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## Game Theory in Roger Michell's *Enduring Love*

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### Abstract

Roger Michell's movie *Enduring Love* is adapted from Ian McEwan's novel of the same title. The character motivated and plot motivated mystery draws an interesting and unsettling portrayal of an urban English couple reestablishing their relationship in the aftermath of a disastrous event. This humorous, romantic and intensifying drama depicts variable study of character and a murky fictional tale about friendship, obsession and love.

This research article is an attempt to study Roger Michell's *Enduring Love* in perspective of game theory. This also explains the post modernity in Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* and the rationality in Roger Michell's film. The postmodern idea of *Enduring Love* is that no kind of knowledge has a privileged access to reality and its explanation. It also explains the idea of Game Theory as a whole from different perspectives. Game Theory is one approach to helping one uncover the rules of complex social systems. It shows that complex social systems can be understood as a game, meaning they have rules. 'Game Theory and Enduring Love', game is being played by the main character Joe to deal with a stalker and to safeguard his love life.

**Keywords-** *Game Theory, Post Modernism, Post Masculine World, Humanism*

Roger Michell is a successful director in both his native England and America. He began an apprenticeship at the Royal Court Theatre and worked as assistant director to noted British playwright John Osborne and Irish playwright Samuel Beckett. Roger Michell helmed big-budget hits as "Notting Hill" (1999) and "Changing Lanes" (2002), while also earning critical respect for small, more intimate features like "Titanic Town" (1998) and "The Mother" (2003). Following an award winning debut as a theatre director in the late 1970s and early '80s, Michell moved into directing for television, including such BAFTA-winning efforts as "The Buddha of Suburbia" (BBC, 1993) and "Persuasion" (1995). His subsequent efforts varied in tone and quality, from intense small dramas like

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“The Mother” and “Enduring Love” (2004), comedies like “Venus” (2006) with Peter O’Toole, and major Hollywood efforts like “Morning Glory” (2010).

*Enduring Love* is English Filmmaker Roger Michell’s sixth feature film which was written by British playwright and screen writer Joe Penhall and shot in Oxford and London, England. The setting of McEwan’s recent novel carries postmodern features and the writer’s descriptions often evoke knowledge ability of the theoretical accounts of postmodernism. McEwan is not sympathetic to the tragic outlook. McEwan is not sympathetic to the tragic outlook. McEwan is still one foot in modernist convictions. The main character of the novel is driven by an uncertain sense of guilt. The characters’ behavior becomes unjudgeable in post-modernity; the ethical confusion arises. *Enduring Love* is set in the post-masculine world, but still echoes the idea of humanism and superiority of masculinity. *Enduring Love* happens to scrutinize its main protagonist’s rationalist thinking. The novel is a contemplation of the modernity’s strategy of unity against the postmodernist’s strategy of unity against the postmodern strategy of plurality. Logo-centrism is also in the postmodernist vision, seen as invalid and subject to deconstruction. McEwan has created an aesthetic exemplification of this concept in the narration of *Enduring Love*, in which its post modernity can be detected.

Game Theory is a kind of decision making theory which is based on reasoning in which the choice of the action is determined after considering the possible alternatives available to the opponents playing the same game. The aim of each player is to the best course of action. The pioneering game theorist John Nash and John Von Neumann were mathematicians who tried to formulate general principle to determine how rational decision makers ought to make decisions in various situations or games in order to achieve their goal. Game Theory is concerned with matters which defines solutions, known as “solution concepts”, to various classes of interactive decision making situations which appears in various areas of application and then investigates their properties and provides procedures for their computation. The theory was first introduced as a scientific discipline by Von Neumann and Morgenstern in their monumental book *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Game Theory may be viewed as a sort of umbrella theory for interactive behavior in the social sciences, where “social” is interpreted very broadly to include human beings as well as other kinds of players (collectives such as corporations and nations, animals, plants, computers, etc.). Game Theory can also be said as a theory of non-cooperative game studies the behavior of agents in any situation where each agents optimal choices of his opponents (301).

