



“And now, What Days are these” An analysis on the contemporary context in *Saturday*, by Ian McEwan

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Abstract

The novel *Saturday* (2005), by the English writer Ian Mc Ewan, has instigated a deep study on modern context. The work describes a day in protagonist Henry Perowne's life, who needs adapt to different situations and assume different "social roles". Along this day, he experiences fear and insecurity, symptoms that torment him. It can be said then, that *Saturday* is situated in "Liquid Times", this means, in times when the shapes dissolve, become unstable, pour down and are molded and adapted (BAUMAN, 2007). The theoretical approaches by Giddens (2002), Baumann (2001, 2007, 2009) and Hall (2006) emphasize the current context and identities. So, the novel *Saturday*, through the characters, brings examples of a day in liquid times.

Keywords: *Saturday*, Ian Mc Ewan, liquid times, Bauman

1. Introduction

The considerations on the contemporary work *Saturday* (2005), by the English writer Ian Mc Ewan have instigated a deepening in the study of the identity in the modern context and the different identities assumed by the individual. The epigraph used refers to a fragment from the novel *Saturday*: "[...] and now, what days are these? Baffled and fearful, he mostly thinks when he takes time from his weekly round to consider" (MCEWAN, 2005, p. 4) ^[7]. This passage reveals restlessness, fear, insecurity, and fragmentation in personal relationships and at work.

Therefore, the protagonist asks himself about the present days, which bring conflict, perplexity, confusion and at the same time, fear. At the end of the fragment it is explicit that Henry reviews the weekly chores, and stops for a moment, making reflections about his days.

Saturday describes a day in the life of the protagonist Henry Perowne. The narrative begins when Henry wakes up at dawn. The neurosurgeon, unable to sleep, makes plans for his Saturday, the day he rests, distracts himself, enjoys moments with his family, engages in leisure activities with his friends. During this day, a series of events results in fear and insecurity, symptoms that start to torment him.

Such symptoms are emerging in the contemporary world. Times when the individual lives in the vicissitude, in which peace, rest and security are not enduring. In this sense, the present text aims to analyze the context in which the protagonist Henry and secondary characters live, as well as the "I" and the different identities assumed by Henry during that day. For Giddens, this context is called 'late modernity' or 'high modernity', for Bauman, 'liquid modernity' or 'liquid times', Stuart Hall uses the term 'postmodernity'. This study focuses on Bauman's perspective, so the terms 'liquid modernity' and 'liquid times' are used. In this text, there is also the approach of identity issues linked to the protagonist Henry Perowne, from the perspective of Zygmunt Bauman,

Anthony Giddens and Stuart Hall in a brief description around the conceptual perspective on the "I" and identities.

2. Liquid times in *Saturday*, by Ian Mc Ewan

The plot of the novel *Saturday* (2005) takes place on the temporal border of a day, a Saturday. Henry, the protagonist, a neurosurgeon, upper middle class, at three in the morning sees a burning plane through the window, makes love with his wife, suffers a traffic accident, runs away from gangsters, visits his mother who suffers from Alzheimer- in an asylum, plays squash with a friend, thinks about the documents he should produce for conferences, attends the rehearsal of his son, who is a guitarist.

Also, he sees his daughter he hasn't seen for six months, and found out she is pregnant. He has his house invaded by the same criminals who persecuted him, he makes a brain surgery in one of them. His day is full of activities, he has limited free time, a busy life and in constantly adaptation.

Saturdays he's accustomed to being thoughtlessly content, and here he is for the second time this morning sifting the elements of a darker mood. What's giving him the shivers? Not the lost game, or the scrape with Baxter, or even the broken night, though they all must have some effect. Perhaps it's merely the prospect of the afternoon when he'll head out towards the immensity of suburbs around Perivale. While there was a squash game posed between himself and his visit, he felt protected (MC EWAN, 2005, p.125) ^[7].

Saturday's protagonist goes is the process of melting, that is, lives in liquid condition. Fluids do not stick to time and space, nor do they stick to any shape and they are constantly ready. This is observed, when analyzing the different roles that Henry Perowne assumes in the society: "It was the paperwork on Friday afternoon that brought him down, the backlog of

referrals, letters to colleagues and editors, an unfinished peer review, contributions to management initiatives, and government changes to the structure of the Trust, and yet more revisions to teaching practices" (McEWAN, 2005, p.11) ^[7].

