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Angel or Demon? The Child in Contemporary Fiction: Ian McEwan's *Atonement*

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled; “Angel or Demon? The Child in Contemporary Fiction: Ian McEwan’s *Atonement*” is our own work and all the sources we have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

Signature Date

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to our dear families and friends and to every child who has been a source of inspiration for us.

Abstract

Childhood is the most memorable time in anyone's life. It is the starting point of all our stories and adventures, and the origin of most of our persistent sadness, hopelessness, and buried worries. Therefore, this thesis addresses the problematic representation of children in contemporary fiction, such as Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. Moreover, this study provides a view on the theoretical framework that encompasses the emergence of the concept of childhood. It discusses various literary depictions of children from the medieval period to the postmodern era in order to understand its significant changes over time, as well as the reasons behind the shift in such representations. Furthermore, this study examines the psychological development of *Atonement*'s protagonist through Freudian concepts in addition to the development stages proposed by Erik Erikson in order to understand her fears, insecurities, disturbing behaviors, and her feelings of guilt and atonement. It further explores the protagonist Briony Tallis as a representative of the child image in contemporary fiction so as to find out whether she is an angel or demon, or a mixture of both. To achieve this goal, the psychoanalytic approach is used, mainly Freud's "Family Romance," and Erikson's stages of development.

Key Words: McEwan, Freud, Erikson, Childhood, representation, angel, demon.

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Introduction

What makes the child so powerful an image of human creativity (...) is exactly what makes our darker visions of the child's mysterious nature and origins so terrifying.

— Ellen Pifer—

All people lay foundation for their lives as children and continue to carry the child inside of them. Be it a dream they had, a conversation they were engaged in, or a moment of deep thought they sank in, the time of childhood haunts them in one way or another. That is to say, childhood is a state all adults have experienced, knowable as far as memory extends but strangely unknowable too. It is that golden period of life that flies away without giving any notice and never comes back; most importantly, it is the period that molds the child as an individual for the rest of his/her life. Therefore, it is only natural that the obsession with a lost childhood reemerges through different representations. The representation and the depiction of children varies across periods in history. Thus, the meaning and the status of childhood are highly debated ranging from the one extreme where childhood has disappeared, to the other where childhood is considered an utter state of innocence and virtue. It also slowly shifted from being a symbol of love and innocence to become a sign of a disturbed state of being.

Indeed, children have taken part in literature from the beginning of times. Although children are "God-given," childhood is a later historical and cultural creation. It did not exist as we know it to be in the medieval period. But it came into existence with the Romantic period with children viewed as separate ideal, pure, innocent beings in need of protection. It further develops in the Victorian era where the child becomes a representation of the harsh reality of the growing magnitude of exploitation in the workplace while preserving the image of

innocence to a considerable extent. However, the concept of childhood during the Modernist era remains neutral and rarely featured as the main concern. Still, these representations continue to develop gradually in the Contemporary era, which tends to portray the nature of the child as the most disturbing and more complicated than it has ever been before, as children are more involved in adults' issues.

It is worth noting that behind these changing images there are significant reasons such as the traumatic events of the two World Wars, in addition to the fast-paced technological development that ensued right after. The world of today is unlike yesterday, thus, things change and so do people. These changes highly harm the world's environment, but the truth is the ones who are suffering dramatically from these changes are children. It is the child's soul and life that are mostly affected. Their childhood is taken away from them and no one is aware of its risks.

Among the best authors living today who tackle issues about children and childhood in their fiction is the British Booker Prize winner Ian McEwan. He is a distinguished storyteller, and one of the most widely recognized authors of contemporary British fiction. His works are often populated with children in a manner that deconstructs previously held opinions about childhood, as his depictions of children tend to be rather disturbing. He is well-known for his morbid representations of reality, and most of the children portrayed in his fiction are psychologically impaired. In an interview published in 1995, McEwan answers when asked about the role children play in his fiction: "the eye of the child gave me somewhere else to stand, a different way— a colder regard, perhaps— a way of looking at the adult world, of describing it as though one came from another planet" (Fortin et al. 2). The child, in his works, is no longer that beloved and protected creature, but rather an unwanted being.

His highly acclaimed novel *Atonement* written and published in 2001, one of the most important works of British literature, an Academy Award-winning film version in 2007, and

one of the most controversial and crucial novels of the twenty-first century, is a story about versions of reality, guilt, and "atonement." It is narrated through the perspective of a thirteen-year-old girl, Briony Tallis, who misinterprets her older sister's love affair with their family's gardener to be something much worse than what it is. Her partial understanding of the world and her naivete start a series of events that change the course of the rest of the girl's life and tears the family apart.

Despite its controversial nature and vague content, *Atonement* is an outstanding example of Contemporary Fiction. It explores the gap between what is real and what is imagined, through focusing on the impact of child's incomprehension and mistaken perception of the world of adults. McEwan's treatment of *Atonement's* characters was fairly studied by many critics. What is noticeable is that critics have generally not viewed the dynamic changes in the concept of childhood in the novel as an issue to begin with. Many discussions and studies of *Atonement* do not so much as mention this change; most touch on the subject only in passing. McEwan's *Atonement,* when studied with the intervention of the psychological variables and psychodynamics of his main character Briony Tallis, offers a deeper understanding of the changes of child's depiction in literature. Thus, this study is going to identify and analyze Briony's actions during the novel mainly and other child characters' perceptions partially.

In this regard, this thesis aims to develop an understanding of the dynamic representation of children in contemporary works of fiction such as *Atonement*. In more ways than one, it is an attempt to show whether the child is portrayed, either as an angel or demon, or a mixture of the two. Furthermore, through a historical approach to literature, the research highlights the departure of the contemporary image of childhood from the Victorian one. Moreover, it seeks to figure out the reasons behind the shift in the depiction of children in literature. Last but not least, by analyzing *Atonement*, this research demonstrates that children in contemporary fiction can be both angels and demons. It should be mentioned that the term "angel" is used in this

research to refer to a state of natural innocence and goodness, while "demon" is used not to imply monster-like or devilish qualities but, rather, to refer to all mischievous, twisted, and disturbing characteristics.

Such work will help us ameliorate our understanding of children's world, not only in literature but also in real life. As we know, due to technological development the world order is changing. Likewise, it is affecting people of all ages, mainly children. Consequently, the new generation of children is very different from the earlier one. Indeed, today's children seem to be more mature, and adept to bear adult's burdens. So, undertaking this research will promote awareness about the changing childhood and its cultural and literary perceptions. For this end, Ian McEwan's *Atonement* is a great example to illustrate our issue.

This study attempts to answer the following main question: How do contemporary works of fiction, such as *Atonement*, portray the dynamic changes of the concept of childhood? In other words, is the child represented as a demon or as an angel? This question will be answered by introducing sub-questions: How does the contemporary image of childhood depart from the Victorian and pre-Victorian ones? What are the reasons behind the shift in the depiction of children in literature? Are children in *Atonement*, as an example of contemporary fiction, angels or demons?

Many researchers and scholars have attempted to study Ian McEwan's writings starting by his first work *First love, last Rates* (1975), which is a collection of short stories characterized by a bizarre cast of grotesques in disturbing tales of sexual aberrance, black comedy, and macabre obsession. Its follow-up, *In Between the Sheets* (1978) tackles similar concerns. McEwan's outstanding description for his characters in his novels and his use of metafiction, especially *Atonement* that frustrates any attempt to draw definite understanding, are the main reasons that drive much of the research conducted on this specific novel in an attempt to understand the character Briony.

The flattering comments with regard to *Atonement* were not restricted just to British-based reviews, but it crosses the borders. Dinitia Smith in *The New York Times* reports that due to its destructive power of the imagination and lifelong influences of a single childhood lie, *Atonement* has won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. Another incredible comment published in the same magazine is by Tome Shone, in which he describes the novel as McEwan's "most complete and compassionate work to date" (Shone, np).

Among the researchers who have attempted to investigate Ian McEwan's treatment of Briony's character is Pilar Hidalgo in his article "Memory and Storytelling in Ian McEwan's Atonement" (2005). Hidalgo starts his piece of writing by a discussion of Robert Macfarlane's observation about the past and language. He moves on to analyze the narrative devices presented in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, such as the use of storytelling "Trials of Arabella" presented in the scene of Briony's birthday party, to create a relationship between Memory and storytelling. In other words, he discusses storytelling as a tool of hunting retrieval of the past. Despite the fact that Pilar Hidalgo focuses on Briony's character, which seems similar to our research, he excludes Briony the child and her journey to adulthood.

Another researcher who has shown interest in this work is David K. O'Hara in his research under the title "Briony's Being-For: Metafictional Narrative Ethics in Ian McEwan's Novel Atonement" (2011). He declares that the self-conscious narrative in Ian McEwan's *Atonement* is extraordinary and surprising; it breaks the conventions and traditional narrative techniques. Among the features that characterize this metafictional style, making it exclusive, is the use of the ethical character for reasserting an ethical complex that lies between author and reader, text, and world (74). Even though K. O'Hara talks about Briony and Briony's being for, but he considers that just in terms of narrative techniques and Metafiction not focusing on the child herself.

Unlike the other reviews, Ilany Kogan in her research "Some Reflections on Ian McEwan's Atonement: Enactment, Guilt, and Reparation" (2014) asserts that the application of the concept "Enactment" in McEwan's *Atonement* is no more the same. In Psychoanalysis, enactment is referring to the occurrences in the treatment setting, while in *Atonement* the term may be associated with the actions of some individuals to cope and manage with bad deeds they have done to others (49). The author illustrates it by analyzing one of his central characters Briony Tallis and trying to create a relationship between three main concepts: Enactment, Guilt, and Reparation. Although Kogan gives an intelligent analysis to Briony's character using psychoanalytic theory, she neglects to consider the changing images of the concept of children in the novel.

Accordingly, an understanding of the contemporary depiction of children in literature can be achieved through tracing the perception of children in literature, its significant changes and the reasons behind it accompanied with concepts from psychoanalysis as it is necessary to gain insight into the nature of children. The psychoanalytic approach is an important tool in investigating the contemporary disturbing concepts of childhood. There is no doubt that this approach is an applicable backup as children's examination surely requires the study of their family and its dynamics. It further helps in discovering the nature of the contemporary child represented by the protagonist Briony Tallis. Therefore, this research utilizes Sigmund Freud's work "Family Romance" (1909), in addition to Erik Erikson's eight stages of psychological development offered in his book *Childhood and Society* (1963).

The thesis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is entitled: "The Child Image in Literature: A Socio-historical and Theoretical Background." It is devoted to the discussion of the child's image in literature in general, and contemporary fiction in specific. Moreover, this study sheds light on the reasons behind the changing nature of children. Additionally, it attempts to explain psychoanalytic concepts of childhood as proposed by Erikson's eight stages of

development, and Freud's "Family Romance" which tackles family issues and the effects of parents on children. The second chapter is entitled: The Child in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*: Angel or Demon?" However, it is related to the analysis of the novel from psychoanalytical point of view. It begins by an examination of Ian McEwan's tendency to use children in his literature and how he depicts the child in *Atonement* in particular. Furthermore, it focuses on Briony's childhood and adulthood through consideration of Briony the child, and Briony the author. In addition, the chapter investigates the guilty feelings and the atonement that the child may encounter in his/her life. In the end, it seeks to provide an answer to the question of whether the child is represented as a demon or an angel in contemporary fiction.

