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**Life deconstructed and reconstructed:
Memories in *Atonement* and *On Chesil Beach* by Ian McEwan**

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Introduction

This thesis discusses two contemporary British literary works: McEwan's novel *Atonement* (2001) and his novella *On Chesil Beach* (2007). Both books address the issue of memories. *Atonement* shows how memories can be shaped according to the will of the one who remembers. *On Chesil Beach*, in turn, presents memories as an inevitable part of human beings. By discussing the style and techniques employed by the writer to present the protagonists' memories to the reader, the thesis shows how the narrative techniques which were considered as experimental when they emerged in the 20th century, employed by McEwan along with seemingly more conventional ones can still produce a similar effect as when they appeared as innovations in narration.

Chapter one constitutes the theoretical background for the subsequent chapters. It presents the narrative devices employed in modernist and postmodernist literature. These narrative techniques, modes and strategies are illustrated on the basis of the novels written by the representatives of modernism and postmodernism: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, (1925) and John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) respectively. Both novels were highly acclaimed and are still one of the most frequently debated works of the 20th century.

Chapter two will discuss Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement*. Firstly, the narrative techniques will be analysed on the basis of the examples from the novel. Then, memories of the protagonists will be discussed to show how the author applies the narrative techniques to present the theme of memories to the reader and how it affects the reception of the text.

Chapter three will discuss Ian McEwan's novella *On Chesil Beach*. In order to present the characters' recollections embedded in the novella, the narrative techniques will be analysed. The presentation of memories which determine the actions and decisions of the protagonists is emphasised by the narrative devices employed by the author. The reception of

the text is influenced by the skilful combination of literary strategies with the theme of memories.

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