The work shows that the character rejects any territorial confinement. This does not mean that he wants to conquer new territories, but that he seeks to destroy the walls that hold him to material and cultural needs. Henry's thoughts flow as his life flows. This Saturday, his condition makes him reflect on his way of living and the endless obligations he has to fulfill. According to Bauman, the bonds of solidity, when undergoing melting, lose constancy and, even, equilibrium.

So, this work by Ian McEwan brings examples of a context in "Liquid Times," that is, at times when forms dissolve, become unstable, flow, and become molded and adapted. The forms or fluids mentioned herein refer to an analogy corresponding to the individual who needs to adapt himself, he is compared to a liquid that, in different containers: shallow, circular, square, high, low, needs to adapt to survive.

The novel Saturday's preface, an excerpt from the work Herzog written by Saul Bellow in 1964, gives indications about modernity and its liquidity: "As megatons of water shape organisms on the ocean floor. As tides polish stones. As winds hollow cliffs. The beautiful super machinery opening a new life for innumerable mankind" (BELLOW, 1964 *apud* MC EWAN, 2005) ^[7].

The use of the ocean water metaphor refers to the constant movement, which polishes the rocks and, at the same time, process results in the life of organisms on the ocean bottom; as well as modernization results in a new life, that is, in a new way of life for humanity, in which the polishing done by the sea waves becomes indispensable.

It is in this sense that the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman deals with the concept modernity, characterizing it as a "liquid" context. In this argument, adaptation becomes fundamental to the survival of the individual. Bauman (2001) in 'Liquid Modernity' articulates the following idea: "Fluids move easily. They "run", "flow", "drain", "splash", "overflow", "leak", "flood", "spray", "drip"; are "filtered", "distilled"; unlike solids, they are not easily contained - circumvent certain obstacles, dissolve others, and invade or flood the path"(BAUMAN, 2001, p.8) ^[3].

Similar to the "solids melt" that Bauman deals with, Anthony Giddens uses the term 'disengagement' because he considers that in the current context there is a reorganization of space and time (GIDDENS, 2002, p. 11) ^[6]. The sociologist considers that modernity can be understood as equivalent to the "industrialized world", whereas it is recognized that industrialism is not the only institutional dimension.

Consequently, "the modern world' is a 'world in speed up': not only the pace of social change is much faster than in any previous system; but also the breadth and depth with which it affects social practices and modes of behavior" (GIDDENS, 2002, p.22) ^[6].

Giddens also emphasizes that modernity fragments and dissociates, being considered as an emergency mark of a new social phase that goes beyond modernity itself - a postmodern era. "High modernity is characterized by widespread skepticism with providential reason, with the recognition that science and technology have two edges, new parameters of

risk and danger while offering beneficial possibilities to humanity" (GIDDENS, 2002, p, 32) ^[6]. Stuart Hall considers that a structural change is transforming modern societies at the end of the twentieth century, "This is fragmenting the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and nationality, which in the past had provided us solid locations as individuals" (HALL, 2006, p.9) ^[10].

According to Stuart Hall, society is no longer as sociologists have thought before, as a unified and well delimited whole, a totality, "but it is producing itself through evolutionary changes from itself, such as the development of a flower from its bulb. It is constantly being 'decentered' or displaced by forces outside of itself ' (HALL, 2006, p.17) ^[10].

The passage below emphasizes the context in which the protagonist lives, it corresponds to the present day, in the city of London, on a Saturday, February 15, 2003. The city is moved by agility. Among the roar of engines, vehicles accelerating, the sounds of the siren, although the day has just begun.

The city's appetite for Saturday work is robust. At six o'clock, the Euston Road is in full throat. Now occasional motorbikes soar above the ensemble, whining like busy wood saws. 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 (MC EWAN, 2005, p.48) ^[7].

The Doppler effect, mentioned by Mc Ewan, is the phenomenon in which an observer perceives the frequencies of sound; the sound of an object in motion that varies its height according to the movement of that object (UFPB, Physics, p. 46) ^[5]. From his apartment Henry just watches the city and the siren sound refers to the idea that the dangers sometimes seem so distant, with low sound, almost imperceptible noise, but at the same time, increases its intensity, become louder, stronger, it also brings Henry to the reality he does not want to see. Through the Doppler effect, there is for seconds, the feeling of withdrawal and also approximation of the moving object, in this case, a police car chasing criminals. At the same time that he feels away from unsafe places, he sees that a certain proximity to this reality is evident.