CHAPTER ONE

The Child's Image in Literature: A Socio-historical and Theoretical Background

Literature is one of the ways in which society transmits and records its preoccupations and values. Children's literature was seen as a conduit for the dissemination of adult notions of right and wrong, morality, and dominant ideologies. Thus, the nature and constitution of children's literature is subject to change. This chapter is devoted to present a historical background of the child's depiction in literature. It discusses the idea of childhood and the changes in its representation from the medieval period to contemporary time. Furthermore, the chapter provides insights into Sigmund Freud's concepts of childhood and family issues, as well as Erik Erikson's Eight stages of psychological development.

1- The Image of the Child in Literature:

The depiction of children evolved gradually from one era to another. If one is in need to look at perceptions of childhood, it makes sense to attempt an understanding of the changing image of such a concept over the years. The representations of children appeared, as early as Egyptian paintings that go back to 3000 B.C (Rosalie 370). It was mirrored in the medieval writings and continued until nowadays.

Yvonne J. Truscott reviews the perception of children in the Middle Ages in her article "Chaucer's Children and the Medieval Idea of Childhood." She starts by pointing out one of the most remarkable views about childhood, that is the view of the French medievalist historian of the family and childhood Philippe Ariès. His book *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, declares that small children and infants during the Medieval period are neither acknowledged nor observed. Their relationships with their parents are abnormal; they are not

treated as individuals because chances of survival were slim. Furthermore, he believes that the family is not a vital social unit, and children are not differentiated from adults (33). In fact, children are ignored and are almost treated as objects.

However, Truscott argues against Aries 'perceptions of children in the Middle Ages. she thinks that children during the Medieval period were not totally ignored as Ariès contends, and their importance may be viewed in some of Chaucer's works, such as *The Canterbury Tale*. Clear evidence may be found in the poet's acknowledgment of both the resilience and vulnerability of children. His tales describes children as part of a narrative. Tales like: "The Prioress," "the Physician," "the Man of Law," "the Clerk," and "the Monk," associate children with misery and working of evil in the world. Their presence almost always intensifies the reader's or listener's experience of cruelty, isolation, and pain. still, she believes that Chaucer's concern about children can have a more positive and optimistic side in those tales (29). Thus, no one can have a final judgment about children's importance during the Middle Ages, because the deep truth is that they are there, but the way of perceiving them is different from one to another.

The Romantic writers look at childhood as a state of perfection and purity. In Romantic literature, there is more emphasis on the relation between humans and nature. Evidently, they construct a connection between children and purity with nature. In her article, "the conception of Childhood and Innocence in the Romantic Poetry," Shaima Saleem views that the Romantic writers value the individual over society, emotion over logic, natural over artificial. The child, as the reflection of the natural and pure for them, should be protected from the harsh realities of life, creativity, and a child's purity should be respected and protected, not killed by wrong beliefs (290). Consequently, the child for them is sacred, and the need for protecting him/ her is a must.

According to Saleem, the attitudes toward children in Romantic Literature differ from one poet to another. For William Wordsworth, Childhood is a distant memory of a kind of paradise that is lost. He supports the view that morality should come naturally and the child should engage in a real-life situation and be exposed to the good role models found in nature; the child should understand the need for sharing, kindness, courage and other values from nature. In his poem "The Evening Walk", Wordsworth speaks about a family that is comprised of a homeless woman with her children, walking around without a shelter. She tries to teach her children how to stand strong against life during cold nights, by telling them "to look at shooting star or to play with glow worms" (Saleem 293). A child can learn about his or her principles and values, only if he or she goes back to nature.

In one of Wordsworth's poems entitled "My Heart Leaps up," it appears that he believes in the idea that men should return to their childhood days when nature was the healer to human problems, anxieties, and life difficulties. He states:

> The Child is father of the Man
>
> And I could wish my days to be
>
> Bound each to each by natural piety. (Wordsworth 211)

From Wordsworth came the conception of the "Wordsworthian Child." In a study entitled *The Burden of the Child in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child and Ian McEwan's Nutshell*, Melit contends that a "Wordsworthian Child" is the child who is highly linked with nature and nature's creature. As a result, men will find God whose wisdom fixed the scale of natures in the child (2).

William Blake, on the other hand, represents the child as a timeless and spiritual entity. He reflects his beliefs through the tongue of the child, as he thinks that man should not expect help from anyone but God. In his collection of poetry *Songs of Innocence* (1789), Blake emphasizes the relationship between the child and God. One of the poems that appear in the

collection is entitled “The Little Boy Found” which is a sequel to “The Little Boy Lost.” In that poem, a boy is lost after he fails to follow his father. While the child desperately calls for his father’s guidance, he is found but only with the aid of God.

‘And, father, how can I love you
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door.’
The Priest sat by and heard the child;
In trembling zeal he seized his hair,
He led him by his little coat,
And all admired his priestly care. (qtd. in Saleem 292)

Unlike the Romantic representations of children and childhood, children’s literature during the Victorian era takes a different path. It began to flourish as a separate genre in the mid-nineteenth century. The child during this given era is a prominent feature. He becomes a representation of the heartache and the agony of the life of the poor. To protect and provide for their families, poor children are obliged to work. Since literature reflects society’s views and voices, Victorian writers started using it as a tool to denounce the injustice towards those children and to preserve their rights. Their literature focuses mainly on children because they were the main victims of the Industrial Revolution. New ways of thinking about children were being constructed in the novels of Charles Dickens, such as *Oliver Twist* (1838), *David Copperfield* (1849), *Hard Times* (1854); Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847); Anne Bronte’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848); George Macdonald’s *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871).

Throughout his novels, Charles Dickens represents the bare suffering of children who have no chance of having a future in order to let the masses see what children are going through

as in *Oliver Twist*. In this novel, Dickens mirrors the attitudes of Victorian society towards the poor. It comes into view with central issues of child labor, poor laws and working in difficult conditions. His extended interests in children are inspired by his own experience as a child who had to wrap bottles in a blacking factory. Therefore, a major part of his experience as a child is one of "neglect and abuse", as Lucy Lafarge contends (364).

Interestingly, despite the fact that Oliver, the child protagonist of *Oliver Twist,* is a victim of socioeconomic corruption and injustice, he still preserves an uncorrupted state of purity, innocence, and goodness. According to Adrienne E. Gavin, although Dickens's *Oliver Twist* is perceived as an object lesson in the criminal effect of a bad environment, Oliver is as much an abstraction as a boy. She believes that the novel is not technically fantasy, but rather it applies fairy-tale tropes like the quest, the lost heir, the identifying object, and the fortunate 'turn' from disaster to bliss. As it is expressed in the words of Dickens himself, "show[s], in little Oliver, the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last" (Author's Preface 3). However, the portrayal of Oliver's character is unlike the other characters such as Noah Claypole. They are viewed to be products of their environment. While, Oliver is set as "other," a principle rather than a person. His behavior impacts and softens the hearts of people around him, not only the hearts of the housekeeper Mrs. Bedwin, gentleman Mrs. Brownlow, and prostitute Nancy, but even the thief-master Fagin.

When Fagin looks upon the sleeping Oliver, Dickens tends to invoke the angelic dead child image, saying: "[Oliver] looked like death; not death as it shows in shroud in coffin, but in the guise it wears when life has just departed; when a young and gentle spirit has, but an instant, fled to Heaven, and the gross air of the world has not had time to breathe upon the changing dust it hallowed" (139). Dickens's narration throughout the novel universalizes the effect of the child angel, infused with the incorruptible powers of heaven. Oliver influences Fagin to postpone his horrible design. His humaneness, fairness, and exceptional beauty compel

people to trust and love him. Like other angelic children, he is notable for his immunity to his surroundings (Gavin 118-119). His soul proves to be stronger than his environment.

Gavin also argues that Victorian writers go beyond depicting children as angels and portray them as Christ-like figures; holy innocents dying for the benefits of the guilty adults around them. Macdonald's novel *At the Back of the North Wind* is a good example of this depiction. The author develops a good description of the misery of Victorian poor children, as well as the idea that children are gifts from heaven. The protagonist of the story is a little poor boy named Diamond. He is one such sign pointing others heavenward. His journey to the county at the back of the North wind causes his physical body to be wasted and almost dead. His silence and little concern for physical needs are among the things that worry his mother Martha.

However, Diamond throughout the story criticizes and rejects his mother's failure to believe in God's providence, the one who would seem the more obvious parent to a Christ-child. He tends to force the adults around him, by loving and shaming them into good behavior. The interesting and deeper truth about him is his belief that goodness could only be found in death (119). As if Macdonald wants to say that the child is the perfect way to revitalize the human spirit and restore the love of life, and only through his or her eye, one can see the world's reality.

The end of this period witnessed a remarkable transition in the depiction of children. This transition can be seen in the works of one of the greatest writers of that time; such writer is Henry James, who is regarded as a key transitional figure between literary Realism and literary Modernism. Greg W. Zacharias, in his book *A Companion to Henry James*, discusses James's Fiction in which the child's psyche is depicted as a tool to shift the focus from the outside environment to the human psyche. He believes that: "James as the American novelist is the most responsible for redirecting the genre away from material culture, away from the physical environment," through which James often makes use of a style in which contradictory

or ambiguous impressions and motives are overlaid or juxtaposed in the discussion of a character's psyche (292).This means that James is one of the reasons behind shifting the attention from the external to the internal, from the outside to the inside. In other words, focusing on human psychology becomes his main interest.

James's portrayal of children presents a significant shift in perception of childhood compared to Victorian Literature's children. He often depicts children in his stories as intelligent, sensitive, and powerful tools always working hard for survival, as explained by George Monteiro (144). James' portrayal of children differs from one story to another, including "The Author of Beltraffio" (1884), "The Pupil" (1891), and *The Turn of the Screw* (1998). In "The Author of Beltraffio," James reflects the harmful influence that family relations and social problems may cause on the child's psyche. This story tells the story of the deadly struggle between the decadent-aesthetic author of the scandalous novel Beltraffio and his wife, Beatrice, over their young son Dolcino. Eventually, this struggle results in corrupting the Boy's childhood by changing his character and principles. "The Pupil," also highlights and mirrors the same issue by telling the emotional story of a young boy growing up in a mendacious and dishonorable family. The only adult that the boy used to trust is his tutor, but due to the circumstances and the environment he grows up in, he betrays him. Thus, James emphasizes the importance of the role of family in directing the child's life.

The Turn of the Screw is perhaps one of James' most thought-provoking depictions of the changing concept of childhood. Through the child characters Miles and Flora, James demonstrates a dramatic change in the regime of childhood innocence through initiating the idea of sexuality either through delusions or revenants. Monteiro also discusses another work of Henry James that addresses pre-adolescent and adolescent sexuality which is *What Maisie Knew* (1897). James's argument in that novel is dramatized through different meetings and encounters. Maisie is the daughter of divorced parents who soon remarry to different partners

causing the child to be in between the new pairs of them facing the consequence of marital mitosis. The daughter gains moral sense at an extremely early age. She matures quickly as a result of being exposed to the existing relationships inside her family, particularly the truth that her own life is dictated by her parent's sexual demands and experiences (144). Evidently, when James embodies the term sexuality into the child's nature, he breaks the traditional image of childhood.

