Just a moment before being attacked, Harry recognises that Baxter suffers from Huntington's disease which disconcerted the attacker and Harry managed to escape.

Later that day, the Perowne family gathered to celebrate Harry's daughter Daisy, who got her first collection of poems published. However, Baxter and his gang found and invaded Harry's house. Baxter terrorises the family, forcing the daughter to read her poems and strip naked under the threat of killing her mother. This moment reveals that the daughter is pregnant; therefore, not one but two lives are at risk. On the pretext of having a new type of medication for his disease, Harry lures Baxter upstairs where he plans to attack him. After the members of the gang flee and Baxter ends up injured and arrested, Harry is called to work as he is needed for surgery of a man who happens to be Baxter, his assailant. Despite having the right to decline, Harry shows his professionalism by performing the surgery.

McEwan published the novel in 2005 and gained both critical acclaim and commercial success. One of the novel's most prominent themes is political engagement as the story unfolds during a large demonstration against the United States' invasion of Iraq. *Saturday* is, definitely, a so-called post 9/11 novel, a genre that deals with the world after the terrorist attacks on the United States' famous World Trade Center in 2001.

6.6. Two Fragments: March 199-

Two Fragments: March 199- is another short story from the collection of seven short stories *In Between the Sheets*. As the story's title suggests, the text is divided into two parts. McEwan provides us with a dystopian vision of London, predicting in 1978 how the world could look like in the 1990s. His post-apocalyptic view offers the reader a closer look at the horrifying decline of society.

The first part follows a father and his daughter during their typical day. The father takes his child to an institution that is similar to a kindergarten as he needs to go to work. When he comes for her in the afternoon, they go back home and watch the life full of decay in the streets of London.

The second part concentrates on the man and his girlfriend. They discuss their dreams and hopes; they also remember the old London and the things that no longer exist. The end of the story shows a poor Chinese family that invited the man to dinner as a sign of gratitude. Not only do they live in poor conditions, but they treat their guest with a meal made of excrements as they cannot afford anything better to eat.

7. Analysis of Martin Amis's London

As the title of *London Fields* suggests, the whole novel takes place in the said metropolis. Amis was very specific while portraying the urban surroundings, mentioning many real places that are situated in the United Kingdom's capital. He depicts the intricacies of London by deluging the novel with many roads (e.g. Portobello Road, Chesterton Road, Golborne Road, Bayswater Road, etc.), streets (e.g. Oxford Street, Baker Street, Bond Street, Marylebone High Street, Strand, etc.), groves (e.g. Ladbroke Grove, Arnos Grove, Westbourne Grove, etc.) districts (e.g. Bloomsbury, Tooting, Clapham, Brixton, etc.) or areas (e.g. West End, East End, Chelsea, Acton, West Hampstead, West Kensington, etc.). Amis does not forget to mention London's natural side either, taking his protagonists to Lincoln's Inn Fields, the Serpentine Lake, many parks (e.g. Memorial Park, Regent's Park, Ibrox Park etc.) and gardens (e.g. Ilchester Gardens, Oxford Gardens, etc.). Amis completes the city's picture with London Borough of Barnet, Hampstead, Heathrow Airport, several lanes, crescents, squares, underground stations, museums and popular monuments.

By mentioning all the locations above and many more, Amis created a vivid image of the metropolis, making the audience feel like they go through the city with the characters. Being so specific, Amis can easily make the reader feel overwhelmed by London as if his goal was to make the reader a mere tourist who has no chance to orientate well without a map.

7.1. The City

Right at the beginning of his novel, Amis describes London '*as taut and meticulous as a cobweb*' (Amis, 2010), emphasising the vastness of the capital. One of his characters expresses a harsh opinion of Londoners, using assumptions of the city at the same time. '*The people in here, they're like London, they're like the streets of London, a long way from any shape I've tried to equip them with, strictly non-symmetrical, exactly lopsided (...).*' (Amis, 2010).

Later in the book, Amis depicts a small park that is covered with rubbish. '*On this green patch, rather regrettably, rather disappointingly (...), there is also a garbage tip:*

nothing outrageous, no compost or bathtubs or abandoned pantotechnicons, just selected refuse, magazines, old toys, a running shoe, a kettle.' (Amis, 2010) The author criticises London's residents' inappropriate behaviour, which ruins the efforts of afforesting parts of the city that were made in order to improve the quality of life. *'This is a London theme; the attempt at greenery would itself appear to attract the trash. The cylinders of wire-netting they put up to protect young trees sufficiently resemble a container of some kind, so people cram them with [rubbish].'* (Amis, 2010) On the contrary, Amis claims that London has minimal problems with dog excrements. *'One thing about London: not so much dogshit everywhere. A lot still. Compared to New York, even old New York, it's the cloaca maxima. But nothing like it used to be, when the streets of London were paved with dogshit.'* (Amis, 2010) However, it is hard to say whether the author's opinion is real or just a work of fiction as the novel takes place a decade in the future and it could be only his wishful prediction.

London Fields deals with darts a lot, and Amis implies this sport is loved by England. *'This is a darts culture here: darts is what the Brits do best, in the afterglow of empire.'* (Amis, 2010) Again, it is hard to decide whether the writer meant what he said or was speaking for his biased characters. Amis also mentions the monarchy, saying *'all you had to do was step into the street and you were surrounded by royalty'*. (Amis, 2010) He then completes his thought of the everlasting presence of the royal family by naming Prince Albert, the Duke of Clarence or the Earl of Warwick.

Amis also ruins the idyllic image of the world's favourite city with his remarks of streets smelling of urine. *'The steeped concrete shone in the low sun, and even fumed slightly with the fierce tang of urine.'* (Amis, 2010) At one point, he even makes a comparison using the scent of urine in the streets. *'For Keith it was sharp and brackish, like the ever-present smell of urine in the streets.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis also disrupts the city's seemingly perfect image by drawing the reader's attention to London's poor inhabitants. *'A queue of tramps had formed at the gates of the Salvation Army Hostel, waiting for soup or whatever was offered, the troops of the poor, conscripts, pressed men, hard pressed.'* (Amis, 2010)

Nevertheless, London's perfection is disrupted even more by the following description of telephone boxes on the street. *'There was no trace of a telephone in it.*

And there was no hint or vestige of a telephone in the next half-dozen he tried. These little glass ruins seemed only to serve as urinals, as shelters from the rain, and as job-centre clearing-houses for freelance prostitutes and their clients.' (Amis, 2010) Together with creating a clear picture of vandalism, the description suggests that the streets became a place of paid sex that everyone can witness. The city's moral downfall is supported by the sentence claiming that no one loathes vulgarisms anymore. *'Christ, even ten years ago, in London, it was quite an achievement to get past two men talking in the street without hearing the word fuck or one of its cognates; but now they're all doing it — nippers, vicars, grannies.'* (Amis, 2010)

While one of Amis's characters considers the city so superb that *'he had never been out of London'* (Amis, 2010), others are waiting for the right opportunity to leave it as one Amis's character says *"when he's better (...) we'll move out of London".* (Amis, 2010) Amis also destroys the notion of being rich if working in the centre of England's capital. *'Some people think that just because one works in the City there are these huge chunks of money lying around.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis's scepticism of London is underlined by one of his characters recommending *"Then go to New York. Go to New England. Go to New London."* (Amis, 2010) The author insinuates that London is no longer one of the leading cities as New York newly assumed that role.

The negative opinion of Britain's metropolis is concluded with the narrator's following words. *'There was a time when I thought I could read the streets of London. (...) But now I don't think I can. Either I'm losing it, or the streets are getting harder to read. (...) No wonder, then, that I can't read streets, which we all know to be hard-metal-lined, reinforced, massively concrete. And getting harder, tougher.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis clearly disapproves the cities getting bigger and more modern, at least with the outcome of such a process. London is known for having almost identical streets full of the same-looking houses, so Amis's concern that London and other large cities are losing their recognisable face may be in place.