The analysis in question emphasizes individuality, which is centered on the protagonist Henry Perowne, their standard of living, choices, actions, and in a flow, description of thoughts and feelings that exemplify his condition. An individual, who metaphorically, is in its liquid form, adapts to the different shapes as his life flows. The individual is then responsible for his merits and failures, and must face the risks and contradictions.

3. Identities as Temporary Attachment Points on Saturday

It is possible to observe that Perowne experiences the fragmentation in the labor relations, because he deals with classes, conferences, bureaucracy, neurosurgeons, he assumes the role of teacher, lecturer, administrator and doctor, and also in personal relationships, because he is father, husband, friend, son and son-in-law. Henry Bourdieu *apud* Kathryn Woodward (2000, p.30) calls these institutions "social fields" as a space

and a place that involves a set of symbolic resources: the family, colleagues, educational institutions, working groups^[11]. In the same way Hall (2006) describes that we are "the same person", but positioned at different times and places according to the role we play.

Stuart Hall points that "Identities are therefore points of temporary attachment to the positions-of-the-subject that discursive practices construct for us" (Hall, 2006, p. 112)^[10] so, "the old identities, which for so long have stabilized the social world, are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual, hitherto seen as a unified subject ... modern identities are being "decentered", that is, displaced or fragmented" (HALL, 2006, p. 7-9)^[10].

For Hall, the postmodern subject has no fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Identity becomes a "mobile celebration": "formed and continually transformed in relation to the ways in which we are represented or interpellated in the cultural systems that surround us" (Hall, 1987 apud HALL, 1998, p. 13)^[9]. Hall says that a complete, unified, and secure identity is a fantasy. "Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a disconcerting and changing multiplicity of possible identities, with each of them we could identify-at least temporarily" (HALL, 1998, p.13)^[9].

Giddens (2002) points out that due to the dynamism and social order different from the previous ones, "the transformations introduced by modern institutions intertwine directly with the individual life and, therefore, with the self" (GIDDENS, 2002, p.9)^[6]. Thus, high modernity goes beyond the domains of individual activities and personal commitments, resulting in risks and dangers (GIDDENS, 2002, p.19)^[6]. Giddens in dealing with identity, uses the term "self-identity" as a plurality of traits possessed by the individual, different from the "I" reflectively understood by the person in terms of his biography (GIDDENS, 2002, p.54)^[6].

On the one hand, according to Simmel (2006)^[14], life has become easier, since stimuli, interests, fulfillment of time and consciousness are offered from all sides and this keeps the individual in a stream, without having to swim, on the other hand there is a series of impersonal offers, there is the need to rescue the peculiarities and to save what there is in the self.

The stream carries the man who does not need to swim, because he follows his course limited by the shores imposed upon it, needing to turn away from the harsh and rough rocks. In an attempt to find security and peace, he takes refuge in the islands, preferring, or being forced into isolation and individualism.

The individual would then have a "liquid life," that is, he obliges himself to change in a short time, which sometimes makes it impossible for habits, forms of action and routines to be consolidated. The comparison "Floating like water, ... you go forward quickly, never facing the current nor stopping long enough to stagnate or cling to the shores or the rocks" (BAUMAN, 2001, p.11)^[3]. This exemplifies a situation in which the individual allows himself to be carried away by the stream of daily actions and can not be firmed. Perowne begins to reflect on his own life:

There has to be more to life than merely saving lives.
The discipline and responsibility of a medical career,

compounded by starting a family in his mid-twenties- and over much of it, a veil of fatigue; he 's still young enough to yearn for the unpredictable and unrestrained, and old enough to know the chances are narrowing (Mc EWAN, 2005, p.28)^[7].

The reflection of the protagonist shows maturity in dealing with his condition, he thinks about his role in the world, about what he has done in his life. In spite of following almost in an "automatic" way what brings him fatigue. He feels old, what reduces the chances of craving for something unpredictable. The pain of incompleteness is in the short time he takes to do what really makes he feel free: "But his free time is always fragmented, not only by errands and family obligations and sports, but by the restlessness that comes with these weekly islands of freedom (MC EWAN, 2005, p. 66)^[7].

Henry has temporal fragments and compares them to islands, by the isolation and impossibility of joining continents. The protagonist has free time, but this does not seem enough to give due attention to who deserves, he feels that it is not present completely in personal relationships.

The individuals' shapes in this liquid condition are in the configuration among self-constructed identities, which are strong enough to be recognized as such, but are also flexible enough "not to hinder the freedom of future movements in constantly changing and volatile circumstances" (BAUMAN, 2001, p.60)^[3].