David Mcwhirter's book *Henry James in Context* also examines and provides a plentiful of thoughts and opinions about the Jamesian children. He maintains that children's nature enables the formulations of Jamesian ambiguity, and their victimization enables the reader to see in James's art of fiction as an art of power. If the readers treat James as a psychological writer, they will perhaps notice that: "children seem natural objects of his attention because consciousness and subjective viewpoints can both, in readings that presume narratives of development and adherence to a limited center of consciousness, be seen to be objectified by James's texts" (117). Mcwhirter believes that James' use of children in his works allows the formulation of at least two great themes which are knowledge and education, and the thing that is interesting about it is that theme becomes a style. Thus, children play a significant role in the development of style, because they present viewpoints at once limited and unknowable which is also why James's novelistic projects and unsettles the pieties of childhood innocence (119).

The representation of the concept of childhood continues to change accordingly during the Modernist literature, as Melit contends (3). What is noticeable about Modernist literature is its writing techniques, in which writers tend to break the rules and the conventions that had dominated novel writing for almost two centuries. She illustrates her opinion by quoting Schofield Benedict's description of Modernism saying: "Modernism eschews the constraints of time and association with specific literary Movements and figures, and focuses rather on what might be turned modernizing Tendencies in literature, such as stylistic innovation, formal

experimentation and the development of new aesthetics" (225). In this regard, she believes that children's role becomes neutral in modernist writings; they are rarely featured as the main interest. To escape from the traumatic post-war life, modernist writers use the image of the child as an escape. Daniela Castilli argues that "the child image in modernist fiction was considered as a momentary relief from the other modernist concerns" (qtd. in Tyson 12). Still, often than not, they were marginalized from the fictional narratives.

Most of the time, Victorian and Modernist fiction treat children as passive recipients. However, there are some cases in which the child is depicted as an active contributor and the master of his decisions. Such works include fantasy and adventure works, such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), in which a little girl falls down a rabbit hole into a magical world and tries to find a way out of it; J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1902) which is about a little boy who never grows up living in Neverland as the leader of Lost Boys (Melit 3). Such a choice of genre gives authors the ability to free children from the adult world.

Unlike previous representations of children, Contemporary ones are the most disturbing; the depiction of the child becomes more complicated than it has ever been before. Their works are often depicting childhood innocence under threat. The main goal contemporary fiction seeks to achieve is to point out that the child is inherently innocent and his innocence is in a need to be protected. It tends to define the child as a sort of adult anxiety and threat to the societal order by portraying his innocent image as a symbol of susceptibility, guiltlessness and lack of knowledge. Works such as Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* (1988) depict the main child character not only incomprehensible to the adults who find themselves unable to regulate him, but also as a destruction of familial bliss, as Adrienne E. Gavin contends (238-240). Thus, the representation of childhood in contemporary novels is more disturbing as children are more and more involved in adults' issues.

Writers such as Don Delillo, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Salman Rushdie transmit the disturbing image of the child that reflects the fears and anxieties of the postmodern age. The idea of childhood as an age of innocence is corrupted in their playful narratives. In her article, "Children in Postmodern Literature: A Reconstruction of Childhood," Hannah Loo discusses the issue of disturbing children and gives an insightful description of the postmodernist representations of them. In her point of view, Postmodernist writers tend to deconstruct the usual idea of childhood as a happy age of bliss and try to use their child characters to express adult ideas and understandings of the world. Many of these depictions are disturbing in their treatment of children and incorporate these children existing in adult worlds and dealing with adult issues. As result, the element of shock value becomes one of the main characteristics and necessary literary tool for them to catch and hold the reader's attention. Loo illustrates her ideas using "Zami: A New Spelling of My Name," which is the autobiography of poet Audre Lorde. The poet writes of her memory of herself as a four-year-old child and her longing for a companion in the form of another little girl (Loo 59). What is interesting about this story is that this girl is not an innocent child as it appears at the beginning and it turns to be something else at the end. Also, the common idea of an absence of sexuality in childhood is deconstructed.

While for fairy tales, Loo speaks about the changes saying that: "there almost seems to be a return to the darker stories told to children during and before the early Ninetieth- century, primary changes involving different agendas, messages and social issues of today" (60). They reinterpret original ones such as the story "I Am Anjuhimeko" by Hiromi Ito in the text *My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me,* a collection of postmodern fairy tales edited by Kate Bernheimer. The changing nature of childhood is reflected also in poetry, in which children become more infused in a more adult world. The general idea Hannah tries to express is that there is an interesting paradox between the ways children are expected to experience their childhood and what they deal with (59-61).

2- The Child in Contemporary Fiction:

Nowadays, people do not know whether to go back or to move on, to fix things or to change them. What matters is to catch up with the world's Globalization and Development. Bertha Mook explains this in her article " The Changing Nature of Childhood: A Metabletic Study" saying that: "Today's world is caught up in an accelerated pace of change, in which Postmodernists feel that people are living in the twilight of transition between unworkable past and unknown future" (148). They are still haunted by the past and unable to let it go, at the same time they are trusting in a future they do not know. The rapid change that today's world is witnessing, influences not only the world's regime but also strongly participates in changing the nature of childhood.

In the contemporary era, literature becomes a mirror of ideological agendas and of political, social, and personal disillusionment. These last influence different concepts and forms of daily life, among them the idea of childhood. Mirjana Šagud examines this issue in her article "Contemporary childhood and the institutional Context," stating that: "Children of today grow up in culturally diverse, socially complex and technically highly developed world" (266). She thinks that the image and the quality of childhood as the world once knew it is becoming extinct. Its spirituality and innocence have been corrupted and no indicators are showing improvement for the better. Moreover, the child becomes a relative category for contemporary writers to express and reflect their hidden memories, wishes, and myths. Consequently, literature becomes an effective tool to send messages and to inform people about the many controversies that are emerging in today's world.

Šagud believes that the dynamic and extraordinary changes of children's nature started with the 1600's due to many reasons. These changes began with Locke's empiricism and progressed with Rousseau's Romantic depiction of childhood as an idyllic time filled with

happiness, protection, independence, and dependence. Then, new visions started to arise with the industrial period when the child had to face and struggle with reality circumstances regardless of age because it is the only option (266). But at the same time, it opened doors for new areas of interest concerning the perception and the views of childhood in both society and literature, such as children's rights and health (both physical and psychological).

The image of the child continued to change through the modernist era. The sense of loss and even despair becomes a necessary literary tool to highlight and to portray the damages that World War One resulted in children. Gavin describes these damages saying that:

> The impact of World War I (1914–18) – including its catastrophic effects on youth lived and lost – social readjustments, the rise of Modernism, and wider knowledge of Freud's theories shifted literary portrayals of childhood in the 1918–39 interwar years away from Edwardian idylls towards greater concern with the psychology and sexuality of child characters. (12)

Childhood innocence, reverence, faith, wonder, joy is almost destroyed in the interwar years. Paul March-Russell in 'Baby Tuckoo among Grown-Ups' examines the changing perceptions of childhood, asserting that: "the use of idealized children to contrast with the corruption of adult society remained a literary convention" (qtd. in Gavin 13). Evidently, exploiting children's idealized picture becomes nothing more than a literary tool and convention for modernist writers.

In various periods, including the present, childhood becomes not only a subject of literary interest but also media, welfare, marketing, educational, political, legal, parental, sociological, cultural, popular interest, which results in creating different images. In Western Europe, the realities of World War II changed dramatically the belief that children are a separate, protected space. The child witnessed and absorbed the destruction and devastation around him,

participated in the anxieties of the adult's unsafe world, and experienced their fathers leaving home. However, in North America, the modern concepts of family and childhood remained more or less untouched until the middle of the 20th century (Mook 145). Thus, people are in a need to start investigating literary texts from the post-war period until now, to explore contemporary situations and visions about children.

Contemporary British works depict the child character set within the context of a large house. They give this image a metonymic feature, for the sake of conveying a kind of frustration of individuals submerged in a system in which they are irresponsible and powerless. Idealism and ignorance of the child's character are betrayed and corrupted in the literary forms by the adults around them (Gavin 214). Works such as Benjamin Britten's opera *The Turn of the Screw* (1954), based on Henry James's 1898 novella of the same name are such an example. It is set in a large house in the countryside and tells the story of a governess desperate to protect children from evil as they experience strange encounters. What is interesting about this story is the element of ambiguity, in which the reader cannot be sure whether the narrator has misinterpreted the corrupting effect of Peter Quint and former governess on two young children, Flora and Miles. The opera, however, is a portrayal of the destruction of innocence by evil. Another striking example that suits the post-war mood is William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954). It tells the story of young boys Ralph, Jack, Simon, Piggy, Roger, Sam and Eric who were on a deserted island. They develop rules but without any adult impulses and influence. The children become uncontrollable and cruel, resulting in chaos (Gavin 212-223). This tale suggests the idea that human nature can be savage if not controlled; in other words, man can be born naturally evil.

World War Two was not the only influence that caused changes in children's nature and the world's order; there is another serious and dangerous source of influence which is Media. What people need to bear in mind is that today is unlike yesterday —a general truth people

sometimes forget about. The war indeed affected the shape of the concept of childhood, but at least it was not on purpose. For the sake of socioeconomic and rapid technological advancement, today's society is imposing and putting children in a more adult-centered world, which opens a window to issues such as cyber-bullying, pornography, violence, and vulgarity and perversion in video games and more (Loo 61).

Neil Postman, in his book *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1994), gives a noteworthy description of the influence of media on children's life. His wondering about what made childhood difficult to sustain during the latter part of the twentieth century is one of the main issues that the world seeks to solve today. In his point of view, the rise of the age of electronic media is one of the main reasons behind the disappearance of childhood. He believes that childhood emerged with the age of literacy, where the need for the acquisition of reading skills separated and pushed away adults from children, but it disappeared with the age of electronic media. Age barriers and limits between the adults and the children disappeared, and all of it is because of the electronic media. It creates a bridge by converting communication in a manner that is reducing the distance between generations. Nowadays, children have access to the TV without any conceptual obstacle and they are introduced to actions never known before. They watch TV shows together with their parents being exposed to different adult's issues, which leads Postman to blame electronic media for ruining the traditional view of childhood.

Another writer who gives viewpoints on children with the media is the education scholar David Buckingham. He introduces two opposing perspectives on childhood. The first is the "death of childhood" which is conducted mostly on the television. Its context is referring to the electronic media exploiting children's vulnerability and killing their innocence. The second is directed towards the strong effect of media, in other words, children can be affected positively by media. Here children are not treated as passive victims, but rather as active agents (Mook 150). Reality TV shows are the perfect examples to cover the issue of the negative

influence of media on children. It makes the child suffer ill effects from such programs and hyper-reality. They start to link happiness to wealth, popularity, and beauty. This last can not only harm the viewers but also the participants, which tends to make the challenges of growing up much more difficult. As it is the same case for the influence of the Disney World.