7.2. Crime and Violence

Crime is described mainly through the character of Keith in the novel. To continue the topic of the previous subchapter, he cheats people as a taxi driver by delaying the ride. *'Listen. I know my way around. I'm not over here to see Harrods, and Buckingham Palace, and Stratford-on-Avon. (...) Slough? Come on. If this is a kidnap or a murder then we'll discuss it. If not, take me to London for the amount we agreed.'* (Amis, 2010) However, his criminal activities go beyond the occasional chauffeuring at airports and train stations. *'(...) he cheated people with his fake scents and colognes at the pavement stalls of Oxford Street and Bishopsgate (his two main lines were Scandal and Outrage); he cheated people with non-pornographic pornography in the back rooms of short-lease stores'* (Amis, 2010) and as Amis continues, *'he cheated people on the street everywhere with the upturned cardboard box or milk crate and the three warped playing cards: Find the Lady!'* (Amis, 2010)

The book also mentions drugs and other addictive substances as a substantial part of the novel takes place in an inferior pub. *'In London, broadly speaking, racketeering meant fighting about drugs; in the part of West London that Keith called home, racketeering meant fighting about drugs with black people (...).'* (Amis, 2010) Amis describes the reality of such night stops using actions of one of his characters who was buying the drugs only out of fear. *'(...) he stopped having to buy drinks for the black girls, and stopped having to buy drugs from the black boys. The heroin, the cut coke, the Temazepam, the dihydrocodeine he had always refused, fobbing them off with small purchases of dope.'* (Amis, 2010) Amusingly, the drugs were not actual drugs, an example of Amis's witty observation of reality. *'He used to take the hash and grass home and flush it down the waste-disposer; he didn't drop it in the gutter for fear that a child or a dog might get hold of it, a needless precaution, because the hash wasn't hash and the grass was just grass...'* (Amis, 2010)

The writer refers to smaller acts of crime as well, e.g. *'some black kids just put a brick through your downstairs window'*. (Amis, 2010) One of the characters is even being robbed by shop assistants, taking it as something normal, nothing to be anxious about. *'The tobacconist overcharged her, the grocer gave short measure...'* (Amis, 2010)

Sometimes the characters are so used to crime and violence in their surroundings that they do not act at all, as demonstrated with *'I find I have spent the last ten minutes looking out of the window, watching a twelve-year-old boy wearily stealing a car'*. (Amis, 2010) At one point in the story, a married couple deals with a burgled car as something unpleasant but expected. *'Over breakfast the next morning Hope informed Guy that the car had been done again and he'd have to take it in. Guy nodded and went on with his cereal (the car got done about once a week).'*' (Amis, 2010) Amis therefore destroys the established claim that only tourists have enormous problems with thieves; in his view, London's residents have to deal with thieves on a daily basis as well.

London is depicted as sometimes a dangerous place, for instance, the Memorial Park is described as a *'park, with its punks and drunks'*. (Amis, 2010) Amis is not even afraid to call some parts of London places of death. *'(...) what you see in London streets at three o'clock in the morning, with it trickling out to the eaves and flues, tousled water, ragged waste. Violence is near and inexhaustible. Even death is near.'* (Amis, 2010) The ever-present atmosphere of unsafety is further highlighted with a report in the news claiming that *'police had made an arrest in the case of the murdered five-year-old in South London's Camberwell'*. (Amis, 2010) Last but not least, Amis mentions problems with dirty money and usury, something typical of the world's biggest places and its hopeless citizens. *'(...) he had been borrowing money on the street, more particularly on Paradine Street, in the East End. He had been borrowing money from a loanshark called Kirk Stockist.'* (Amis, 2010) In a much darker tone, it is also obliquely indicated that one of the characters abuses his wife. Furthermore, to make matters worse, someone is said to abuse their baby.

Amis's talent allows him to comically and aptly depict the crime situation of London. *'Little did they know that the place they were about to burgle - the shop, and the flat above it - had already been burgled the week before: yes, and the week before that. And the week before that. It was all burgled out.'* (Amis, 2010) The author creates a humorous picture of the burglars rivalling each other, assuming that there are more thieves in London than houses now. *'Indeed, burgling, when viewed in Darwinian terms, was clearly approaching a crisis. Burglars were finding that almost everywhere had been burgled. Burglars were forever bumping into one another, stepping on the toes*

of other burglars.' (Amis, 2010) Amis finishes his sketch with an absurd image of thieves in a queue, waiting for their turn on the flats and houses. *'There were burglar jams on rooftops and stairways, on groaning fire-escapes.'* (Amis, 2010)

The perfect image of London is also disrupted by the presence of a corrupted policeman that often stops by the pub as Amis writes *'the bent copper, John Dark, came over'*. (Amis, 2010) The novel also hints at parts of the city where the policemen are too scared to intervene. *'A lone policeman was watching him from the pavement, motionless against the plunging figures beyond. Just a kid. In a uniform. Fucking tithead. Keith was fairly confident that the policeman wouldn't try nothing here, or he'd get lynched.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis, however, saved London's reputation in the end with the police officer interfering into the matter.

7.3. Traffic

Right at the beginning of the novel, Amis makes several comments about the taxi situation in London. By saying *'I'd been standing under the sign saying TAXIS for about a half-hour (...)'* (Amis, 2010), Amis likens the United Kingdom's capital to the greatest cities of the United States, implying it is nearly impossible to get a ride. While that moment emphasised by *'You won't get a cab here, pal. No way.'* (Amis, 2010) takes place at the airport, Amis makes it clear that the impossibility of getting a taxi is typical for London in general, not just the crowded places.

'You seldom see a black London taxi any more. You can call them, and arrange a rendezvous within a mile of Marble Arch; but apparently they stick to the West End and the City.' (Amis, 2010) Amis also mentions black cabs which are typical for Britain. Nevertheless, they seem to be intended for tourists nowadays. *'Black cabs are like the buggies on Central Park, a tourist thing, a nostalgia thing. And a money thing: they're blindingly expensive.'* (Amis, 2010) The tourist attraction is further proved by Amis stating that its *'drivers wear modified befeater outfits'*. (Amis, 2010) The author even calls the black cabs socially insensitive, probably hinting at the unfavourable economic situation of many Londoners.

'So nowadays cabs aren't even minicabs. They're just any old heap with a removable sign up on the dash.' (Amis, 2010) Amis describes taxis meant for non-tourists as ordinary vehicles that are often in bad condition, implying that anyone can become a taxi driver nowadays, as evidenced by one of the main characters. The unprofessionalism of paid drivers is further demonstrated in the following sentence. *'The driver treated his cab as a peasant might treat his horse or ass, with numb and proprietorial cruelty.'* (Amis, 2010)

Traffic is commented from both the usual participant point of view and also the less common observer point of view, e.g. *Hope was staring out expressionlessly at the car-crammed street.* (Amis, 2010) It seems that Amis cannot resist expressing his thoughts on London's traffic situation. The novel is full of remarks such as *'he picked his way through the doubled traffic'* (Amis, 2010), *'[he] wedged in one of the traffic jams that routinely enchained his day'* (Amis, 2010) or *'look at the congestion'* (Amis, 2010). One of his characters even decides to travel by train in order to arrive at his destination on time. *'In the damp-dog airlessness of the train (a taxi would have taken all morning) (...).'* (Amis, 2010)

Amis also expresses a local saying through one of his characters that implies Londoners are so accustomed to traffic problems that they know how to deal with them. *'Never drive down the Golborne Road on Friday or Saturday afternoons. Rubbish trucks innit. Occasioning pronounced congestion. You nip up Lancaster Road instead. Common sense.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis also uses the traffic situation as a simile at one point, *'he stood in the kitchen, as frazzled as London traffic'*. (Amis, 2010)

The writer also criticises the fact that people lose their precious time in traffic jams. *'He arrived at the tricky junction on the Great Western Road: familiar horrorspot, with zebra-crossing, bus station, and humpbacked bridge over the canal, all complicating access. Fifteen minutes later, he was still there.'* (Amis, 2010) He goes as far as to say that people rob each other of time and hence lives. *'In traffic, now, we are using up each other's time, each other's lives. We are using up each other's lives.'* (Amis, 2010) However, Amis is not complaining of cars only; he expresses discontent with planes and airports as well, describing *'a fourteen-hour wait in the VIP Lounge at Heathrow (...).'* (Amis, 2010) He hints at the peak of globalism by mentioning the full

utilisation of airports. *'Heathrow provided no such fuel for optimism, or even for stoicism. (...) The queues, the queues, cross hatched by the extra-frantic, the extra-needing. Too many belongings. Too many people all wanting to do the same thing...'* (Amis, 2010)

Amis thinks about the traffic situation of the current world, stating that it shows the greatness of the city. *'We know that traffic reflects the temperaments of the great capitals (...): the unsmiling triumphalism of Paris, the fury and despair of old New York, the cat-and-mouse audacity of Rome (...).'* (Amis, 2010) He continues his enumeration with *'the ragged murder of Cairo, the showboat longevity of Los Angeles, the industrial durance of Bombay or Delhi, where, four times a day, the cars lash the city in immovable chains. But here, in London — I just don't get it'* (Amis, 2010), comparing London directly to the mentioned cities and expressing his doubts over London's greatness.