Perowne has enough solidity to have good personal and working relationships, but this does not prevent the constant adaptations needed in these contexts. This solidity can be considered as "I", the essence of the individual, while identities are the positions assumed by the "I". The protagonist seeks a meaning for his life. "The lack of personal sense-the feeling that life has nothing to offer- becomes a fundamental psychic problem in late modernity [...] Existential isolation is not so much a separation of the individual from others, but a separation of the moral resources necessary to live a full and satisfying existence (GIDDENS, 2002, p.18)^[6].

Such circumstance has the effect of symptoms that are deeply experienced and perceived by individuals. The feeling of dissatisfaction and accentuation of individuality and isolation emerges. All these, results in restlessness, fear and insecurity. Roberto Cardozo de Oliveira (2006)^[12] considers that it is necessary to separate Identity, the Identities that can be assumed, from the "I". To better explain this, Anthony Giddens is quoted: "While identities can be experienced as a plurality, the "I" is experienced as one because it is the framework that guarantees the continuity on which the multiplicity of identities is inscribed" (GIDDENS, 1989, p.35 apud OLIVEIRA, 2006, 63)^[12].

According to that conception, the "I" does not dissolve, what dissolves, shapes and is constantly adapted are the identities. Henry had to adapt to the different situations and places. During twenty-four hours he assumed the role of father, observing his son Theo in the rehearsal and talking to his daughter Daisy, he took the role of son, visiting his mother in the asylum, a friend when playing squash with a colleague of work, the role of husband, being always close to his wife, loving her deeply. He also assumes his function at work, as a

doctor, a surgeon, a lecturer, a researcher, giving attention to patients on duty and to the new academic knowledge. However, this "I" is not structured. It is a process of construction linked to existence. The conception of existence exposes that each individual must respond to the demand for his own being. Róbson Ramos Reis in the book *Personal identity and recognition* treats on existing in relation to the other.

What each individual is or is not is given by a beam of properties, given or to be achieved, but by modes of being or possibilities. Thus, the existence also means the fact of being in relation with different totalities of objects, entities and individuals. [...] It means a dependence of existing in relation to the entities for which the relation is formed. Dependence is not only the relation to the forces and powers that eventually unfold in such relationships. To exist means to be this relation and nothing else (REIS, 1999, p.118) ^[13].

Sometimes, in different situations, the following question arises: How can I become something, if deep down I am nothing? (REIS, 1999 p.128) ^[13]. "Understanding of being is an opening to possibilities that not only open the space of one's own identity, but of each and every identity" (REIS, 1999, p.124) ^[13]. Self-identity is something that needs to be formed, such formation happens historically and in a relationship with the other.

As mentioned before, there are several conceptions around identity, through the opinion of Giddens, the idea is to work with the concept of "I" in terms of biography. It is consider Henry's analysis as "I" and the different identities he has assumed.

Henry's identities and his "I" are directly related to his personal relationships and the people he lives with. Despite being a famous and renowned neurosurgeon, he had to submit himself to a meager littleness, submitting himself to the orders of the bandit Baxter, in order to guarantee the life of the members of his family. This is linked to Bauman's description, which states that submission becomes the condition for deliverance (BAUMAN, 2001, p.27) ^[3].

In the day-to-day battle related to the identities assumed during the course of life, it is perceived an "endless struggle between the desire for freedom and the need for security, haunted by the fear of loneliness and the fear of incapacity" (BAUMAN, 2009, p.44) ^[2]. Perowne tried to follow a daily routine of work and activities, as this brought him comfort and security. Thus, Bauman states, "Routine can shorten, but it can also protect" (BAUMAN, 2001, p. 28) ^[3]. The following excerpt shows how much work and routine make Henry feel more secure: "Wedged in traffic alongside the multiple faces, Henry experiences his own ambivalence as a form of vertigo, of dizzy indecision. In neurosurgery he chose a safe and simple profession" (MC EWAN, 2005, p. 141) ^[7].

However, there is not exactly an established routine and there is a moment when this "protection" is challenged. That Saturday he realized that during some events, he assumed different shapes, it means, identities he had taken along the day, made impossible for him to provide security, peace and comfort. He almost had an established work routine, but his

profession as a neurosurgeon required much more time and dedication.