Don Delillo's *White Noise* is one of the best literary works that illustrate the influence of mass media on the postmodern era, as ninety-nine percent of American families had a television set in their houses by 1960 (Garcia 74). The presence of television becomes a part of the culture and the life of the society of this given era. Television and radio play an important role in affecting the novel's development as well as character's growth and ways of communicating with other characters and with themselves. In a book review of the novel by Jayne Anne Phillips from *The New York Times*, Phillips asserts that: "Children, in the America of *White Noise*, are in general, more competent, more in sync than their parents" (26). She is pointing out the idea that Delillo portrays children as being more mature and smarter than the adults. Clear evidence for her saying is that the parents have a constant sense of self-doubt that makes them immature and paranoid especially from the idea of death, while children become the binding force and the solid ground for their parents.

Some of the previous stories show how parents can harm their offsprings instead of being a source of protection and comfort, such as James' "The Author of Beltraffio" (1884), and "The Pupil" (1891). It portrays how the dysfunctional or irresponsible behavior of parents inflicts on children psychological wounds that are never forgotten and are often played out into their adolescent and adult life. Consequently, parents' insecurities, fears, and guilt are projected into children, laying on them a burden greater than they can handle. So, the child is in a need to be protected, and this last can happen only if their parents and the world around them be able to understand his or her psyche, attitude, and feelings.

3- Sigmund Freud's "Family Romance":

Sigmund Freud is often considered as the founding father of psychoanalytic theory that focuses on the study of the unconscious mind in order to explain human behavior. His theory of psychosexual stages of development plays an important role in examining and investigating daily life issues, such as family relations. In 1909, Freud presented an interesting short paper entitled "Family Romance," which explains the common phenomenon when children first become independent of their parent's authority. This growth period plays an important role in children's development, and Freud acknowledges that it is: "one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development" (237).

According to him, in the first couple of years of life, "the parents are the only source of authority and all beliefs." The most momentous wish of the child during these early years is to be like his parents, mainly the parent of his own sex, and to be big like them. But as the child's growth increases, he/she cannot discover the category to which his parents belong. The child gets the ability to compare other children's parents with his own, as well as acquires the right to doubt the unique and incomparable quality which he has associated with them (237). Later on, the child will use the knowledge that he gets from this process of comparison in criticizing his parents, as well as in supporting and justifying his critical attitudes. The child, at some point, will feel neglected by his parents, which will lead him to revenge through imaginary means or misdemeanor. Typically, the child escapes from the difficult experiences he faces with his real parents, through fantasies to become a part of an ideal family. Freud also believes that fantasy may enable children to begin the process of repressing incestuous feelings to facilitate the growth of imagination (Coleman and Ganong 589).

This theory opens the doors for a new concept, which is the Oedipus complex. In his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), Freud first introduces the term of the Oedipus complex, although he did not formally start using the concept until the year 1910. The term

becomes increasingly significant as he continues to develop his concept of psychosexual development. He refers to the name Oedipus to a 5th Century B.C Greek-mythological character King Oedipus, who fulfills a prophecy that he will marry his mother and kill his father. Freud contends that king Oedipus shows and mirrors the innately human competitions between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters. Thus, the myth is not only a simple story that is rooted in literature, myths of ancient history, or social conventions, but it also illustrates family relations and societal taboos.

He believes that the Oedipus complex depicts the unconscious desires that a child may have toward the parents of the opposite sex. However, Freud suggests two sides to these unconscious desires. It can be normal and positive, in which the child starts to see the parent of the same sex as a competitor for the other parent's affection, resulting in creating violent thoughts against this competitor that he or she either expresses or represses. But, it can have a negative formulation, in which the child begins to have desires toward the parents of the same sex and develops a rivalry with the parents of the opposite sex (Coleman, and Ganong 587). These rivalries can also happen with other mother or father figures, as well as with other family members.

However, Freud tries to give the readers another interpretation to his point of view of childhood, in which he gives an interesting explanation to children's acts. He contends that the child is only trying desperately to return to happier times when the parent's status was omnipotent. The concept of "family romance" when it is applied more broadly to the larger social movements of history, becomes particularly memorable. Freud himself states this idea saying: "The whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations" (237). It is, thus, interesting to see how the child rebels against his parents; interesting to see how the new generations, without any differences, always make a revolution against the ideals inherited from their predecessors.

The psychoanalyst' Anna Freud, heavily influenced by her father's "Family Romance," reformulates the developmental needs of children and emphasizes the child's needs for stable relationships with his parents and the impact that this relationship may cause on his or her psyche. She believes that the parents have a position of authority over their child, in which the child's ego is too immature and his superego still too dependent on the parents who provide the model for it (Ebgcumbe 67). Thus, the child will have the ability to be responsible for his future development, after he becomes aware of his id impulses and his conflict about them.

In his book *Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, and the Psychoanalysis of Children and Adolescents*, Alex Holder also examines the same idea. He explains that the parents are the main tool for the development of the child's superego, and thus, also play an important role in regard to the repressions that the child must undertake during the course of his development, which may lead him to face neurotic manifestations. These repressions, having been lifted and the instinctual impulses liberated by analysis, will lead to asking the question of who should be responsible for deciding which of these instinctual impulses can be satisfied. However, in the end, he associates this responsibility to the parents, just like Anna Freud contends (32). She says:

> We cannot forget that it was these same parents or guardians whose excessive demands drove the child into an excess of repression and into neurosis. The parents who are now called on to help the child's recovery are still the same people who let the child get ill in the first place. Their outlook has in most cases not been changed. Only in the most favorable instances have they learned enough from the child's illness to be ready to mitigate their demands. Thus it seems dangerous to leave the decision about the fate of the newly liberated instinctual life entirely in their hands. There is too great a risk that the child will be forced once more into the path of repression and neurosis. In such

> circumstances it would have been more economical to have omitted altogether the wearisome and painful process of liberation by analysis. (qtd. in Holder 33)

Her contribution in analyzing children's psyche is one of the main pillars that helps her in developing and incorporating many insights into psychoanalytic theory, including the understanding of human development, as well as providing techniques for work with children who suffer from developmental deficiencies.

Anna Freud's work offers new ways to understand and manage children's difficult behavior in order to protect them from becoming violent, murderous, delinquent or promiscuous, or turn to substance abuse. It also helps in raising the world's knowledge and awareness about the appropriate ways of dealing with children who create trouble, not for others but for themselves. Those children usually fail in their schoolwork, unable to cope with social relationships and situations, or unqualified for work, and suffer from crippling anxieties (Ebgcumbe 2). Both groups of children are under a future threat of suffering from difficulties in parenting and their sexual partnerships because of their anxieties, inadequacies, or immaturities.

4- Erik Erikson's Eight stages of Psychological Development:

Freud's theories paved the way to the development of more concepts about child behavior and development stages. Most significant are the Eight stages of development by Erik Erikson, who is one of the prominent figures that played an outstanding role in developing the field of psychoanalysis and human development. He developed one of the most popular and influential theories which is impacted by Freud's work. The main difference between the two is that Erikson's theory (1959) is centered on psychosocial development, while Freud's theory (1905), is based on psychosexual development. Erikson's clinical practice has included the treatment of children and has made close studies of the process of growing up in a variety of social and cultural settings.

His book, *Childhood and Society* (1963), introduces and explains his theory about children. This last has eight distinct stages divided into five stages up to the age of eighteen years and three further stages beyond, well into adulthood. Each stage builds on the preceding stages and paves the way for following periods of development. In each of Erikson's stages there is a conflict people experience, and this conflict serves as a turning point in their development. It has the ability either to succeed or to fail in developing a psychological quality. Here, the potential for personal development can be high, as so the potential for failure. If people face conflict and deal with it successfully, they will get psychological strengths that will help them for the rest of their lives. But if they fail a strong sense of self may not be developed (Cherry n.p). Behaviors and actions can be inspired by a sense of competence. Becoming competent is the main concern in each stage in the theory. The person will feel a sense of proficiency, only if he/she handles the stage well. If the stage is poorly handled, the person will come up with a sense of incompetency in the aspect of development.

The first stage of Erik Erikson's theory focuses on the infant's basic needs being met by the parents and how this interaction can result in trust or mistrust; it is the most fundamental stage in life. An infant is dependent; from the day he is born he depends on his parents, especially his mother, for subsistence and comfort including food, love, warmth, safety, and nurture. For Eriksson,

> Mothers create a sense of trust in their children by that kind of administration which in its quality combines sensitive care of the baby's individual needs and a firm sense of personal trustworthiness within the trusted framework of their culture's life style This forms the basis in the child for a sense of identity which will later combine a sense of being 'all right,' of being oneself, and of becoming what other people trust one will become. (249)

Thus, the character and the nature of the child's caregivers play a significant role in developing trust. And if they fail to provide for them the appropriate climate for care and love that he needs to survive, a new feeling will grow up inside the child that he cannot trust or depend on the adults in his life.

When parents are unable to guide their child's life and depend only on certain ways like prohibition and permission; they are going to result in few frustrations which are going to influence their child's mentality, either in this stage or the following stages. Therefore, Erikson believes that "parents must be able to represent to their child a deep, an almost somatic conviction that there is a meaning to what they are doing, to stop their children from becoming neurotic not from frustrations, but from the lack or loss of societal meaning in these frustrations" (249). That is to say, if caregivers are consistent sources of nurture, an infant learns to trust that others are dependable and reliable. If they are unresponsive to their baby's needs, or perhaps even abusive, the baby is going to view this "new world" as an undependable, unpredictable, and possibly a dangerous place.

The second stage of Erikson's stages of development is "Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt," and it deals with One-year-old to three-year-old toddlers. Throughout this stage, Erikson contends that: "In describing the growth and the crises of the human person as a series of alternative basic attitudes such as trust vs. mistrust, we take recourse to the term a 'sense of,' although, like a 'sense of health,' or a 'sense of being unwell,' such 'senses' pervade surface and depth, consciousness and the unconscious." Moreover, he believes that there are, at the same time, ways of experiencing accessible to introspection, ways that reflect the behavior of others. This stage provides children with two important social modalities that are "holding on" and "letting go." However, these modalities are like any other modalities concerning their conflicts, they have two sides: they can end with either in hostility or benign expectations and attitudes. Thus, "to hold can become a destructive and cruel retaining restraining, and it can

become a pattern of care: to have and to hold. To let go, too, can turn into an inimical letting loose of destructive forces, or it can become a relaxed 'to let pass' and 'to let be'" (251).

As children grow physically and cognitively, they start to gain a little independence from their caregivers. They acquire new skills, through starting to perform basic actions on their own, and have the ability to make their decisions and express what they prefer which lead them to gain control (252). For example, they can play with their toys, feed themselves, go potty by themselves, and even dress. In this regard, Erikson assumes that if someone learns to control his bodily functions, he will achieve a degree of trust and a building of self-awareness and independence. Whereas children who can't take care of their own basic needs and continue to depend on their caregivers may start to have a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt.

The third stage takes place at three to five years of age, which is during the pre-school years, and it is named the "Initiative versus Guilt" stage. In his opinion, "There is in every child at every stage a new miracle of vigorous unfolding, which constitutes a new hope and a new responsibility for all. Such is the sense and the pervading quality of initiative" (255). What is interesting about all these senses and qualities is that they all go through a crisis, which will result in that the child suddenly seems to "grow together" both in his person and in his body.