7.4. Weather

All books set in London have to acknowledge its typical weather in a way, and Amis is fully aware of that. He actually reflects the weather on his pages a lot. To no one's surprise, the weather the author describes here is almost exclusively rain and cold. He mentions hot weather a few times, but even those references are connected to the typical British rain, e.g. *'it was hot, and the rain was hot (...).'* (Amis, 2010)

The novel offers an immense number of rain references, from *'(...) as she prepared to usher him out into the wind and the rain (...).'* (Amis, 2010) to *'Guy wandered off into the rain'* (Amis, 2010) to *'(...) [he] turned to face the street-wide wall of rain'* (Amis, 2010) and *'nothing divides us — just a screen of rain'*. (Amis, 2010)

To avoid getting repetitive, Amis described the weather through his characters' clothes as well, e.g. *'(...) the top five buttons of his steaming, rain-soaked shirt were missing (...).'* (Amis, 2010) or *'(...) Guy in his big wet shoes, Nicola in her dark-green wellies (...).'* (Amis, 2010) The author adds a destructive attribute to the unfavourable weather as well by stating that *'the rain would ruin it, the scuff and the shuffle and the tyre squirt would certainly ruin it (her shoes were already ruined).'* (Amis, 2010) Nevertheless, not only property has been destroyed. He also emphasised the weather's

impact on someone's health. *'The cold he had caught in the unwholesome rain soon developed into an arctic fever.'* (Amis, 2010)

Amis also assigns importance to the sound the rain makes. While some may perceive it as a relaxing sound, his main characters do not. *'Nicola awoke, and heard the rain, and went back to sleep again, or she tried. The rain sounded like industrial gas escaping from the rooftops (...).'* (Amis, 2010) At other times, the writer maintained a neutral attitude towards the sounds of the wet weather. *'He became aware of the sound of rain on the streets and rooftops.'* (Amis, 2010)

The author successfully recreates the miserable weather into an almost catastrophic scene. *'Forever intensifying, the rain was now coming down so hard that even the cars seemed to be wading off home. Just buses, like lit fortifications, stalled in the wet night.'* (Amis, 2010) Another horrifying description focuses on the weather's everlasting persistence. *'He kept on waiting for the rain to slacken. But it didn't. It kept on doing the other thing. It was lashing down, just like they said, whipstroke after whipstroke, in climbing anger.'* (Amis, 2010) The following sentence invents a nearly horror-like image. *'(...) [he plunged] through the diagonal arrowshowers of reeking rain, through the desperate maelstroms of Queensway and Westbourne Grove (...).'* (Amis, 2010) To further demonstrate Amis's vocabulary-rich descriptions of the English weather, the subsequent quotation shows his playfulness as well. *'Seven feet of water dumped from the sky in twenty-four hours: a day when all the weather gods rush for the bathroom...'* (Amis, 2010)

Amis also describes the impact of rain on people. Despite living in London for their whole lives or the most of it at least, Londoners do not seem to be in peace with such weather. *'It's terrible,' said Incarnacion (...) and gestured toward the window and the terrible rain: 'the terrible rain!' (...) It wouldn't look so bad in a jungle or somewhere, coming down like this, but in a northern city, suspended from soiled clouds.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis continues to express the maid's feelings. *'It brings you so low. When the sun shines? You happy. Feel good. Cheerful, you know? (...) But when is raining like this. Rain, rain, rain. When is raining? You sad. Is miserable, you know? You get depress.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis finishes Incarnacion's quite humorous mental breakdown by uttering, *'You wake up? Rain. Go out? Rain. (...) Rain, rain, rain. How you going*

to cheer up and feel good and happy and cheerful when is all this rain? How? Rain! Just rain, rain, rain!' (Amis, 2010)

To slacken the intensity, the writer occasionally replaces the rain with the description of fast-moving and petrifying clouds, e.g. *'a dead cloud collapsing into the fog of dark rain'*. (Amis, 2010) The strange behaviour of clouds helps the author to create the desired feeling of a mystery. *'Guy went out into the street and buttoned his jacket against the sudden cold. The clouds, which were behaving so strangely these days, had gathered themselves into a single cylinder (...).'* (Amis, 2010) Another quote seems to hint at something almost unnatural. *'Above, the clouds were moving with preternatural speed (...). The clouds sped, and not just laterally either. They seemed to bounce and romp and tumble.'* (Amis, 2010) Because such descriptions could easily give the impression of being withdrawn from a fantasy novel, it is understandable that Amis relied much more on the rain while creating the atmosphere for his work.

7.5. Different Nationalities

London is well-known for being the dream destination for immigrants who seek employment and a better life in general. Amis takes full advantage of that as his novel is filled with different nationalities. He naturally mentions the migrants as his characters encounter them, e.g. *'he introduced me to the Polacks and the brothers (...).'* (Amis, 2010), *'(...) the young Swedes and Danes formed lines at his stall (...).'* (Amis, 2010) or *'around us young Arab husbands grumbled while their wives shopped'*. (Amis, 2010)

But Amis captures the reality in an even better way. He refers to different nationalities in connection with shops and stalls. The novel mentions, for instance, the Indian Mutiny on Cathcart Road, the Bangladeshi stationer's in Queensway, the Muslim café Hosni's, the Mexican snack bar in Westbourne Park Road or the vegetarian Bangladeshi restaurant in Kilburn. When writing about an Asian grocery, he does not forget to add that it is off-licence. The atmosphere of second-rate shops owned by immigrants is also described. *'N. Poluck, the sign said grimly. Cornish Dairy. Confectioner & Newsagent. Yeah: tabloids, packet cakes, and milk cartons. Old Polish couple ran it, with an air of great depression and disobligingness.'* (Amis, 2010)

The author also cannot resist putting an immigrant into a classic English shop as he states that *'at its head sat a Spanish girl in a steel pen'*. (Amis, 2010)

Amis continues to emphasise people's differences in other spheres as well. With *'(...) an old black man in the corner with a sax and the fierce melancholy of Coleman Hawkins'* (Amis, 2010), he reminds the reader of a famous black saxophonist. When talking about the contestants of a darts tournament, he writes *'the fast-throwing oriental had what it took to put one over on the South London drayman'*. (Amis, 2010) Quite stereotypically, Amis also suggests that foreigners have different manners in the following quotation. *'That left her accent, which was definitely foreign (Europe, thought Keith: somewhere in the middle), and they might do things funny where she came from.'* (Amis, 2010)

7.6. Au Pairs

Au pairs are very sought after in the United Kingdom as local parents are more career-oriented than those from other European countries. It is, however, an inferior job and such parents are therefore dependant on girls from Eastern Europe who desire to earn better money and improve their language skills as local teenagers have better job opportunities and would demand a higher salary. Au pairs are reflected throughout the whole novel because a rich family needs someone to look after their spoiled and aggressive child with whom they are at their wits' end, as evidenced in the following quote. *'Around the house, these days there was a kind of SWAT team of burly orderlies, as well as a few scarred nannies and au pairs.'* (Amis, 2010)

Amis beautifully depicts the family's need of an au pair. *'The Clinches were passing through the nanny choke-point of autumn: several new ones would be starting over the next couple of weeks.'* (Amis, 2010) He seems to be aware of the fact that European students seek the job position the mostly in the time of a new academic year as they, for instance, decided to suspend their university studies for a while or were not accepted to their dream college and have to wait for the next year to try again.

The author shows the interviewing process as well. *'Hope was interviewing, or importuning, a new nanny.'* (Amis, 2010) Amis indicates that British families seek new

au pairs quite often. While in this case they need her because of the unmanageable child, finding an au pair is a problem of every family as the girls do this job just for a few years or even only months. *'Nanny auditions were a constant feature of Hope's daily life. There had been a standing ad in The Lady ever since the week of Marmaduke's birth...'* (Amis, 2010)

Because of that, Amis gladly emphasises the presence of a new au pair whenever possible, e.g. *'he was in his nursery, trying out a new au pair'* (Amis, 2010) or *'(...) maybe the current au pair is more my speed (...)'*. (Amis, 2010) Amis also mentions the obvious, the fact that it is a job mainly for immigrants. *'On his way up the stairs he saw another new nanny, dark-skinned, exotic, serenely slovenly. There had been a tacit relaxation of the rule about pretty nannies.'* (Amis, 2010) Perfectly capturing the reality of it again, Amis shows that people of the United Kingdom are used to having a stranger in their home every now and then. *'(...) [he] wandered up the stairs and into the hall, nodding, now and then to a half-familiar nanny or au-pair.'* (Amis, 2010)

8. Analysis of Ian McEwan's London

Similarly to Amis's *London Fields* novel, McEwan's works are full of references to real places situated in London. While *Atonement* takes place in the United Kingdom's capital only partly, the author makes the reader feel the presence of the metropolis throughout the whole novel by several subtle allusions. The writer mentions many districts (e.g. Stockwell, Morden, Lambeth, etc.), streets (Clapham High Street, Downing Street, etc.), roads (e.g. Lambeth Palace Road, Whitehall, Clapham Road, etc.), parks (Regent's Park, St. James's Park, Clapham Common, etc.) and many other places, e.g. West End, Tate Gallery, Sotheby's, Wandsworth Prison or Alder Hey Hospital.