Henry, who had so many lives in his hands, feels unable to deal with thieves who threaten him and threaten his family for hours in his own home, his comfort zone. He experiences the fear of losing those whom he loves so much and feels dread and weakness. Bauman underlines that "the insecurity of the present and the uncertainty of the future produce and fuel fear" (BAUMAN, 2007, p. 32) ^[4], which arises from the feeling of impotence.

Perowne also sees his family through Baxter: the girl and the old fellow won't be a problem; the boy is strong but doesn't look handy. As for the lanky doctor, that's why he's here. Of course. As Theo said, on the streets there's pride, and here it is, concealing a knife. When anything can happen, everything matters (MC EWAN, 2005, p. 207) ^[7].

As in an epiphany, the perception of Henry that his own life is justified in the lives of his family's members occurs. The phrase "When anything can happen, everything matters," indicates how much he fears danger and the threat to those he loves most. There, in front of his daughter, his wife, his son, and his father-in-law, everything mattered, there, at the same time before Baxter and his henchmen, anything could happen. The sociologist Bauman postulates that "Every day we learn that the inventory of hazards is far from over: new hazards are discovered and announced almost daily"(BAUMAN, 2007, p.12) ^[4].

In this liquid-modern space, fear is constant. The individual's life "is far from being free from fear, and the liquid-modern environment in which he tends to be conducted is far from being free from dangers and threats" (BAUMAN, 2007, p.15) ^[4]. Every day, men and women take steps to improve their sense of protection and to defend their lives. Thus, according to Zygmunt Bauman: "three fronts that fight the battles in defense of human life: against the superior forces of nature, against the innate weakness of our bodies and against the dangers that emanate from the aggression of other people" (BAUMAN, 2007, p.168) ^[4]. The fear of Henry and his family matches the sociologist's third allusion, the fear of aggression from other people.

Unable to reduce the amazing pace of change, let alone predict and control its direction, we focus on what we can or believe we can, or what we can influence: we try to calculate and minimize the risk of ourselves or people which are now nearer and dearer to us, to be afflicted by the countless and indefinable dangers which the opaque world and its uncertain future reserve (BAUMAN, 2007 p. 91) ^[4].

By becoming hostage of the bandits, Perowne, his children Theo and Daisy, his father-in-law Grammaticus and his wife Rosalind are also hostages of insecurity, fear and submission. The fragments extracted from the work show this idea. At one moment Rosalind says to her children, "Daisy, Theo. I think it's best to do it" (MC EWAN, 2005, p. 207). Perowne notes that "There's more anger than fear in her voice now, and some

rebellion in the understated 'The think' (MC EWAN, 2005, p. 207)^[7].

In another passage, it is evident Henry's sense of impotence "Henry tries to keep not only the panic, but the entreaty from his voice. He wants to sound like a reasonable man. He's only partially successful. His heart rate makes his voice thin and uneven, his lips and tongue feel inflated" (MC EWAN, 2005, p. 285)^[7].

For Daisy, what caused strangeness was the fact that they weren't robbed before, this was so normal in big cities. When she returned from her trip she said: "Also, Dad, I can't believe we've lived here all this time and you and Mum have never been mugged" (MC EWAN, 2005, p. 152)^[7]. Violence in big cities is something so common that it costs them to believe that they have not gone through it yet. At the same day his daughter had said this to Perowne, some facts changed the impression of safety. This is visible in the daily life of the big city.

Georg Simmel pointed out that men's nerves have "the possibility of adjusting to the content and to the way of life in the big city, renouncing to react to it" (SIMMEL, 2009, p.10)^[14]. This phenomenon of adaptation, according to Simmel, causes the *blasé* feature. The word *blasé*, from French origin, is designated as what "expresses complete indifference to what is new, and to what must shock, or that who is dulled by excessive stimuli (sensory, affective, intellectual, etc.) or pleasures, and who became insensitive or indifferent to them". (Dictionary)

Thus, there is a certain conformism, because the individual is taken by the stream of the city. In this context where there is a need for adaptation, adjustments to the way of life, relations of coexistence of men with different interests and accumulation of people, fear and insecurity are evidenced. So as, in the face of the inventory of differences and oddities, the search for ways of coexistence with the other results in the *blasé* features.

Aversion, repulsion, indifference, strife, immediacy, rapidity are observed. The types of individualities in the great cities are huge, what result in an intensification of nervous life, "which arises from the rapid and uninterrupted change of the interior and exterior impressions. Man is a being of difference (...)" (SIMMEL, p.4, 2009)^[14].