Erikson even argues that this stage completes the second stage, through which Initiative adds to autonomy the quality of undertaking, planning, and attacking. It makes the child more active, his self-will is going to arise and will inspire his acts and defiance. While autonomy focuses on keeping potential rivals out, initiative brings with it an anticipatory rivalry. Ultimately, the child will develop a sense of moral responsibility. He/she will begin to explore their environment and ask a lot of "why" questions, "where he can gain some insight into the institutions, functions, and roles which will permit his responsible participation, he will find pleasurable accomplishment in wielding tools and weapons, in manipulating meaningful toys—and in caring for younger children" (256). In order to demonstrate what they believe is the

adult world, they create stories and relate them with various family scenes and rules. During this stage, the child gains the importance of social approval. Children who succeed at this stage will feel able and capable to lead others. In contrast, children who fail to acquire these abilities will stick with a sense of guilt, lack of initiative, and self-doubt (255).

The fourth stage occurs during the early school years from approximately age five to eleven and it is named "Industry versus Inferiority." This stage, "is socially a most decisive stage: since industry involves doing things beside and with others, a first sense of division of labor and of differential opportunity, that is, a sense of the *technological ethos* of culture, develops at this time" (260). Consequently, social interactions provide children with a sense of developing pride in their achievements and abilities. They like to be encouraged and commended by their parents and teachers because this can help them in gaining a feeling of competence and can helps them believe in their skills. This leads them to compare themselves to their peers as they feel the need to validate their competency; they become proud and confident. The danger that the child may face at this stage lies in a sense of inadequacy and inferiority. Erikson explains that if the child "despairs of his tools and skills or of his status among his tool partners, he may be discouraged from identification with them and with a section of the tool world" (260). Also, when the child's family fails to do its responsibilities, such as encouraging and preparing him for school life, or when school life fails to sustain the promises of the earlier stage, he will lose hope and even isolate himself from the outside world.

The fifth psychological stage is "Identity versus Role Confusion" that happens during the often turbulent teenage years from twelve to eighteen years. Erikson argues that "with the establishment of good initial relationship to the world of skills and tools, and with the advent of puberty, childhood proper comes to an end. Youth begins" (261). This stage marks the shift from childhood to adulthood. It emphasizes the role of the development of ego identity, which

is a conscious sense of self which changes constantly due to new experiences and information acquired through social interactions. He further contends that

> It is the accrued experience of the ego's ability to integrate all identifications with the vicissitudes of the libido, with the aptitudes developed out of endowment, and with the opportunities offered in social roles. The sense of ego identity, then, is the accrued confidence that the inner sameness and continuity prepared in the past are matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others, as evidenced in the tangible promise of a career. (261)

The danger of this stage is role confusion, which occurs when youths feel insecure and confused about themselves and the future, and remain unsure of their beliefs and desires. However, if the youth receive proper encouragement and reinforcement from personal exploration, they will come up from this stage with a strong sense of self and feeling of control and independence, and reach fidelity (262). Thus, developing a personal identity provides each of us with a unified and cohesive feeling of self that is encountered through life.

After having developed a strong sense of identity at stage five, young adults from nineteen to forty years become concerned about finding intimacy and companionship or exploring personal relationships at Erikson's "Intimacy versus Isolation" stage. According to him, intimacy is "the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises" (263). That is to say, this stage helps the adults to develop close, committed relationships with others. Just like the other stages, this stage has two outcomes. From one side, individuals who reach intimacy, will form relationships that are abiding and secure. And those who have a poor sense of self tend to experience painful rejections, less committed relationships and are more likely to suffer emotional isolation, loneliness, and depression, from the other side. This may result in what Erikson has

called “distantiation,” which is the counterpart of intimacy (264). This happens when young adults isolate themselves to avoid and even eliminate the people and negative forces that appear to be harmful to them.

The seventh stage is “Generativity versus Stagnations”, in which leaving a legacy becomes the fundamental concern of middle-aged adults from forty to sixty-five years. Individuals continue to build the structure of their lives, by focusing on their families and their careers. They start to feel the responsibility and the necessity to be productive and make contributions to society, for the sake of leaving a lasting legacy and making the world a better place for future generations. Therefore, “Generativity is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation, …And indeed, the concept generativity is meant to include such more popular synonyms as productivity and creativity, which, however, cannot replace it” (267). On the other hand, Stagnation is one of the results that people may face if they fail to deal with the crisis at this stage. They will feel that they are uninterested, unproductive, and uninvolved with the environment and the people around them.

At the last stage which is “Ego Integrity versus Despair,” people are in late adulthood from sixty-five to death, they are typically retirees. Erikson defines ego integrity as:

> The ego’s accrued assurance of its proclivity for order and meaning. It is a post-narcissistic love of the human ego—not of the self—as an experience which conveys some world order and spiritual sense, no matter how dearly paid for. It is the acceptance of one's one and only life cycle as something that had to be and that, by necessity, permitted of no substitutions. (268)

At this point in development, people experience a flashback of the events in their lives and examine to decide whether they regret the things that they did, or they are happy with what they achieved. If they lack or lose this accrued ego integration, they will be exposed to a fear of death, through which they feel a sense of bitterness and despair. whereas if they achieve a sense

of integrity, they will end up with a general feeling of satisfaction, and wisdom even when confronting death.

The history of Literature has been indeed filled with children. Yet the depictions of child characters varies greatly from one era to another and from one author to the other. It shows the changes that the child's image has passed through to be the way it is today. Any attempt to understand the depiction of children cannot fail to be accompanied by an understanding of the psyche of children. For this purpose, the viewpoints of the psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson play a significant role in analyzing the representation of the child characters in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER TWO:

The Child in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*: Angel or Demon?

In this chapter, analyzing *Atonement*, one of the most outstanding works of Ian McEwan, in light of Freud's "Family Romance," and Erikson's stages of development, provides a clear insight into the changing nature of childhood in contemporary fiction. Additionally, this section of the research attempts to bring to attention the dynamic and rather complex representations of children in Contemporary fiction through an in-depth analysis of the child protagonist Briony Tallis, and her journey from childhood to adulthood.

1- Ian McEwan and Children:

Ian McEwan is an award-winning author and one of the most influential writers in Contemporary British fiction. He is noted for his clear writing style and grotesque depictions that earned him the name "Ian Macabre." McEwan was born on June 21, 1948, in Aldershot, Hampshire, England. McEwan spent much of his childhood in the Far East, Germany, and North Africa, where his father was posted (Malcolm 1). He belongs "to the generation that grew up immediately after the war and it was made a part of his life with the stories his father told him of his involvement in it and with the fact that his babysitters were corporals," as Julie Ellam contends (2). McEwan received a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Sussex and a master's degree in creative writing from the University of East Anglia (both in the United Kingdom).

He becomes a mainstay in British contemporary literature and each new publication is largely welcomed by the critics and his expanding readership. McEwan's works shaped British fiction in the last twenty or so years of the twentieth century, in which they were "written and published in the context of the changes, both perceived and real" (Malcolm 6). It provides multiple opportunities to the reader, such as getting insights into male violence, family and its

perversion, love and innocence, gender relations, wars, international politics, science, the quest for new world-order, and rationality. Moreover, his novels offer a new dimension to the interpretation and the analysis of the text, in which it not only tackles serious themes but also integrates them in an economical stylist narrative form. Thus, his novels are well known for an economy of style, and his fiction is recognizable for its displays of meticulous research (Ellam 4). For example, *The Child in Time* (1987) which won the Whitbread Novel Award, gives a deep understanding to the dominant political ideology of 1980s Britain; as did his novel *Amsterdam* (1998), the winner of the Booker Prize.

If one deeply focuses on McEwan's novels and stories, they will notice that McEwan is very concerned with the role of the irrational in his characters' lives. The reader will see that the characters are driven by desires and emotions that they cannot control. Some of McEwan's works offer unique perspectives about problems facing children, including his first collection of short stories, *First Love, Last Rites* (1975), which won the 1976 Somerset Maugham Award. And three novels —*The Cement Garden* (1978), *Atonement* (2001) which won the winner W. H. Smith Literary Award and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, *Nutshell* (2016), without forgetting to mention one of his substantial collection of stories for children, *The Daydreamer* (1995).

In *First Love, Last Rites*, McEwan's narrations, in general, are concerned with adolescents, children, and young adults. Several stories in this collection focus on the child as a central character and portray him uniquely and exceptionally. A good example is the story "Homemade," which is about an adult narrator who recounts his childhood experience as a fourteen-year-old, and how he achieved sexual initiation with his younger sister. This story breaks the conventional image of childhood by incorporating the child's world into the adult' world. The "Disguises" is another example of McEwan's disturbing images of childhood. It is about a young boy who is taken under the wing of his eccentric aunt and is dragged into her

fantasy world, including her weird and immoral games. However, the depiction of the child as a central figure in "The Last Day of Summer" is unlike the previous stories; it rather presents the sufferance and the traumatic experiences of an orphaned twelve-year-old boy. The interesting thing about these stories is the uncommon and unconventional portrayal of children in claustrophobic settings.

The concept of childhood remains of basic interest in McEwan's famous work *The Daydreamer*. The stories in this collection are about imagination and transformation. It recounts the adventures of Peter Fortune, who starts the volume as a ten-year-old and ends it at twelve. Throughout these stories, he imagines that he is chased and attacked by his sister's malevolent doll. This fiction is a celebration of childhood as a state of partial freedom and anarchy in which traditional rules are no longer applied. *The Daydreamer* bears some relation to the stories of childhood in *First Love, Last Rites*, mainly when Peter starts to see adults' world from a twelve-year old's perspective in a way that is cleverly disturbing and yet recognizable for the adult reader.

The unusual depiction of children continues to be part of McEwan's narrations. *The Cement Garden* tells the story of an orphaned brother and sister who lost their mother and cannot let go of her body, which they buried in the garden. This novel reflects the complicated psychological problems that orphans may face when their parents are absent. Moreover, it is an extreme example of a psychological fixation similar to William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1930), in which Emily keeps the corpse of her lover in her bed for forty years. McEwan's novel shows that the children's grief is not buried with the mother as their dysfunctional behaviors become more apparent. For example, Tom starts acting like a baby to get the attention of Julie. The latter falls in love with a man who is much older than her. The complicated story shows how orphans can and cannot cope with the absence of their parents.

His latest novel *Nutshell* is a very unlikely narrative in which a knowledgeable fetus in his third trimester narrates the story while "bound in a Nutshell" (Shakespeare 2. II.51). However, he is conscious of the implications of what is happening around him and seems to be much more intelligent than people around him. The events of the story take place in around a week. The story is about a contemporary married couple, Trudy and John Cairncross, who wish to have a child. However, their wish is not quickly fulfilled. After almost ten years of marriage, the bond becomes weaker and the couple considers separation. When the marriage seems to be falling apart and while passing through many problems, Trudy gets pregnant. Unsatisfied with her incompetent poet of a husband, she betrays him with his brother Claude, with whom she eventually conspires to kill the husband. So, the highly attentive fetus tells us about a murder conspiracy that is cleverly being planned for, and how he is filled with guilt and anguish because of his helplessness. By the end, the fetus decides to take action that is going to save his future and his mother's. This story presents the harmful effects that the child may face as a result of his parents' selfish actions. It also shows how, regardless of the bad circumstances, the child can still become wiser and even can affect his parents' life.