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*Enduring Love* is a British film maker Roger Michell's sixth feature film, which was written, by British playwright and screenwriter Joe Penhall and shot in Oxford and London, England, is an adaptation of a novel from 1997 by a British novelist and screen writer Ian McEwan. Game Theory is pretty light in what it "imposes": if we describe people making independent choices in a situation, we pretty much have to specify at a minimum that the people are, what their possible choices are, and how they feel about the possible outcomes. In the sense a game is a kind of notation, like musical notation, intended to specify only minimal aspects like note pitch and duration, not phrasing or various kinds of expressiveness.

Current literature uses the term 'obsessive love' to describe erotomania or love addiction. Obsessive love can therefore be seen as an umbrella term that covers sub groups such as erotomanics and love addicts, although no literature has been found that uses both concepts within the context of obsessive love. A common conception of obsessive love is generally that of a person being infatuated with a particular individual. However, another category includes those who feels the need to be in love generally. These are commonly known as 'love addicts'. A more medically accepted category of obsessive love is that of erotomania.

Game Theory is also being applied to romantic relationships. People may not realize it, but probability is a large factor in relationships. When things start to disintegrate, there is the probability that you could leave you. A third option would be that things could improve between the two types of people and they could leave you. Game Theory is also being applied to romantic relationships. People may not realize it, but probability is a large factor in relationships. When things start to disintegrate, there is the probability that you could leave the person and get over them. Some of the power and meaning of Game Theory can be illustrated by assessing the statement, "if we were all better people that world would be a better place. This may seem to us to be self evidently true" (21).

*Enduring Love* begins with a peaceful country side scene in which university lecturer, Joe, has planned a champagne picnic for his girlfriend, sculptor Claire, with the intention of proposing marriage. However, this perfect moment is interrupted by the appearance of a hot air balloon in trouble; several other people in the vicinity, along with Joe, join in a rescue attempt, and all witness the dramatic events that follow. Of all of those present that day, it is Joe and other man named Jed, who find themselves alone together witnessing a horribly disfigured body. In the days and weeks after the accident, Joe has struggled to process the horrific events of the balloons accident. The film demonstrates some of the post-traumatic experiences that an individual may have. In particular, Joe

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struggles with survivor guilt and experiences numerous visual set off that reminds him of balloons as he tries to go about his everyday life. It is perhaps this mental state, which renders him more vulnerable to the un-wanted attention of Jed, whose initial contact after the accident seems so responsible. Joe believes that he can manage the situation himself, but he and Claire suggests that Joe need help to deal with Jed's unwanted attentions. Joe believes that he can manage the situation himself, but he and Claire in his stalking, and he believes that she is an obstacle to him and Joe being together. Joe's mental health deteriorates further, as he could not convince Joe. His attitude has changed and turned into an irrational, angry and a depressed one. Towards the end of the film, both Joe and Jed are stirred by the violent behavior, this reminds of the significant danger that can befall on any victim of stalking, in extreme cases.

*Enduring Love* is perhaps the cleverest titled movie so far. A suspense thriller that intelligently explores the ideal of lasting love, the film also is about the act of withstanding someone's affection exploring the notion that people are victimized by the passion of those who love them. The movie dares to focus alternately on rationality and the inexplicable, fate and random events, the mundane and the catastrophic. In short, it is complex and psychologically probing.

*Enduring Love* offers the opportunity to understand emphatically how it feels to suffer the prolonged harassment experienced by a victim of stalking. The main character Joe breaks all fundamental rules recommended to deal with the stalkers. Even though the title is 'Enduring Love' it has different meaning as the relationship between Joe and Claire is disturbed because of the obsessions of Jed towards Joe. The story mixes it with Joes own sanity collapsing at the same time as Claire's 'enduring love' for him is put into the test. The whole ball game and that all the 'talking' is what gets in the way. Joe's guilty feeling and nightmares made him play a game to deal with the situation. Jed is realistic as he gradually descends into instability. Morton may have less time but she is equally convincing and realistic in showing that love always has limits everywhere except in the movies. Ifans is good even though he has the role of the religious fanatic, mentally ill, homosexual stalker to deal with.