The *blasé* character is evidenced both in the actions of Henry Perowne and in the attitudes of the bandits. Henry Perowne follows his life without concerns about people who are not part of his family. He drives his car through the streets of London, but acts indifferent to the situations he sees in it, as well as to the people he encounters. Baxter and the other thieves are indifferent to the life or death of this upper-middle-class family. Each of these lives would be only one, without relevance in a city with so many other lives.

The struggle for what is part of the individuality, ie, emotional life and well-being are continuous movements. Thus, in an oversight of the bad guys, Perowne and his son Theo manage to defend themselves and bring Baxter down the stairs. The protagonist thinks for a moment: "He, Henry Perowne possesses so much- the work, money, status, the home, above all, the family- the handsome healthy son with the strong guitarist's hands come to rescue him, the beautiful poet for a daughter, the famous father-in-law, the gifted, loving wife;

and he has done nothing" (Mc EWAN, 2005, p.228)^[7].

He realizes that he has everything to be happy, work, social position, a home, money and especially a family, which has shown to be understanding and loving. At the same time that the protagonist had all this, Baxter had little and still a brain disease that required surgery. If Perowne did not do it, Baxter would have less. A bandit's life was now in his hands. He does not hesitate, and after the traumatic experience in his house, he feels responsible for that life, and fulfill the obligations of his profession.

The narrative finished in the same way as it began, Henry and his wife Rosalind lying on the bed: "He fits himself around her, her silk pajamas, her scent, her warmth, her beloved form, and draws closer to her. Blindly, he kisses her nape. There's always this, is one of his remaining thoughts. And then: there's only this. And at last, faintly, falling: this day's over" (Mc EWAN, 2005, p. 279)^[7].

There is in some way, a redundancy in the narrative that is completed just as it had begun. Although, in most of the real-life and fictional sequences, the days end like this. This refers to an automatism, that is, something obvious, since the protagonist and his wife are taken daily by the streams of liquid modernity.

4. Conclusions

Henry Perowne finally stops and reflects on his achievements, fears, social standing he assumes, and insecurity he feels. His day had been hectic, turbulent and scary. The daily anxiety to fulfill all his obligations makes him live in conflict and some facts awakened in him the fear and the insecurity. According to Bauman, the eternal uncertainty, as something impossible to be avoided, becomes "an inexhaustible source of anxiety and an aggression generally dormant but continually exploding" (BAUMAN, 2007, p.90)^[4].

Hall, Giddens, and Bauman offer different readings regarding to the present context, but all of them mark the idea that it is necessary adaptation and fragmentation of the individual. Hall emphasizes that from social changes come changes in personal identities, Giddens in dealing with "high modernity" describes that such circumstance directly influence the relationship between self-identity and modern institutions, while Bauman emphasizes that in a liquid context the individual must adopt different shapes, assuming a liquid form to adapt and survive.

The three sociologists share a common idea linked to modernity, its liquidity or disembedding, as well as the influence of it on identity, and the fact that individuals have "transitory identities" by assuming different positions and lifestyle, so they must adapt to continuously.

When questioning about the present day, the protagonist uses two adjectives that condense his conception: baffled and fearful. The current context scares him because of instability and dangers. The condition of change and adaptation is perceived only in the instant that he finally pauses in his weekly daily restlessness and takes time to think.

Accustomed to carrying out daily tasks connected with work, Henry Perowne feels some excitement on that Saturday morning, which makes it impossible to sleep and makes him look at London from a different angle. He feels secure in his profession, with his home, and with the wife he loves. During

the narrative, the liquidity of Henry's life, forced him make adjustments to develop certain actions and even to survive during that day. He needed dedicate himself to the family, each member requiring unique and differentiated attention.

Perowne's work takes his time, even though it is not usual for Saturdays. Henry realized that what he had built all his life could change so quickly, that is, in less than seconds, he could lose everyone he loved and for hours he felt small and weak. He had saved many lives, but he felt fear and powerlessness when his own life and his family's live were under threat.

And now, what days are these? Baffled and fearful. So, that saturday could be designated as: a day in liquid times. Mc Ewan, even though, transitioning in a fictional construction, he shows the need for the protagonist to adapt to different situations, having flexibility in the roles assumed in society and private life. The different identities assumed, insecurity and fear are evident in the various moments and experiences lived by the protagonist. These aspects were derived from the changing conditions of social and individual life. These lives, which in a liquid context, are neither fixed in space nor to time.

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