While McEwan's *Saturday* is entirely set in London, it lacks *London Fields'* exaggerated attention to detail and makes it much easier for the reader to navigate through the story. Still, there are countless references to streets (e.g. Charlotte Street, Cleveland Street, Warren Street, Maple Street, Downing Street, Conway Street, etc.), roads (Euston Road, Huston Road, Tottenham Court Road, etc.), areas (e.g. Soho, Paddington, Perivale, Acton, etc.) and other places like parks, squares, bridges, gardens, cultural facilities and more.

McEwan's short stories naturally do not provide the space for a detailed description of the surroundings; however, *Conversation with a Cupboard Man* mentions Clapham and Muswell Hill districts while *Dead as They Come* refers to West End and Hyde Park. *Two Fragments: March 199-* is more abundant in terms of the city's description, making references to roads (Circle Road, Tottenham Court Road, Whitehall), streets (Frith Street, Old Compton Street, Gerrard Street), bridges (Chelsea Bridge, Vauxhall Bridge), Camden Town, Soho, Regent's Park, Cambridge Circus and Shaftesbury Avenue. On the contrary, *Butterflies* is completely deprived of London's details.

8.1. The City

In *Atonement*, London is oftentimes mentioned even in the novel's large part that is set miles away from the capital. The father of the family is depicted as a city figure connecting the mansion with the metropolis. '*When her father was home, the household settled around a fixed point. (...) his presence imposed order and allowed freedom. Burdens were lifted.*' (McEwan, 2010a) The previous quote suggests that

the father stands for stability and follows a set of rules that hold the family as well as the country together.

The father character also represents secrets that the city helps to cover as it is implied that London is not only the place of his work but of a love affair too. *'She did not wish to know why Jack spent so many consecutive nights in London. Or rather, she did not wish to be told. Nor did she wish to know more about the work that kept him late at the Ministry.'* (McEwan, 2010a) London's ability to conceal secrets is mentioned once more as one of the main characters used the city to hide her true life before her family. *'She did not want her mother to know about the lowly work she did. (...) It was important to her that her parents, especially her mother, knew as little about her life as possible.'* (McEwan, 2010a)

The son of the family who moved to the metropolis portrays it as an entirely different and exciting world in comparison to the calm and rather boring countryside, e.g. by the Cockney dialect typical for working-class Londoners. *'(...) [he] did the comic Cockney voice he reserved for her. "An' if it ain't my li'l sis!"'* (McEwan, 2010a) But McEwan also makes clear that living in the city is a demanding thing requiring responsibility. *'(...) for nine months, for every waking minute of every day, enslaved to a vision, he had shuttled between headquarters, his boardroom and the factory floor. He had bought a large house on Clapham Common and hardly had time to visit it.'* (McEwan, 2010a) While London is depicted as a location full of rush, it is also a tempting place filled with endless possibilities. He plays with the idea that *'one day he might bring home a friend for Cecilia to marry'*. (McEwan, 2010a)

His sister longs for the life in the city as *'it was hard to imagine [her brother] ever lonely, or bored or despondent'* (McEwan, 2010a). London was then seen as a place of job opportunities. *'Leon repeatedly invited her to spend time with him in London. University friends were offering to help her find a job—a dull one certainly, but she would have her independence.'* (McEwan, 2010a) The capital was also portrayed as a progressive place where women had the same opportunities as men, something unheard of in the rest of the country in that time. *'D'you know, there are girls getting all sorts of jobs now. Even taking the civil service exams.'* After all, *'(...) it was what her father expected of her'*. (McEwan, 2010a) In contrast, one of the Londoners expresses

later in the novel her children's excitement of being evacuated to the countryside during the war. *"They's so excited about going in the countryside. Never been before, would you believe."* (McEwan, 2010a)

The author also points at London's streets that are well-known for being very similar to each other and their typical bricked houses looking nearly identical. *'The street she was looking for was three turnings past the tube station, itself another replica. The Edwardian terraces, net-curtained and seedy, ran straight for half a mile. 43 Dudley Villas was halfway down, with nothing to distinguish it from the others (...).'* (McEwan, 2010a) In the epilogue, McEwan quite poignantly ponders on the perception of a city in one's declining years. *'Beyond a certain age, a journey across the city becomes uncomfortably reflective. The addresses of the dead pile up. (...) One day I too will prompt a moment's reflection in the passenger of a passing cab.'* (McEwan, 2010a)

In *Saturday*, McEwan claims that present-day London finds itself in a time of prosperity as he writes *'the overfull litter baskets suggest abundance rather than squalor (...).'* (McEwan, 2010d) He portrays London as one would expect a big city to be portrayed, a lifeful place crowded with people. *'(...) [benches] look benignly expectant of their daily traffic - cheerful lunchtime office crowds, the solemn, studious boys from the Indian hostel, lovers in quiet raptures or crisis, the crepuscular drug dealers, the ruined old lady with her wild, haunting calls.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

The author philosophises about the city's impact on its people, suggesting when someone decides to live in a city, the person plunges themselves into a massive and unstoppable vortex of events. *'But a city of its nature cultivates insomniacs; it is itself a sleepless entity whose wires never stop singing (...).'* (McEwan, 2010d) Through his protagonist, McEwan admires cities in general and considers them one of the biggest humankind's creations as demonstrated by the following fairly utopian quotation. *'(...) the city is a success, a brilliant invention, a biological masterpiece - millions teeming around the accumulated and layered achievements of the centuries, (...) sleeping, working, entertaining themselves, (...) nearly everyone wanting it to work.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

Of course, it is a writer's duty to mention tourists in connection to modern-day London. McEwan decides to talk about students as it is quite common for European schools to organise trips to the United Kingdom. *'The long line of tourists - teenagers mostly - outside Madame Tussaud's seems less futile than usual (...).'* (McEwan, 2010d) The author also comments on the current street fashion of the young that seems to be rather careless and sloppy. *'They're wearing trainers, track suits and hooded tops - the currency of the street, so general as to be no style at all. Theo sometimes dresses this way in order, so he says, not to make decisions about how he looks.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

McEwan proves his mastery of writing by inserting his vivid descriptions of the city, as seen in the following quote. *'(...) a spot he's always liked, where the affairs of utility and pleasure condense to make colour and space brighter: mirrors, flowers, soaps, newspapers, electrical plugs, house paints, key cutting urbanely interleaved with expensive restaurants, wine and tapas bars, hotels.'* (McEwan, 2010d) He makes the reader feel like they are right there by portraying the pretty side of London and, contrastingly, by criticising it, e.g. by saying parts of the city resemble Communist Warsaw. *'(...) the neighbourhood is packed with penny-pinching office blocks and student accommodation - ill-fitting windows, low ambition, not lasting well.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

The author also depicts the city in weekdays when it is not as much flooded by tourists but rather by workers. *'(...) the square at its best weekday lunchtimes, in warm weather, when the office crowds from the local production, advertising and design companies bring their sandwiches and boxed salads, and the gates of the gardens are opened up.'* (McEwan, 2010d) His masterful and detailed descriptions leave almost nothing to the reader's own imagination as he elaborates on his delineation even more. *'They loll on the grass in quiet groups, men and women of various races, mostly in their twenties and thirties, confident, cheerful, unoppressed, fit from private gym workouts, at home in their city.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

McEwan also does not miss the opportunity to represent London as a place that formed the world's history. *'On Sunday morning, September the third 1939, while Chamberlain was announcing in his radio broadcast from Downing Street that*

the country was at war with Germany, (...).' (McEwan, 2010d) The reminiscence of such a pivotal moment stresses London's persisting importance and could also demonstrate McEwan's pride in being a patriot of sorts.