The story became the study of the insane adoration of one man for another, as well as philosophical questions about the nature of love and how we can understand this huge but largely overlooked phenomenon. The movie is very little about the neurotic threat posed by Jed; the focus of the movie is on the relationship between Joseph and his girl friend Claire. Jed the stalker is merely a catalyst; a tool has to be, in views of the character. Much more for the attentive audience to chew on

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is the relationship between Joseph and Claire. Right from the opening picnic scene, we notice the awkward, somewhat impersonal relationship between the lovers who would have been living together for some time. During the candle light dinner with some other people right after the accidents, Claire's care and concern is reciprocated with impatience and annoyance. The use of silence is quiet noticeable, especially in the first scene.

With the title of "enduring love" the movie challenges to contemplate various meanings of the story and the sub-texts. There is first of all the battle with one's own sense of guilt, on the "who let go first" question. There is also the consuming jealousy of the dead man's wife that turned out to be a pretense. There is of course the twisted obsession of Jed. The movie does not give an answer. The simplest love, between Joe and Claire, does not stand the trial and when Claire can stand far away enough to be able to sculpture Joe's face; it's over, even if she had not made it so obvious by announcing it. Jed figure was existing in Joe's imagination, welling up from his unconscious mind to haunt him. Jed was at the triggering event but he haunts Joe without reference to anyone else, and challenges him on the most difficult subject for many English intellectuals; love for thy neighbor.

Joe dismisses love publicly in his lectures and privately to friends; according to him it's just "biology". Naturally, this conviction makes him unaware of insulting his live-in lover. He is trapped inside his inability to love. Jed's professed love makes Joe extremely uncomfortable, and he uses all sorts of evasions to escape it. This passage of the film, roughly the first half, was rivetingly significant to me. It is dealing with a central English issue. As the plot developed, Jed emerged from the shadow into Joe's life. The film lost its way a little. Joe never confronted his inability to love, and Claire left him. The symbolic representation of his disaster was brilliantly theatrical, but raised some difficult issues of plot resolution that were uncertainly handled. To call this picture a stalker film is like saying *Hamlet* is about mental health.

The style of the film manages to be both low-key and visually distinctive. The performances are of an extremely high talent as well, with Daniel Craig bringing a self satisfied individual role but also a vulnerability to his role of the logical professor pushed to an illogical limit, whilst Samantha Morton offers support as the bewildered Claire, who has to question Joe's mental stability as he begins obsession about the accident and his newly acquired "friend". However, much more impressive, if only for the fact that he delivers a performance completely against every other role, is Rhys Ifans, who embodies the lonely and perhaps somewhat disturbed Jed with a quiet, contemplative

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spirit that goes against the kind of melodramatic, raving lunatic found in similar Hollywood endeavors.

The interplay between the three characters is wonderfully handled but Mitchell, who paces the film deliberately, so that the relationship only becomes truly apparent over a gradual period of time. Jed's protestations of love in the Tate Modern was a classic example of the irony present throughout the film: a man declares his love in an art gallery, a hallowed place where fierce emotion is challenged into high art. But he is merely rendered a nuisance and shooed away. The end is quite predictable perhaps, in part but is a perfect end to the film. The final with Jed at the end, with the kiss, perfect for the film, despite being very grueling on the eye, not meaning to be homophobic. A rational mind would perhaps enjoy Joe's sessions with a counselor but the point is Joe's identity is questioned here. The rational decision he takes at last by studying the actual need of Jed achieved him success and an end to the problem. Like a game, all our choices have a consequence that affects the structure of the game. With a choice to say hurtful words, one may inevitably change a relationship forever, either for a worse end or for a good end.

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