2- *Atonement*:

McEwan's *Atonement* is yet another novel that deals with the notion of abnormal children. With this novel, McEwan fascinates not only the fans but also the non-committed ones. It is even considered as his most impressive work to date. Robert MacFarlane, in his review for *The Times Literary Supplement*, regards it as his 'finest achievement' (3). *Atonement'*s significance does not only refer to the English setting or the surprise that Briony has directed the narrative from the beginning, but also to McEwan's technical expertise, especially in metafiction. His technical skill of holding the separate sections together is one of the reasons behind putting his

work in the top of the list of the important novels and behind its adaption into a movie that has garnered much critical acclaim.

Interestingly, in *Atonement* McEwan uses other writers' voices and revives their works through his outstanding metafictional writing of Briony's stories, which makes him look like he has the capacity that his prodigy Briony has always hoped for. Critics often view his work as a masterpiece and compare him with writers such as Henry James, Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence, as each one of them demonstrates a deep interest in the 'transformation' of individuals. Geoff Dyer argues that: "McEwan uses his novel to show how this subjective or interior transformation can now be seen to have interacted with the larger march of twentieth-century history" (qtd. in Ellam 63). Furthermore, McEwan's novel demonstrates the dangers of the literary imagination, and its influence on people's life. His unique way in setting the ground for his narrative draws the reader into a realistic landscape and at the same time reminds him that it is a novel that he is reading (Ellam 63-65). Thus, Ian McEwan is considered one of the finest writers of his generation.

Atonement is a story about a precocious thirteen-year-old Briony Tallis, who has an outstanding talent for writing. She is the youngest daughter of three children of the Tallis family, living in an English country estate. The novel has three major parts, plus a final denouement from the author. The first and the longest part begins in the summer of 1935, with the visit of the maternal cousins, the twins Pierrot and Jackson and their fifteen-year-old sister Lola, whose parents are in the process of divorcing. Meanwhile, Cecilia, Briony's sister who has just come back home from Girton College, Cambridge, is struggling with her confused feelings toward the housekeeper's son and her childhood friend, Robbie Turner, who is home from the Cambridge University for the summer.

While Briony is trying to get her cousins to rehearse a play she has written for the arrival of her older brother Leon and his wealthy friend Paul Marshall, she accidentally witnesses a

strange encounter, in front of the fountain, between her sister and Robbie from an upstairs window. When Cecilia takes off her clothes in front of Robbie and jumps into the fountain to retrieve the piece of her family heirloom vase that Robbie broke. Briony, without hearing their conversation, starts to think of Robbie as a threat to her sister. After Robbie realizes his love for Cecilia, he attempts to write a letter of apology to her for the sake of explaining his behavior earlier in the day. But accidentally, when trying to send that letter via Briony, he hands Briony a vulgar draft instead, who reads it and concludes that Robbie is a "maniac" (120). Later, this apology turns to a lovemaking in the family library which Briony observes and directly reinforces her ideas and suspicion about Robbie.

At dinnertime, Briony's mother Emily joins everyone at the table celebrating her son's arrival. In the middle of their conversations, the twins leave the dinner table and run away leaving a letter behind, which reveals that they escaped because they miss their parents. Eventually, everyone in the house goes out to search for them. As Briony searches alone, she finds Lola being raped. The rapist runs away before Briony can see or identify him. But, despite this she convinces both herself and Lola that Robbie is the one that committed the crime. After they return home, Briony begins her story and tells everyone about Robbie's crime. She even gives her testimony to the policeman. So, when Robbie appears with the twins he is arrested.

The second part takes place during World War II. It recounts the sufferance of Robbie Turner as a soldier in the British Military Force after spending three years in the jail, from one hand. And from the other hand, it describes Cecilia's new life as a training nurse living away from her family as a result of their accusation of Robbie. Robbie's only way to communicate with his lover Cecilia is through letters in which he learns that Briony, now eighteen, has recognized her sin and she is now ready to change her testimony. However, they meet once before he goes to war in France. This part ends with Robbie getting injured and hopefully waiting with his companions to be taken back to England.

Part three follows Briony, who has refused her place at Cambridge and chooses to work as a training nurse during the war. Realizing the full extent of her crime, Briony hopes that nursing will act as a penance for her sin. Now, she remembers that she actually saw Paul raping Lola instead of Robbie. She still writes, although she lacks the passion of writing that she used to have before the awful incident. At the end of part three, Briony learns from her father, Jack Tallis, that Lola and Paul Marshall are to be married at a church nearby in the next few days. She secretly attends the wedding and does nothing to stop it. And, afterwards, she pays a visit to Cecilia in which unexpectedly she sees Robbie as well. As it is expected, both of them reject Briony's apology and refuse to forgive her, though she promises them to try to put things right and even exonerate Robbie by changing her testimony.

The final section, titled "London 1999," is presented from Briony's perspective. She is in her late seventies and dying of vascular dementia. She becomes a famous novelist and her book *Atonement* is going to be published on her birthday. This section transpires that Briony is the author of the preceding sections of the novel, and it contains Briony's confession about her novelization in which she admits that some of her events are true and some are not. For example, she uses the letters from the museum of archives, and the meeting with one of the corporals with whom Robbie marched, to retell the war part. Her story of reuniting Cecilia and Robbie is nothing more than imagination. Briony justifies that if she told the reader the truth, he/she will not draw any sense of hope or satisfaction from it. But above all, she wants to give Robbie and Cecilia the happiness they could not have in reality. The section finishes with Briony's conclusion that the author's attempt to achieve atonement through a novel is something impossible. The author for her is God, and he is the one who determines the character's fates and alters them at will.

3- Briony Tallis:

McEwan's description of Briony Tallis as a child throughout the novel and how he presents her personality development is very unique, as it highly mirrors the image of the disturbed child. As mentioned before, the main character of this novel is Briony Tallis. In essence, she is a fictive character and the fictional author of the novel's story. Throughout the novel, her life is shifting from Briony the child to Briony the author. Jullie Ellam discuses McEwan's portrayal of Briony saying that:

> In Briony, McEwan has created a character that emphasizes that the readers do not have to have empathy with her or identify with her to enjoy the work. She is always ambiguous and is difficult to believe in, given that her lie has given the novel its drama, and so she may be regarded as a lesson in understanding ambivalence. (42)

Thus, she is regarded as the reason behind the confusion that the novel depends on, and at the same time, she is the tool for reminding the readers that this is a work of fiction.

3-1- Briony the Child:

The first part of the novel describes Briony as a young girl in-between childhood and adulthood with a passion for writing and secrets, and an obsession with tidiness. However, her growing up circumstances are unlike other normal children, as her father is most of the time absent for work, and her mother is always in bed because of severe episodes of migraine. Even her older siblings spend much of their time away at school. This parental absence causes Briony to spend great chunks of time living in a world inside her head and having no one to play with besides herself. To this effect, her mother, Emily Tallis, explains that Briony

> [h]ad vanished into an intact inner world of which the writing was no more than the visible surface, the protective crust which even, or especially, a loving mother could

> not penetrate. Her daughter was always off and away in her mind, grappling with some unspoken, self-imposed problem, as though the weary, self-evident world could be re-invented by a child. *(Atonement* 68)

Briony creates a world around her of which no one is aware, and she lives in it. Freud explains this as the child's way to escape from the difficult experiences he/she faces with his/her parents (Coleman, and Ganong 589). As if her creation of the imaginary world is the solution for facing the problems she struggles with and remaining active and sophisticated.

For this reason, Anna Feud, her father Sigmund Freud, and even Erik Erikson assure that the presence of parents in the lives of their children is irreplaceable. They play a vital and fundamental role in developing their children's physical and emotional well-being (Apriyanti 1). Thus, their absence negatively influences their children's inner states, which may place them in a state of psychological distress, as it is the case for Briony. When her physical and emotional needs such as receiving love and care are unmet, she creates her world. Her mother's presence in the novel is just like her absence. Instead of nurturing her children, she is nurturing her migraine. Emily's condition actually "has stopped her giving her children all a mother should. Sensing this, they had always called her by her first name" (*Atonement* 66). Her children do not sense the word mother and its nurturing implications all because of her carelessness. Her existence is just like "an invalid's shadow land," as Briony describes (103). She is unable to perform her role as Briony's primary caretaker, and unable to perform her duties as an actively involved mother and as the matriarch of the house.

Briony's emotional struggle is not only restricted to her relationship with her mother, but it also includes her father, Jack Tallis, who is also incapacitated in providing love and care to her. As Briony describes: "When her father was home, the household settled around a fixed point. He organized nothing, he didn't go about the house worrying on other people's behalf,

he rarely told anyone what to do-in fact, he mostly sat in the library" (122). Her father chooses to spend time alone with books rather than sitting and interacting with his family.

According to Freud's "Family Romance," "the parents are the only source of authority and all beliefs" (237). Usually, they are the exclusive source of love and care for their children, but in the case of Briony, neither her father nor her mother are caregivers; it is, in fact, her sister Cecilia who provided that since Briony had always "required mothering" from her (*Atonement*103). The nonexistent role and the neglect of her parents push Briony to find another source for love and care since this is what she needs the most. This conforms to what Freud explains as the child's way to desperately return to happier times when the parent's status was omnipotent (237). However, even though Briony uses a backup plan to feel love and care once again, what happened forced her to lose her trust in the outer world. The failure of Briony's parents to provide the appropriate climate for care and love causes her to fail in developing "trust," as Erikson's first stage of development "Trust versus Mistrust" requires.

She starts to see the real world as nothing more than undependable, unpredictable, and possibly a dangerous place. For her, "the social world was unbearably complicated," she is surrounded by nothing more than "Machines, intelligent and pleasant enough on the outside, but lacking the bright and private *inside* feeling she had" (*Atonement* 36). Her trust in people is broken, thus, she starts to depend on herself, and most importantly, she gains control over herself and other things around her, and she attempts to impose material order on the psychological disorder around her. She becomes:

> [O]ne of those children possessed by a desire to have the world just so. Whereas her big sister's room was a stew of unclosed books, unfolded clothes, unmade bed, unemptied ashtrays, Briony's was a shrine to her controlling demon: the model farm spread across a deep window ledge consisted of the usual animals, but all facing one way--towards their owner- -as if about to break into song, and even the farmyard hens

were neatly corralled. In fact, Briony's was the only tidy upstairs room in the house. (4-5)

This quote tells the reader that Briony is an organized and meticulous person, to a distressing extent, who likes things to be under control. The fact that she does not experience the real meaning of family's care and love, and the fact that she cannot do anything to change it, push her to "reinvent" the world around her — a world that she can be able to control, and even change it whenever she wants.