Butterflies portrays a much calmer part of the city, which nearly resembles a small village. *'I walked down several streets, between privet hedges and hot, parked cars. Down each street there was the same smell of lunch cooking. I heard the same radio programme through open windows. I saw cats and dogs but very few people (...).'*' (McEwan, 2010b) This notion is further supported by McEwan's suggestion of people being much closer here, knowing each other personally and caring for neighbourhood relations. *'Charlie likes to know what is happening in the street. He knows everyone along here, including all the children. I had often seen the little girl out there with him. The last time she was holding a spanner for him.'* (McEwan, 2010b) To highlight people's closeness even more, the mentioned mechanic is said to provide help to his neighbours who have problems with their broken vehicles. *'He repairs cars for the people in the street and their friends.'* (McEwan, 2010b)

McEwan also depicts a naively exaggerated optimism typical of someone who decides to move to the capital as seen in his short story *Conversation with a Cupboard Man*. *'So I came to London. I managed it at first, I felt strong in my mind, you know, I felt as though I could take on London. It was all new then and exciting for someone who had never been there in his life before.'* (McEwan, 2010b) He soon uncovers the reality of it with the following quotation as he states that the newcomers are almost always offered only the least significant job positions. *'The only kind of jobs I came near to getting were lifting and carrying or digging. They'd take one look at me and tell me to forget it. Finally I found a job in a hotel, washing-up.'* (McEwan, 2010b) Naturally, the author heads towards the incomer's awakening and documents a realisation of overestimating his forces. *'I didn't feel so strong. London was becoming too much for me.'* (McEwan, 2010b) The city almost outgrew the character and seriously and irretrievably hurt him as a human being. *'I found it hard to get out of bed in the mornings. It was better under the bedclothes, I was safer there. I was depressed by the thought of facing thousands of people, thundering traffic, queues and things like that.'* (McEwan, 2010b)

In *Dead as They Come*, McEwan continues to see London as an indefatigable living entity, nearly suggesting it could be one of the main characters of the story. *'All day long there are voices around me, on the telephone, at lunches, at business conferences.'* (McEwan, 2010c) He also observes the difference in the residents' behaviour in the city. *'I chose Monday, a quiet day in any shop.'* (McEwan, 2010c) McEwan notices that weekdays are much calmer in comparison to weekends regarding people's determination to spend time in shopping centres, something typical of every larger city anywhere in the world. *'I could have had Saturday, a busy day...'* (McEwan, 2010c) It is another way for the author to depict the city as an exciting urban space.

Post-apocalyptic London is presented in *Two Fragments: March 199-* with the author strongly implying that the whole world has irreversibly changed. *'(...) it was easy enough to imagine the world outside the room as it once was, ordered and calamitous.'* (McEwan, 2010c) There is no longer electricity as the citizens have to light candles or get warm by making fires in streets, and, moreover, there are kinds of food missing as well, especially fresh victuals. *'I had made and retracted plans to leave the city with Marie. (because of „Fresh milk, eggs, cheese... occasional meat.“)'* (McEwan, 2010c) The survival aspect of life in the near future is further emphasised by stating that scarce resources are hard to find and people have to use them frugally. *'The lamp still burned above the doorway. Knowing the difficulty of finding paraffin I turned it out, then stepped into the black street.'* (McEwan, 2010c)

McEwan beautifully captures the atmosphere of London through its streets, providing the reader with several vivid descriptions. *'To make quicker progress I walked in the middle of the street, down long avenues of rusted, broken cars. It was downhill all the way into central London. I crossed the canal and entered Camden Town.'* (McEwan, 2010c) The author suggests that the ubiquitous fires became the only place where people could socialise as there were no pubs, clubs or any cultural facilities anymore. *'I walked to Euston and turned up the Tottenham Court Road. Everywhere it was the same, people came out of their cold houses and huddled around fires. Some groups I passed stood in silence, staring into the flames; it was too early yet to go to sleep.'* (McEwan, 2010c) Unsurprisingly, such people did nothing but recalled the good times they once lived, either secretly hoping that they will once come back,

or reconciling themselves to the idea of the present decay being permanent. *‘Two middle-aged men on either side of the fire were arguing passionately through the flames while the rest listened or stood dreaming on their feet. League football was a fading memory.’* (McEwan, 2010c) Using the example of one of the most popular sports in the world, McEwan shows that many things the humankind took for granted had become a mere memory of contemporary witnesses. *‘Men like these would beat their brains out, or each other’s, attempting to recall details that once came easily to mind. “I was there, mate. They scored before half-time.”’* (McEwan, 2010c)

8.2. Crime and Violence

The son of the protagonist in *Saturday* is astonished by his parents never attacked in the city, suggesting it is quite rare for London’s citizens in the present day. *“Also, Dad, I can't believe we've lived here all this time and you and Mum have never been mugged.”* (McEwan, 2010d) Their luck, however, does not last as the whole family is assaulted near the end of the novel. McEwan also points to the change in people’s behaviour towards paramedics as some inhabitants often do not hesitate to attack them, and hospitals are no longer considered a safe place. *‘The guards' job is to keep out the troublemakers, the abusive or incapable, the ones likely to throw up on the waiting-room floor, or take a swing at authority, at a light-boned Filipino nurse or some tired junior doctor in the final hours of her shift.’* (McEwan, 2010d) The author states that having security guards in hospitals is something that Britain adopted from the United States to people’s great satisfaction. *‘The medical staff have had enough. They want protection. The drunks and loudmouths are thrown out onto the pavement by men who've worked as bouncers and know their business. It's another American import, and not a bad one - zero tolerance.’* (McEwan, 2010d)

Two Fragments: March 199- portrays futuristic London as a rather dangerous place by stating *‘(...) my visits were rare, it was a long walk from south to north and back again, and a little dangerous’.* (McEwan, 2010c) *Butterflies* intensifies the violent situation in London by describing a shocking scene of a group of youngsters who torture an innocent animal to their amusement. *‘A group of boys stood round the fire they had*

built. They were some kind of gang, they all wore the same blue jackets and cropped hair. As far as I could tell they were preparing to roast a live cat.' (McEwan, 2010b)

Conversation with a Cupboard Man portrays bullying of employees by the abusive boss. *'He used to chase after the women who were meant to keep the kitchen clean. (...) I can see him now, giggling and spitting and running his hands up their skirts. The women didn't dare say anything because he could throw them out.'* (McEwan, 2010b) McEwan explains tolerating such indecent behaviour because of the fear of losing one's job, something quite common among indigent people. *'Because I didn't laugh at his jokes like the others, Pus-face started getting really nasty. He went out of his way to find me more work to do, all the dirty jobs were mine. (...) I wanted to keep my job so there was nothing I could say.'* (McEwan, 2010b) The writer also underlines the staff's fear of losing their jobs by their constrained support of the chief's hideous behaviour. *'Then he laughed and the others joined in, only because they were scared of him.'* (McEwan, 2010b) Losing his ideals and disgusted by such experience, the main character becomes a criminal. *'I had no luck with finding a job and as my money was running out I started stealing from shops. (...) I also had to pay the rent so I started taking more valuable things and selling them in second-hand shops.'* (McEwan, 2010b) The author documents the lives of shoplifters resulting in the inevitable, getting caught. *'This was working quite nicely for about a month. I had all I wanted, and if I wanted something different all I had to do was put it in my pocket. But then I must have got careless because a store detective caught me stealing a watch from a counter.'* (McEwan, 2010b)

8.3. Traffic

The traffic density is not mentioned in connection to modern times only, McEwan indicates the increasing utilisation of vehicles in the 1940s was already happening when London was affected by war, as seen in *Atonement*. *'As the street curved and narrowed, the steady traffic along it sounded louder and the warm fumes blew into her face.'* (McEwan, 2010a)

Thanks to its setting in contemporary London, *Saturday* contains many comments regarding the traffic situation. *'He can hear the first stirring of steady traffic on the Huston Road, like a breeze moving through a forest of firs. People who have to be at work by six on a Saturday.'* (McEwan, 2010d) The preceding sentence aptly implies that life in London starts not with the sunrise anymore but with the first sounds of traffic. *'At six o'clock, the Euston Road is in full throat. Now occasional motorbikes soar above the ensemble, whining like busy wood saws.'* (McEwan, 2010d) However, it is not only about people having to get to work, but McEwan also hints at criminals using the morning darkness to cover their dishonest actions. *'Also about this time come the first chorus of police sirens, rising and falling in Doppler shifts: it's no longer too early for bad deeds.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

The author uses the rest of the book to highlight London's traffic congestion. *'He's driven a couple of hundred yards through Marylebone in slow-moving traffic (...)'* (McEwan, 2010d), *'(...) the Saturday-morning traffic is no longer moving - there's an obstruction ahead'* (McEwan, 2010d) or *'it's five fifteen, and already there's a rustle of traffic on the Euston Road'* (McEwan, 2010d) are only some examples of that. McEwan explains that the time has changed, and almost every citizen is in need of a car nowadays, hence the bothersome problems. *'It's one of those moments when to be a car owner in a city, the owner of this car, is sweet.'* (McEwan, 2010d) At one point, he hints at traffic being so nerve-wrecking that the main character chooses a taxi instead, which will not expedite his journey, but it will prevent him from losing his mind. *'The traffic's hell. He's going to make his own way in a taxi.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

Nonetheless, McEwan does not refer only to traffic on the roads; he points to the transport of the 21st century as well, the increasingly accessible air transport. *'Back in the bedroom he hears a distant rumble of an airplane, the first of the morning rush hour into Heathrow, he supposes, (...).'* (McEwan, 2010d)

Butterflies blames cars for displacing parks full of trees by parks intended for parking the vehicles, causing the vanishing of nature from the town. *'There are no parks in this part of London, only car parks.'* (McEwan, 2010b) *Dead as They Come* describes the behaviour of some drivers who act nearly aggressively and indifferently to others, an issue that is increasing all over the world in the last few years. *'He drove*

competently and outrageously fast. He always knew where to park. He was always at the front of any queue of traffic, and he was rarely in a queue. He knew every shortcut every street in London.' (McEwan, 2010c)

8.4. Weather

McEwan's novels are rather indifferent towards London's weather. While *Atonement* sees one of its characters admiring *'the huge cumulus clouds piled against a pale blue sky'* (McEwan, 2010a) or describes *'a delicious coolness in the air'* (McEwan, 2010a), *Saturday* refers to weather in no significant way.

