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Metamodern Meditation in Ian McEwans' *Solar*: revisiting the integration of the Self and Technology

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Abstract

The novel, Solar is centered on the holocaust of science and scientific depletion. Climate change and Michel Beard's attempts to find renewable energy, especially, photovoltaic solar panels highlight the need for restoring nature. Michael beard's response to nature is not only conveying a message that the nature is at risk, but also it disseminates a note to everyone in the place of Beard. The novel is highly critical on the aspects self and technology foregrounding the aim of interchanging one on the other. Self is reflected through the Science and Science is mirrored on the Self of Beard by making Beard as a Universal Character. There are other aspects in which the author emphasizes on the features of nature, stating the point that Nature cannot return to its original inhabitants. On the other hand, He also creates a kind of awareness in the minds of readers the truth about nature. The reactions of Beard on climate change represents every individual that integration of the Self and Technology is necessary. The novel passively

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transcends minds of the readers towards restoring the ecosystem and sensitizes the reality that the effects of science on humans are only reflected on nature. He makes an attempt to fuse nature, scientific innovations, self of the individuals and ecology.

Keywords:Climate change, Deep ecology, Dangers of science, Self and reality, Metamodernism.

In Cultural studies, Metamodernism has emerged as a literary theory which envisages the aftermath of Postmodernism in a new perspective. Most of the researchers may agree with the fact that it had its evolution as primitive theory before the year, 2010. Metamodernism is a manifesto to seek power centre and acknowledge that fragmentation is no more a conceptual issue. There is a great need to integrate all those fragmented selves towards social ethics. Metamodern manifesto started occupying the field of literature in 1990s. It was recognized as a meditation on the theme of 'awakening the Self'. According to Blake, the concept of the term, 'Self" is a preoccupation of our mind and it is interlinked to our feelings, Joy and sorrow. In other words, it is a transformation of our 'presence' from the substance of reason into our imagination. It is a kind of self-realization in which common balance of ideas and transformations of the self attain its past.

Metamodernism finds a field of study between modernity and real technology, a field of centered 'Self'. Metamodern Technology is an integration of reality and the self, a kind of road map towards creating a new feeling. In other words, on grounds of technology, Metamodernism studies the reflection of human faculty into the realm of real technology. It also emphasizes predicament of imaginative technology of the future. Especially, in the field of Cloud Computing, the function of technology is compared with a replica of the human brain and its neurons. So Metamodern attitude undermines a passage between old and new and leaves a strong message of innovative and imaginative thinking.

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Solar is a novel written by Ian McEwan and was first published in 2010. The story intersects the personal life of the central character, Michael Beard into three periods, 2000, 2005 and 2009.

The interaction of the novel is based on climate change but the development of the novel leaves many questions behind its strategy. McEwan is not only dealing with Science but also he expresses the attitude of scientific institutions in the novel. Modernism formed the basis for scientific technology but later, in the 1970s, during postmodern era, it supplemented the task of adhering to the needs of technology and made the people radical thinkers of science. In a situation, it lead the people that survival of humans on the earth is only possible with the help of technology due to the contributions of science in the field of mobile, internet, computer and other electronic gadgets. The Climate Change that is referred in the novel is one such devastating attitude of science but there are many holocausts of science. Especially in the novel, Beard's attempts to save the earth from global warming, is not to find a solution to the issue rather he tries to reiterate the cause for climate change:

> Beard was not wholly skeptical about climate change. It was one in a list of issues, of looming sorrows that made up the background to the news and he read about it
>
> (Solar, 17)

It is very clear that McEwan addresses the effects of technology and tries to solve the problems created by technology, through technology. What McEwan experiments in Solar, is a kind of realization that science cannot further progress the lives of human beings. He exhibits that science cannot again restore the spoil of nature.

As it is in the case of Beard, He is unable to find any alternative sources to control climate change. This imparts the message to the readers that Nature may be restored by nature itself only. Embracing the practices of saving nature from such holocausts is vitalized by Beard. Returning to nature and invent renewable energy for the cause of climate change is a universal

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address to the people that there is something that takes place unusually. Throughout the novel, McEwan wakes up the reader that there is a great need to restore nature. This Self – awakening is processed through Beard till the end of the novel. McEwan integrates the self of Michael Beard with the reality of technology. Dangers of science has always been considered as an oscillation between modernism and postmodernism by the Metamodern thinkers, pointing out that the encouragement of science and scientific inventions of the modernism was later questioned by the postmodernists. Brent Cooper emphasizes this through the words of Goldman:

> Goldman relays, enlightened modernity had science as its backbone. This is not anti-modernist, nor is it anti-Western civilization, but rather a mature awareness of the exponential dangers that technological 'progress' and population/economic 'growth' have generated and continue to generate. (Bifurcation of Postmodernity, 01)

McEwan is careless about scientific inventions through the lens of Beard's plagiarism on photosynthesis techniques that the plagiarized technology or so called advancements of science is a real mockery. Criticizing science and scientific inventions make pun on the real world in the aspects of postmodernism but it ends in failure in the novel. Dangers of technology has been again signified by Michael Beard, no matter how leads his life as a scientist. The Personal life of a scientist in eating, drinking and womanizing relocate that science is something ironical in the beneficent of knowledge based society. Again, at this point of discussion, McEwan tries to integrate science and personal life of a scientist in the negative aspects apparently. In other words, here 'self' represents the complicated personal life of a scientist and 'reality' represents scientific inventions.

Indirectly, the integration of the self and reality leads to the study of deep ecology. Deep ecology has also been considered as a paradigm for restoring what science did in the past to the human beings. If it is definite that what is suffered by the earth is also a suffering of humans,

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McEwan is very purposive in arguing deep ecology in the novel. McEwan argues the disputes of technology, at the same time, fetches the significance on our environmental system. He aligns climate change in the order of human issues, it means, he projects that nature and humans are in the same eco system, interchanging brutality of science on these two entities are one and the same. This ideology has been echoed in all the aspects of the novel.

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