3-2- Briony's Stories:

Reading the novel proves that Storytelling is what Briony's life revolves around. While children spend their days playing and having fun, Briony spends her days in the library reading books and dictionaries. She likes to write stories and her inspiration is always related to events happening around her. Her passion starts at an early age when she was just a ten-year-old; in the words of her sister Cecilia: "what had seemed a passing fad was now an enveloping obsession" (21). Her stories are just like any other stories in portraying the idea of "happy ending," in which "the evil characters are purely evil and the good ones are genuinely good" (Sernham 2). For example, she writes a tale about "a humble woodcutter who saved a princess from drowning and ended by marrying her" (38). However, though Briony's stories are simple and naïve, they are thorough; "[It] has the basic concept of a story which forms the foundation for much great fiction" (Sernham 2).

Briony's obsession with writing stories crosses the borders, in which she starts to link it with everything that happens in her life, as Catherin Sernham argues. This threatens her perception of reality since reality risks becoming an extension of her internal fictional world. She begins to treat people around her as if they are characters in her story. For example, when

she witnesses the scene of the fountain between Robbie and Cecilia, she directly considers it as nothing more than a tool to develop her stories. As Briony expresses:

> For her now it could no longer be fairy-tale castles and princesses, but the strangeness of the here and now, of what passed between people, the ordinary people that she knew... It was a temptation for her to be magical and dramatic, and to regard what she had witnessed as a tableau mounted for her alone, a especial moral for her wrapped in a mystery ... It was also a temptation to run to Cecilia's room and demand an explanation. Briony resisted because she wanted to chase in solitude the faint thrill of possibility she had felt before. (*Atonement* 39-40)

Briony, without understanding and hearing what was happening between her sister and Robbie, directly makes the scene a story. This is relevant to Erikson's third stage of development where the child in order to demonstrate what he/she believes is the adult world, he/she creates stories and relates them with various family scenes and rules. Thus, Briony's obsession blinds her from seeing the truth of what is happening.

After the witnessing of the fountain scene, she never stops thinking of it, and it becomes the center of her life. After reading the letter that Robbie mistakenly sent to Cecilia, Briony's mixed and disturbed feelings make her believe that it is an opportunity for her to grow as an author: "The very complexity of her feelings confirmed Briony in her view that she was entering an arena of adulthood from which her writing was bound to benefit" (113). She immediately creates a story in which she takes the role of the brave heroine and Robbie plays the role of the villain. For her now, Robbie is no longer the good friend who lived with them for years. He fits in her new story as an impostor and as someone who "always pretended to be rather nice. He's deceived us for years" (120). For her, it does not matter that he is kind, but what matters is that he is the villain; thus, his kindness becomes an act of evil.

It is worth noting that Briony has great confidence in both herself and her stories. This confidence indicates that she has accomplished Erikson's fourth stage of development that is "Industry versus Inferiority." That is to say, when the child is encouraged by his parents, he/she will accordingly gain a sense of competence and confidence. Briony's parents are assuredly most of the time absent, but they are there when it comes to her encouragement. Whenever Briony finishes one of her stories, she reads it aloud with pride. "[I]t surprised her parents and older sister to hear their quiet girl perform so boldly, making big gestures with her free arm, arching her eyebrows as she did the voices, and looking up from the page for seconds at a time as she read in order to gaze into one face after the other" (6). Her body language while reciting her stories justifies her sense of confidence, in the same way when she gives her testimony about Lola's rape to the police officer. She directly accuses Robbie of the crime, because she has already made a role-play for him in her story as a villain. Therefore, changing his role will not fit her need to connect her reality with her fictional world. All what matters for Briony is that the two worlds must fit. As Teti Apriyanti explains: "Briony's obsession with being a writer is dangerous when it is related to her poor interpretation between reality and fiction as well as her need to interfere other people's privacy, including other people's perspective" (85). Even though Briony did not see him making the crime but "Everything connected. It was her own discovery. It was her story, the one that was writing itself around her" (*Atonement* 166). Without hesitation, she concludes that he is the one to blame.

Briony's passion for writing provides her not only with strong confidence but also with an unlimited sense of order, which is embodied in everything she does, from her room to her stories. In her opinion, writing stories "for an unruly world could be made just so. A crisis in a heroine's life could be made to coincide with hailstones gales and thunder;" this seems to be the only way to satisfy her sense of order (7). For her, the only way she can control everything from weather to people's life is through her stories. She does not only want to reign over the

characters of her imaginary world but also to administer the life of people of the real world. Professor Peter Mathews, in his article "The Impression of a Deeper Darkness: Ian McEwan's *Atonement*," draws attention to Briony's obsessions with order, he states that: "All of Briony's passions—her storytelling, her love of secrets, her penchant for miniaturization—stem from an obsession with order, in both a moral and a physical sense" (148). He believes that as Briony's stories indicate her physical sense of order, they also reflect her mental sense of order that lies in expecting order to exist in the one taking place around her. Briony does not want her sense of order to be restricted only to the stories she believes herself to be part of, but also wants the people around her to accept it (154). Indirectly, Briony is trying to say that this is her world and people have no option other than accepting her decisive control in it.

For example, when Briony trains her cousins to perform a play she writes, entitled *The Trials of Arabella*, she does not accept any other opinion except her own. Her controlling and leading desires appear strongly, mainly in the scene when Lola wants to play the role of the main character Arabella which is usually Briony's role. At the beginning of the rehearsals, Briony does nothing except for thinking of a way to face Lola's decision to take the leading role, since Arabella is nothing more than a depiction of herself, unlike Lola who has no similar features to Arabella's character. But by the end, Briony cannot resist her controlling nature and she "took the play from Lola and said in a voice that was constricted and more high-pitched than usual, 'if you're Arabella, than I'll be the director, thank u very much, and I'll read the prologue" (*Atonement* 15). This play is so important for Briony because it gives her the ability to manage not only her performers but also the life of the people around her, including her older brother, Leon. In truth, it is mentioned that

> Her play was not for her cousins, it was for her brother, to celebrate his return, provoke his admiration and guide him away from his carless succession of girlfriends, towards

> the right form of wife, the one who would persuade him to return to the countryside, the one who would sweetly request Briony's services as a bridesmaid. (4)

As if her brother is lost and unable to direct his personal life, and most of all he is in a need for her help and guidance.

Furthermore, this play mirrors another abnormal feature of Briony. It shows how she is unable to see or realize the idea that other ways of viewing things, besides her way, do exist. When she starts to explain the plot summary of the play, her cousins unconsciously start to express their opinions about plays in general, however, their answer that "'[They] hate plays and all that sort of thing… It's just showing off'" highly surprises Briony. It makes her wonder "'how can [they] hate plays?" The idea that Briony's cousins are not interested in plays as much as she does persuades her thinking that she is unique, thus they will "never understand her ambition" even if they try to do so (11).

3-3- Briony the Author:

The last part of the novel follows Briony the writer. It is the only part written in the first person point view, in which Briony herself tells the events. These events occur after the completion of her novel. Throughout this part, Briony's impression is quite different from the one that the reader used to know. It shows the developmental change that Briony went through, but it mainly shows the major change which is her becoming more of a likeable character.

When Briony was eighteen-years-old, during the third part of the novel, she has somehow changed a great deal by following her sister's footsteps and studying to become a nurse. It is the first time that the readers experience Briony as a normal girl, having a friend, cheerfully talking, and having fun, in which "their laugher grew louder, into cackles of hilarity and derision" (289). Moreover, it is Briony's first time to notice that "her life was going to be lived in one room, without a door" (288). Her personality shifts from being a rigid character to

becoming a warm, bright, young girl. Not only that but even her attitude towards writing changes:

> The age of clear answers was over. So was the age of characters and plot. Despite her journal sketches, she no longer really believed in characters. They were quint devices that belonged to the nineteenth century. The very concept of character was founded on errors that modern psychology had exposed. Plots too were like rusted machinery whose wheels would no longer turn. A modern novelist could no more write characters and plots than a modern composer could a Mozart symphony. (281)

Her stories now are no longer simple and naive; they become greatly influenced by modern authors. For her, now plots and characters are no more important, the description matters.

However, she is surprisingly still quite similar to the thirteen-year-old Briony because she is using her new job merely to mask her true self: 'the writer' she was ever since she was young. She remains unable to notice what is happening around her because she still lives in her world. Considering Briony's acts and her age through the lens of Erikson's theory, Briony is now situated in the fifth stage of development, which is "Identity versus Role Confusion." Briony remains certainly unclear and confused about her personality and her thoughts, she feels insecure, and she is even unsure about her desires. Her main concerns such as her obsession with order and protocol are the same but the only difference is that now she realizes that they are of no importance to the world. As it is expressed in the scene when Briony commands the soldiers to stand up from beds and clean up their clothes first, she speaks up: "'You must get up,' … 'there's a procedure.'" (294). Instead of taking care of them, she controls them as usual.

This sense of order does not stop at the age of eighteen, but it continues with her until she becomes a seventy-seven year old. Though Briony suffers from a disease that will make her slowly lose her memory, she only cares about how to keep things, like her business, in order. Briony has indeed written books and stories her whole life, but the incredible change that the

reader is going to notice is that her success begins once she accepts others' ideas. This comes to attention mainly when she receives a rejection letter from the magazine editor CC for her first draft *Two Figures by a Fountain*, a draft that turns out to be the tale of the real-novel as Briony reveals by the end. The editor tells her:

> [S]uch writing can become precious when there is no sense of forward movement. Put the other way around, our attention would have been held even more effectively had there been an underlying pull of simple narrative... [Y]ou dedicate scores of pages to the quality of light and shade, and to random impressions... This static quality does not serve your evident talent well... Your most sophisticated readers might be well up on the latest Bergsonian theories of consciousness, but I'm sure they retain a childlike desire to be told a story, to be held in suspense, to know what happens... Our wish is that you will take our remarks – which are given with sincere enthusiasm – as a basis for another draft. (312-314)

Thanks to his comments she finally recognizes that the effective story is the story that has characters and plots, unlike her previously mentioned belief, and most importantly the one that successfully captures the readers' attention. This last lies mostly in her last attempt to revise her story, in which she adds the scene of the reunion of Robbie and Cecilia that did not happen, and that has not been part of the previous draft. Thus, she finds a way to make her draft alive, better, and develops it into a great novel entitled *Atonement*, which becomes a manifestation of all her skills.

As Briony is in the last years of her life, she reaches the last stage of Erikson's stages of development. She experiences different flashbacks, a flashback that is similar to a window from the past. Briony admittedly uses her wisdom to create a happy ending for her sister Cecilia and Robbie, but the truth remains one and is that her true feelings are disdain and presumption.

> Her sister's confirmation of her crime was terrible to hear. But the perspective was unfamiliar. Weak, stupid, confused, cowardly, evasive – she had hated herself for everything she had been, but she had never thought of herself as a liar. How strange, and how clear it must seem to Cecilia. It was obvious, and irrefutable. And yet, for a moment she even thought of defending herself. She hadn't intended to mislead, she hadn't acted out of malice. (336)

Her reaction to the crime is weird and unfamiliar. Though she fails to tell the truth to Robbie and Cecilia and she feels responsible for their separation and even their death, she never thinks of herself as a liar. The happy ending she creates is only an attempt to fill her psychological needs, to ease the stress she has, and above all to convince herself to move on.