Oppositely, the author's short stories tend to utilise weather in order to depict the atmosphere of the city. In *Butterflies*, McEwan portrays sweltering weather but notes it is rather an exception in such territory. *'And it was hot. I have never known it so hot in England.'* (McEwan, 2010b) The writer also shows the impact of such weather on the surroundings with sentences *'its roof was too hot to touch'* (McEwan, 2010b) or *'because of the heat the canal smell was stronger today, an animal rather than a chemical smell given off by the scum'*. (McEwan, 2010b) Not only that, the heat affected the characters as well. *'The sun was on my side of the street, straight into his eyes. He shielded them with his hand (...).'* (McEwan, 2010b) With *'(...) there was nothing to do, it was too hot...'* (McEwan, 2010b), the author implies the story itself would not have happened if it had not been for the weather. *'(...) I felt suffocated by the sun's heat rising off the pavement'* (McEwan, 2010b) only emphasises the negative effect of the said weather conditions on the protagonist's future actions.

The remaining short stories are loyal to the concept of typical English weather. *Two Fragments: March 199-* mentions that *'a light rain was falling (...).'* (McEwan, 2010c) or *'the sky was thick and angry'*. (McEwan, 2010c) Despite the rain, London finds itself in a dry state with people collecting raindrops, not hesitating to attack each other over it. *'(...) the street was filling with people preparing to collect rain-water. (...) They rolled barrels into the center of the street to collect water from the tarpaulins. For all this activity there was silence, jealous, competitive silence. As usual fights were breaking out.'* (McEwan, 2010c) The critical situation is further developed with one of London's

best-known symbols nearly gone. *'The Thames was lower than he had ever seen it. Some said that one day the river would dry up and giant bridges would uselessly span fresh meadows.'* (McEwan, 2010c)

With *'it was October, raining a fine, bitter drizzle'* (McEwan, 2010c), McEwan's *Dead as They Come* describes typical English drizzles. *'(...) as the gray October dawn pierced the brooding London clouds (...)'* (McEwan, 2010c) refers to cloudiness, another typical feature of the United Kingdom's weather. *Conversation with a Cupboard Man* meanwhile uses the sound of the rain to emphasise the haunting loneliness of the main character. *'When it rains at night it beats against the roof and I wake up.'* (McEwan, 2010b)

8.5. Different Nationalities

Modern-day London is full of different ethnicities and McEwan is fully aware of that. *Saturday* mentions an Indian hostel, an Iraqi restaurant, the Chinese embassy or the British Association of Muslims. *'Cleveland Street used to be known for garment sweatshops and prostitutes. Now it has Greek, Turkish and Italian restaurants - the local sort that never get mentioned in the guides - with terraces where people eat out in summer.'* (McEwan, 2010d) McEwan appositely notes that London is a very proud city that tries to hide any multicultural signs away from the centre and thus tourists' eyes. Most of London's residents, however, live with immigrants in harmony and appreciate their skills. *'There's a man who repairs old computers, a fabric shop, a cobbler's, and further down, a wig emporium, much visited by transvestites. This is the fair embodiment of an inner city byway - diverse, self-confident, obscure.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

Apart from mentioning places, there are many references to people as well, e.g. *'two Asian lads in tracksuits (...)'* (McEwan, 2010d), a *'Chinese couple walking hand in hand (...)'* (McEwan, 2010d) or *'(...) two West Indians and two, sometimes three Middle Easterners who might be Turks'*. (McEwan, 2010d) Nevertheless, not all immigrants are mere passers-by, some of them are people with whom the main protagonist has a closer relationship, e.g. *'(...) the [hospital] guards, Mitch and Tony,*

both West Indian (...) (McEwan, 2010d) or his colleague and friend from the United States. *'Jay is the only American medic Perowne knows to have taken a huge cut in salary and amenities to work in England. He says he loves the health system.'* (McEwan, 2010d) McEwan also breaks the prejudice of immigrants being almost exclusively uneducated, doing the least popular jobs and not being beneficial to the country at all as the protagonist's friend *'did his Ph.D. at University College London and speaks excellent English'*. (McEwan, 2010d)

The coexistence of different ethnics is also mentioned in McEwan's short stories *Butterflies* and *Two Fragments: March 199-*. The former mentions *'(...) a group of West Indian boys playing football in the street'* (McEwan, 2010b) while the latter refers to *'a small Chinaman [that] stood just within the circle of light'*. (McEwan, 2010c) However, the firstly mentioned story also describes a Pakistani family that is contending with racism. *'It belonged to the Pakistani family who ran the small shop at the end of the street. For their own reasons they called the shop 'Watson's'. Their two sons were beaten up by local skinheads.'* (McEwan, 2010b) While hoping to find a better life in London, they found the exact opposite and are planning to return home. *'They were saving money now to return to Peshawar. The old man used to tell me about it when I went to his shop, how he was taking his family home because of violence and bad weather in London.'* (McEwan, 2010b) McEwan disrupts the optimism of people moving to Britain's capital in order to live a better life, likening such desire to the famous American Dream that often turns to be equally unsuccessful.

8.6. Environment

The state of the environment is something that McEwan takes great interest in. In *Atonement*, things or places producing pollution are put into contrast with nature, but they seem to co-exist in harmony. The author does not seem to imply that the modern inventions destroy the environment, at least not directly. *'Despite the traffic fumes, there was a scent of fresh vegetation around, newly cut grass perhaps from the hospital gardens, or from young trees along the riverside.'* (McEwan, 2010a) He mentions the expansion of factories and their almost daemonic smoke as well but does not comment on its effect on the planet. *'She left the little park behind, and passed*

a small factory whose thrumming machinery made the pavement vibrate. There was no telling what was being made behind those high filthy windows, or why yellow and black smoke poured from a single slender aluminium stack.' (McEwan, 2010a)

Saturday provides more space for comments on the planet's environment but is not actually critical either. On the contrary, the author moderates the ecological hysteria with sentences like *'The air tastes almost clean.'* (McEwan, 2010d) or *'The air is better, and salmon are leaping in the Thames, and otters are returning. At every level, material, medical, intellectual, sensual, for most people it has improved.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

In *Saturday*, McEwan shows London in the best light possible, mentioning the hard work of road sweepers who try to clean the streets to the last bit. *'(...) the sanitary teams are still at work, cleaning up after the demonstration. (...) From noisy trucks, generator-powered arc lights illuminate mounds of food, plastic wrappings and discarded placards which men in yellow and orange jackets are pushing forward with wide brooms.'* (McEwan, 2010d) He praises their meritorious work and pities them at the same time as their work seems meaningless because *'(...) behind [them], at the far end of the street, cartons and paper cups are spreading thickly under the feet of demonstrators gathered outside McDonald's on the corner. And beyond them, across the metropolis, a daily blizzard of litter.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

The author also criticises the job for being highly underpaid, noting that it is done only by people who lack the luck. *'(...) having to sweep the streets for a living looks like simple bad luck. (...) The streets need to be clean. Let the unlucky enlist.'* (McEwan, 2010d) McEwan expresses empathy for the street cleaners as they have to work under any conditions and often overtime. *'He recognises one of the sweepers as the man he saw this morning cleaning the pavements in Warren Street: a whole day behind the broom, and now, courtesy of untidy world events, some serious overtime.'* (McEwan, 2010d)

Butterflies mirrors the filth of the protagonist in the story's surroundings. The horrible actions take place near the river, which is described as *'brown stinking water running along the backs of factories'*. (McEwan, 2010b) The author implies

the water has always been in such a bad condition, spoiled since the beginning, just as the main character. *'On the surface there were patches of yellow scum, and they did not move either because there was no wind to push them along.'* (McEwan, 2010b) He confirms that thought by literally stating *'The river's very dirty. It's always been dirty'*. (McEwan, 2010b) Apart from the river, the short story also describes deserted places that converted into rubbish dumps. *'Round the next bend of the canal in an immense space between a factory and a warehouse was the scrap yard. There was black smoke in the sky ahead of us, and as we came round the bend I saw that it was coming from the scrap yard.'* (McEwan, 2010b)

The most critical voice is used in *Two Fragments: March 199-* where McEwan directly blames people for polluting the air by cigarettes and implies there is no way to reverse the results of their careless actions. *'All the typists were smoking as they worked and the air was thick and sharp with smoke, not of this day alone but of ten thousand previous days and ten thousand days to come. There seemed no way forward.'* (McEwan, 2010c)

8.7. Wartime London

Atonement is exceptional among McEwan's works for its setting in World War II. McEwan beautifully depicts the atmosphere of the city during the war, describing the transformation of the city together with the behaviour of its citizens. Everything was subordinated to the war which is demonstrated at one point with transport problems. *'(...) the trains were impossibly slow. Priority was for military traffic moving southward. At Birmingham New Street station he missed a connection and the next train was cancelled. He would have to wait until the following morning.'* (McEwan, 2010a)

While the British knew about the war, the general feeling was that it does not directly affect them. *'(...) before the bombing of the city in September, London had the outward signs, but not yet the mentality, of war.'* (McEwan, 2010a) McEwan continues portraying the city before the war became personal to all Britons. *'Uniforms, posters warning against fifth columnists, two big air-raid shelters dug into the park*

lawns, and everywhere, surly officialdom.' (McEwan, 2010a) He vividly describes the life in the capital that was still untouched by the war, a sort of a calm-before-the-storm moment. *'The scene was dreamlike in its normality. Prams drifted along the paths, hoods down in full sunlight, and white, soft-skulled babies gaped at the outdoor world for the first time.'* (McEwan, 2010a) The author puts a big emphasis on the paradox of one country being annihilated while the other is still finding itself in relative peace. *'Children who seemed to have escaped evacuation ran about on the grass shouting and laughing, the band struggled with music beyond its capabilities, (...). It was hard to believe that barely a hundred miles away was a military disaster.'* (McEwan, 2010a)

Although people continued to live their normal lives, they were scared as the rest of the world, thinking about the possible impacts of the war in their country. *'Perhaps London would be overwhelmed by poisonous gas, or overrun by German parachutists aided on the ground.'* (McEwan, 2010a) On the other hand, McEwan expresses through one of his characters a hope of the famed British composure. *'Even if the Germans came, people would still play tennis, or gossip, or drink beer.'* (McEwan, 2010a)

After France, the British ally, lost to Germany, Britain and London with it started to change rapidly. *'No one was to stay in the city unnecessarily. The sandbagging on the ground-floor windows was reinforced, and civilian contractors were on the roofs checking the firmness of the chimney stacks and the concreted skylights.'* (McEwan, 2010a) The following quotation quite chillingly depicts how London prepared for the potential invasion by German troops. *'All the destination boards were blank now. Confusion to the invader. (...) All the signs had been taken down or blacked out. (...) Most plans and maps of the city had been confiscated by order.'* (McEwan, 2010a) The dreadfulness was further fuelled and remade into a sort of paranoia by spreading rumours of Germans already being in the town, camouflaged and ready to strike. *'There were stories in the paper of German parachutists disguised as nurses and nuns, spreading out through the cities and infiltrating the population.'* (McEwan, 2010a) Still, people refused to panic. *'It could be any Saturday afternoon. There was little evidence of a war in this suburban street.'* (McEwan, 2010a) As McEwan shows on his characters, they tried their best to continue living their lives even with the German scarecrow looming behind their backs.

8.8. Terrorism Threats

Similarly to *Atonement*, *Saturday* maintains a specific place amongst McEwan's literary works. The 2005 novel deals with the impact of 11 September 2001 on the whole world, in this case the United Kingdom. While the novel was released only four years after the terrorist attack that changed the world forever, it is opportune to note that the world has never stopped being strongly afraid of terrorism acts since the attack on a symbol of the United States.

The following quote placed early in the novel sets the mood of the world that is familiar with terrorism. *'Despite the troops mustering in the Gulf, or the tanks out at Heathrow on Thursday, the storming of the Finsbury Park mosque, the reports of terror cells around the country, and Bin Laden's promise on tape of 'martyrdom attacks' on London, (...).'*' (McEwan, 2010d)

Throughout the whole novel, McEwan is firmly convinced that the terrorist attacks on Britain will sooner or later follow. His goal is not to spread a mass hysteria; he rather perceives it as a simple fact and states it in quite a conciliatory manner. Sometimes the author talks about the West in general, e.g. *'Al-Qaeda, it's said, (...) will be provoked by an attack on Iraq into revenge on the soft cities of the West'* (McEwan, 2010d) or *'the government's counsel - that an attack in a European or American city is an inevitability - isn't only a disclaimer of responsibility, it's a heady promise'* (McEwan, 2010d). In other cases, he refers specifically to England's capital, from simply stating *'there could be revenge attacks on London'* (McEwan, 2010d) to *"(...) when the first explosion hits London"* (McEwan, 2010d) to a more resolute *'the scale of death contemplated is no longer at issue; there'll be more deaths on a similar scale, probably in this city'*. (McEwan, 2010d)

McEwan rather insensitively finishes the book without providing the reader with the slightest hope of better tomorrows. Unduly pessimistic, he portrays London as a significantly vulnerable place that is not able to defend itself and is merely waiting for its terrorists to come. *'London, his small part of it, lies wide open, impossible to defend, waiting for its bomb, like a hundred other cities. Rush hour will be a convenient time.'* (McEwan, 2010d) He even reminds his readers of 1999's Ladbroke

Grove rail crash, suggesting something similar will happen but this time deliberately. *'It might resemble the Paddington crash - twisted rails, buckled, upraised commuter coaches, stretchers handed out through broken windows, the hospital's Emergency Plan in action. Berlin, Paris, Lisbon. The authorities agree, an attack's inevitable.'* (McEwan, 2010d) While McEwan's previous comments were quite objective, his last statement seems to be nothing but hysteric. But instead of provoking hysteria, McEwan gives an impression of a rather egoistic desire to convince the reader of his truth, making his audience believe that his words will eventually come true.

9. Comparison of Amis's and McEwan's Portrayal of London

To conclude with a concise comparison, the following text analyses both similarities and differences between Martin Amis's and Ian McEwan's description of London in their literary works. The comparison is patterned on the thesis' two preceding chapters that analysed the aforementioned authors' works and follows the same structure in order to make the analysis well arranged.

Generally speaking, Amis provides the reader with a more detailed and specific portrayal of the United Kingdom's capital city. He overstuffs his novel with mentions of many real places, which inevitably leads to a feeling of being nothing but lost in the city as the reader has a hard time to orientate in the delineated description. In a certain sense, London is the main character of *London Fields*, whether it was Amis's intent or not. On the other hand, McEwan's works are full of genuine places as well, and he vividly describes the city with the same energy, but he clearly has a sense of knowing the limits and does not flood his works with exaggerated details. Although it could have been Amis's artistic intention, there is no denying that McEwan's texts are more pleasant to read.

Both writers highlight the city's similarity, stressing London's nearly identical streets and residential premises. While Amis criticises it, McEwan does not comment on it. The two authors substantially differ regarding the other aspects of the city. It appears that Amis has little respect for the city as he frequently criticises it and expresses his doubts over London's position in the world, having no understanding of its popularity and belittling its importance. Contrarily, McEwan seems to have respect for London as he often praises the metropolis and gives the impression that he considers himself a proud citizen. He even emphasises the city's importance as he mentions Chamberlain's declaration of war to Germany in 1939.

Both of them mention rubbish in the streets, but while Amis often depicts the smell of urine or parks full of litter, McEwan seems to be protective of the city's efforts to deal with the mess as he frequently mentions the street sweepers. On the other hand, McEwan's futuristic concept of the city in *Two Fragments: March 199-* is more drastic, depressing and negative than Amis's future in *London Fields*, even in the matter of London's cleanness. Last but not least, there is a vast difference in the perception of a modern city

between the two authors. Amis is very critical of such a concept, McEwan, on the other hand, has an admiration for it and considers it one of humankind's most significant creations.

Due to the character of a criminal in *London Fields*, Amis naturally focuses on crime and violence more than McEwan. He describes the city as sometimes dangerous, full of vandalism and its inhabitants commonly use vulgarisms. The crime in the city is so frequent that it has become a regular part of every-day life for Londoners. While McEwan's stories deal with assault or abuse followed by murder, his works put less focus on crime and violence, at least in the sense of being London's main domain as Amis sees it. Similarly, both authors pay a lot of attention to London's traffic. However, McEwan only uses it to create the atmosphere of the city while Amis finds affection in castigating it and uses it to disparage the city.

Weather is something that Amis is quite vocal about, referring to it whenever possible. His descriptions portray the weather conditions as very inclement; he mentions the destructive aspect of it, and sometimes he suggests nearly catastrophic scenarios. At another time, Amis goes as far as making it seem even mystical. He also explores the impact of bad weather on people. McEwan's novels do not make use of weather in any significant way, but that is not the case of his short stories. In them, one can find quite a lot of mentions regarding the state of the weather. The reason for it could be the limited space that the short stories offer. By using weather, the process of drawing the story's atmosphere can be quite effective and useful.

As for different nationalities, Amis probably depicts more foreigners than McEwan, but he does not portray them as positively as McEwan does. Amis might give his readers an impression of having a bit of negative attitude towards immigrants in comparison to McEwan who portrays such characters as equal to true Londoners and makes them an integral part of the metropolis. One of McEwan's main characters knows a number of those people personally; one immigrant is even said to have obtained an academic degree at one of London's universities after he had moved to the city.

In addition, McEwan perceives London as a somewhat vulnerable place that is simply waiting for a terrorist attack to happen. A thought similar to that one cannot be found

in Amis's *London Fields*; however, it is essential to note that the mentioned novel was released more than a decade before the 2001's terrorist attack on the United States, so the absence of comments concerning the crucial incident is understandable and would have been most definitely addressed if the novel had been released later.

10. Conclusion

The main aim of this master's thesis was to analyse Ian McEwan's and Martin Amis's literary works set in London, the United Kingdom's capital. The paper examined McEwan's novels *Atonement* and *Saturday* and four short stories from his collections *In Between the Sheets* and *First Love, Last Rites*, namely *Butterflies*, *Conversation with a Cupboard Man*, *Dead as They Come* and *Two Fragments: March 199-*. To contrast McEwan's works, Amis's novel *London Fields* became a subject of the study as well. In order to analyse the setting, it was necessary to study the city itself and examine a city's role in literature in general.

The theoretical part was divided into four main parts. The first section introduced London, provided general information, depicted its history and, most importantly, presented the city's current most pressing issues, e.g. the standard of living, crime, violence, immigration and the Brexit situation. To provide the reader with more background information before the main theoretical part, the subsequent chapter offered the overview of writers connected to the metropolis; a few of them were born there, and a few spent their whole lives there. The penultimate and most crucial section of the thesis' theoretical part was concerned with the city in general, pondering on its importance and role in fiction. The chapter also briefly explained the concept of urban space and encapsulated the central literary works set in London. The rest of the thesis' first part introduced both Martin Amis and Ian McEwan (in alphabetical order), their lives, achievements and their main works. The examined novels and short stories were introduced in more detail in order to make the following analyses more comprehensible.

The practical part analysed Amis's novel and all McEwan's works. At first, the thesis emphasized authors' use of real places in the works, stating several examples and giving an overall comment on the specificity. While reading the studied works, I made notes of all mentions regarding the city, either being direct, figurative or only referring to the populated place. After that, I categorised the mentions according to the topic they were referring to. According to my analysis, both authors were concerned with the city in general, crime and violence, traffic, weather and different nationalities. Amis also frequently commented on au pairs. McEwan, on the other hand, was specific with his comments on the environment, terrorism threats and the description of wartime London.

To avoid repetition and write a thesis of reasonable length, I included only the most important and interesting passages in the paper. After explaining and providing comments on every quotation, the last chapter of the thesis shortly compared London's portrayal of both authors, mentioning their similarities as well as differences.

Amis's depiction of London can be seen as exhaustive or even painstaking. The reader should rightfully consider the city the main character of the novel. McEwan's descriptions are meticulous as well, however, uncluttered and easier to digest. Despite the works having been written quite a long time ago, they aptly reflect today's state of the world and its current issues. The question is whether the authors were foresighted enough or the situation simply persists to the present day.

The contribution of this academic research lies in the analyses themselves and the final comparison. The thesis shows that the city's many current problems are reflected in the literature, drawing the reader's attention to urgent issues. The paper also provides comprehensive exploration of London in literature. My proposal on further research is to include authors' other works set in the United Kingdom's capital (e.g. McEwan's *The Child in Time*, *Amsterdam*, *The Cockroach* etc. or Amis's *Other People: A Mystery Story*, *Money: A Suicide Note*, *The Information*, etc.) or compare McEwan and Amis to other contemporary writers whose works are set in London (e.g. Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith, etc.).

Resumé

Hlavním cílem této diplomové práce bylo analyzovat literární díla Iana McEwana a Martina Amise zasazená do Londýna, hlavního města Spojeného království. Práce se zabývala McEwanovými romány *Pokání* a *Sobota* a čtyřmi povídkami ze sbírek *Psychopolis a jiné povídky* a *První láska, poslední pomazání*, konkrétně povídkami *Motýli*, *Rozhovor s mužem ze skříně*, *Dokonalé bezživotí* a *Dva fragmenty: Březen 199-*. Aby bylo možné McEwanovu tvorbu porovnat, předmětem zkoumání se stal i Amisův román *Londýnská pole*. Za účelem zkoumání literárního prostředí bylo potřeba nejprve prostudovat samotné město a prozkoumat postavení města v literatuře jako takové.

Teoretická část byla rozdělena do čtyř hlavních částí. První část představila Londýn, poskytla základní informace, popsala jeho historii, a hlavně ukázala největší současné problémy města, např. úroveň života, kriminalitu, přistěhovalectví nebo takzvaný brexit. Aby měl čtenář před samotnou teorií co nejvíce doplňujících informací, následující kapitola nabídla přehled autorů spojených s velkoměstem, ať už se tam narodili nebo tam jen celý život žili. Předposlední a nejdůležitější část teoretické části se zabývala městem obecně, uvažovala nad jeho důležitostí a rolí v literatuře. Kapitola také stručně vysvětlila koncept městského prostoru a shrnula hlavní literární díla zasazená do Londýna, která byla kdy napsána. Zbytek první části diplomové práce představil Martina Amise a Iana McEwana (v pořadí podle abecedy), jejich život, úspěchy a hlavní díla. Zkoumané romány a povídky byly představeny podrobněji, aby byly následné analýzy lépe pochopitelné.

Praktická část rozebrala Amisův román a všechna McEwanova díla. Práce nejprve zdůraznila užití reálných míst v dílech autorů, uvedla několik příkladů a celkově okomentovala použití skutečných míst. Během čtení zkoumaných děl jsem si poznamenával veškeré zmínky týkající se města, ať už byly přímé, obrazné nebo jen odkazující na obydlené místo. Poté jsem roztřídil všechny zmínky podle tématu, na které odkazovaly. Z analýzy vyšlo, že se oba autoři zabývali celkově městem, kriminalitou, dopravními problémy, počasím nebo různými národnostmi. Amis se také často zmiňoval o au pair. McEwan se na druhou stranu odlišoval svými komentáři k životnímu prostředí, teroristickým hrozbám nebo popisem Londýna za dob války. Aby se práce zbytečně neopakovala a měla rozumnou délku, zahrnul jsem do práce ty nejdůležitější nebo nejzajímavější pasáže.

Poté, co byly všechny citace vysvětleny a okomentovány, poslední kapitola porovnávala vyobrazení města obou autorů, poukazující jak na podobnosti, tak i odlišnosti.

Amisovo znázornění Londýna lze vnímat jako vyčerpávající, až přepečlivé. Čtenář může město považovat přímo za hlavní postavu románu. McEwanovy popisy jsou také důkladné, ovšem přehledné a lehce stravitelné. I přes to, že byla díla napsána poměrně dávno, výstižně odráží dnešní svět a jeho současné problémy. Otázkou je, jestli autoři byli dostatečně prozíraví, nebo zmíněný stav jednoduše přetrvává do současnosti.

Přínos této akademické práce tkví v samotných analýzách a konečném porovnání. Práce ukazuje, že spousta současných problémů je v dílech reflektována a přitahuje tak pozornost čtenářů k naléhavým problémům. Diplomová práce také poskytuje ucelený pohled na zkoumání Londýna v oblasti literatury. Práci by bylo možné dále rozšířit o další díla obou autorů zasazená do hlavního města Spojeného království (např. McEwanova díla *Dítě v pravý čas*, *Amsterdam*, *Šváb* atd. nebo Amisova díla *Jiní lidé: Tajemný příběh*, *Peníze: Zápisky o sebevraždě*, *Informace* atd.) nebo porovnat McEwana a Amise s dalšími současnými autory, jejichž díla jsou také zasazena do Londýna (např. Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith atd.)

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