4- Plundering the Child:

Children constitute a group in population that is more vulnerable to violations provoked, in most cases, by adults through different ways. It can be a metaphorical violation or physical one, in which the child may be sexually abused, as it is the case for the rape of the fifteen-year-old Lola by the businessman Paul Marshall. It is not Lola's fault that she is acting just like any other adolescent girl, who is not accountable for her actions because she is in the process of developing from a child into an adult ("Adolescence"), nor that she is beautiful and likes to paint her toenails and wears perfume with a womanly tang. It is Paul's fault for misinterpreting her acts. When he "saw the girl was almost a young woman, poised and imperious, quite the little Pre-Raphaelite princess with her bangles and tresses, her painted nails and velvet choker" (60), he directly comes to the idea that since she is acting like a woman, so she is a woman regardless of her age. He perceives her as nothing more than a source of sexual attraction, which foreshadows the tragic rape of Lola and the destruction of her childhood later on in the story. This awful crime does not only harm Lola physically but also psychologically.

In their article "The Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Children's Psychology and Employment," Md. Abdul Wohab and Sanzida Akhter give a deep understanding to the harmful psychological effects of child abuse. They strongly believe that childhood sexual abuse is a serious "central issue of mental and physical problems which may carry on up to adult life of men and women," resulting in a dangerous influence on their psychological, mental and social development (144). Problems such as, anxiety, low self-esteem, behavioral problems, depression, social problems, even drug use and impaired relationships that can even become a main barrier in maintaining a balance in children's future life (145). As it is the case for Lola, it results in creating traumatic problems that probably will last with her throughout her life. Even though she marries Paul Marshall, her rapist, she will always remain that child who has been raped, as Briony expresses:

> Poor vain and vulnerable Lola with the pearl-studded choker and the role-water scent, who longed to throw off the last restraints of childhood, who saved herself from humiliation by falling in love, or persuading herself she had, and who could not believe her luck when Briony insisted on doing the talking and blaming. And what luck that was for Lola – barely more than a child, praised open and taken – to marry her rapist. (324)

Their marriage remains nothing more than the union of a victimizer and a victimized.

Briony experiences in a metaphorical way the physical and psychological violation that Lola goes through. Although Briony is to blame for the misfortunes that happen to Cecilia and Robbie, part of the blame lies in her family. It is the Family's duty and obligation to predict and oversee the acts and the behaviors of their child; they should be aware of their child's character, which was not the case with Briony. Because of the absence of her parent's role, she becomes biased. Her mother's illness and her father's absence for work prevent them from spending much time with their daughter to understand what kind of child she is and to prevent early

disorders. They do not instruct and help her to develop her morality, and instead of guiding her, they just let her act and copy their behaviors. For example, “It occurred to no one to send her to her bed” when topics are inappropriate for her age (179). These leads her to think that she fully understands their characters and even their acts. Therefore, whatever she does, she is very confident about it, as her words express: “I can. And I will” (168). They strengthen her self-confidence, make her brave, and most of all they provide her with a false certainty that whatever she does is right. In short, the absence of her parents’ guidance is mentally violating the normalcy of her childhood and perverting her innocent nature.

These misleading thoughts and awareness are some of the things that push her to accuse Robbie of the raping of Lola. Briony’s family trust her words immediately not heeding her creative imagination, tendency to construct stories, and desire to be at the center of imagination. They did not suspect her of lying, otherwise, they would stop and prevent her from destroying the life of an innocent man. Briony’s human rights of being cared for and of receiving parental guidance are absent, thus, she is unable to recognize the bad consequences that may result from her testimony. “Everyone knew the terrible fact of a violation, but it remained everyone’s secret” (174). Her mother somehow knows her character, because she is her mother after all, but she stands aside while she lies. Her brother “without even asking what the trouble was” (172), trusts Briony’s words. No one of them, except for Cecilia who keeps saying, “Remember what a dreamer she is” (212), believes Robbie and insists on his innocence. Parental negligence and violating the innocence of the child lead her to develop what seems to be a lifelong guilt.

5- The Child's Guilt:

Guilt is one of the oldest and most frequent themes of literature and art. It even becomes a universal concern of novelists who explore inner life and secrets. Guilt in psychological literature is, generally, "conceived as a subjective feeling of guilt that is part of human experience about world and about relationships among people" (Švandová 8). That is to say, Guilt is the feeling that a person can have from something that was said or done in the past. Moreover, "Guilt is the cognitive or emotional experience that occurs when one realizes or believes accurately that they have compromised on their standards of conduct or have violated a moral standard, and that they bear a significant responsibility for that violation" (Chakraborty 55). It is the uncomfortable feeling of responsibility that a person may experience for his wrong deeds, as it is the case for Ian McEwan's Briony.

McEwan's story depicts Briony as a character who feels regret throughout her life, due to the sin she commits when she was a child. The interesting thing about the story is that tracing Briony's personality allows us to trace her guilt. As Sigmund Freud, in his book *Civilization and its Discontents*, contends: "To begin with, if we ask how a person comes to have a sense of guilt, we arrive at an answer which cannot be disputed: a person feels guilty (devout people would say sinful) when he does something he knows to be 'bad'." He believes that our conscience is derived by a set of moral values set before us, thus we feel guilty. This conscience as Freud calls, a "superego," is one of the important things that the child encounters in his developing stage. It happens when he or she becomes gradually internalizing certain controls upon him/herself (71).

However, Briony's guilt is slow in manifesting itself. In the first part of the novel, Briony is described as a little girl suffering from nightmares. Freud describes such nightmares as: "[D]reams with a painful content that are to be analyzed as the fulfillment of wishes. Nor will it seem a matter of chance that in the course of interpretation one always happens upon subjects

of which one does not like to speak or think" (101). The unusual thing about the nightmares in this story is that they foreshadow Briony's act that will cause her a lifelong guilt. Whenever Briony sees a nightmare and wakes up screaming as little girl, Cecilia is the one who

> [W]anted to comfort her sister, for Cecilia had always loved to cuddle the baby of the family. When she was small and prone to nightmares – those terrible screams in the night –Cecilia used to go to her room and wake her. *Come back*, she used to whisper. *It's only a dream. Come back.* And then she would carry her to her own bed. She wanted to put her arm around Briony's shoulder now, but she was no longer tugging on her lip, and had moved away to the front door. (*Atonement* 44)

This passage clearly illustrates Briony's mental state before committing the crime and after it. It shows that though Briony's sister Cecilia is the one who usually "rescued [her] from self-destruction" (44), and the only one that brings her back from her bad dreams, but this will no longer be the case for the nightmare of guilt that she is about to enter.

The second sign of her feelings of guilt appears in a form of stress and anxiety when she gives her testimony to the officer in which "under his neutral gaze her throat constricted and her voice began to buckle" (174). Even though she does not yet realize her guilt, but deep inside of her, she feels a sense of unease. She even does not know the difference between what she thought and what she actually saw that night: "[S]he was driven back, with a little swooping sensation in her stomach, to the understanding that what she knew was not literally, or not only, based on the visible" (168). Thus, her sense of guilt toward the crime is initially extreme and confused.

But, Briony comes to realize her guilt when she is to be an adult. She is finally conscious that she did something wrong when she lied. Now, she recognizes that her guilty feelings are caused by doing a sin. She knows that her wrong testimony caused pain to someone else. She even wants "the inspector to forgive her" (174). She becomes unable to control her sense of

guilt to the extent that she thinks of it even when she is having fun. When Briony and her friend Fiona return to the hospital and they find wounded soldiers, "[their] eyes met and something passed between them, shock, or shame that they had been laughing in the park when there was this" (292); perhaps the same way she feels for enjoying her life while her sister and Robbie cannot enjoy their lives. Nothing comes to her mind except for the idea of what if "one of these men might be Robbie" (298); seeing their pain reminds her of the pain she has caused to Robbie. Briony's sense of guilt is also depicted when she thinks that she must apologize to Cecilia and Robbie; she really wants to meet them, to talk with them, and most of all to admit her wrongdoing. She wants to change things and make them better by expressing how sorry she is, as she says "'I'm very very sorry. I've caused you such terrible distress.'" (348). Though she deeply believes that they will not forgive her, she still seeks their forgiveness.

6- The Child's Atonement:

Generally, any act of guilt leads to an attempt of atonement, as the title of McEwan's novel suggests. The novel portrays the child's sense of guilt, which is felt by Briony, who experiences lifelong remorse and engages in lifelong attempts to atone for her sin. It deeply conveys the idea that the person who commits the crime must repent for it, must be ready to take responsibility for the consequences of his wrong deeds, and above all, must take actions to change himself/herself. In fact, making a child sin and go through guilt and atonement are another testimony to the new and complex portrayal of childhood in fiction.

Originally, the word atonement has a religious connotation, which means "a reparation or expiation for sin and reconciliation with oneself and with God" (Mishra 21). That is, it is the action of making amends for a wrong or sin. Thus, the notion of the word atonement is as necessary as the notion of guilt itself. There is no doubt that the attractive thing about the novel is its title "Atonement," which makes the reader expect an element of redemption in the novel.

When the eighteen-year-old Briony realizes her guilt and understands the gravity of her crime, she starts her journey of atonement. Her first attempt to atone starts when she decides to train as a nurse instead of going to Cambridge University as self-punishment. She hopes that her duties as a nurse during the war and abandoning all the luxuries of upper-class life, including giving up on the fancy flats, traveling, and the job at the ministry will serve as some sort of penance towards her guilt. Cecilia writes to Robbie, "I get the impression that she's taking on nursing as a sort of penance" (*Atonement* 212). A "penance" that turns Briony from a girl that used to care only about getting attention and praise, to a girl whose life is all about humiliation and discomfort, through which she cleans bedpans every day: "She was abandoning herself to a life of strictures, rules, obedience, housework and constant fear of disapproval" (276). She even thinks that changing her name from "B. Tallis" to "N. Tallis" as a sacrifice of self. In her point of view, taking care of the injured soldiers is an indirect way to forget temporarily her sense of guilt.

Briony also tries to atone for her crime by using her writing. When she decides to rewrite the scene of the fountain from different points of view a scene that turns to be a novel. After fifty-nine years of continuous attempts of rewriting, she makes the second step towards her atonement because, she no longer has the courage to face "[her] pessimism" (371), and no longer has the power to face the "pitiless" truth of the death of Cecilia and Robbie (370). She uses the novel to make what is impossible possible in which she reunites them. She knows that she cannot push back the clock but making them alive and happy seems like her only way to ease a guilty conscience. In this respect, Mishra explains that "Just as guilt makes Lady Macbeth wash her hands again and again to get rid of the blood she imagines, for Briony, the 'attempt' of writing this novel again and again is a form of atonement" (85). Briony uses her writing to remind herself repeatedly of her unforgivable crime. She is unable to forget what she did, unable

to move on, to the extent that her first achievement is nothing more than a reflection of her past life.

However, by the end of the novel, the reader comes to know that Briony's act of atonement never took place. Briony's penance, self-punishment, self-sacrifice, and her attempts to fix things are all illusory and insufficient. It turns out that the reunion of the two lovers and their happiness is nothing more than an invention to develop her novel and satisfy her readers, As Briony states:

> What sense or hope or satisfaction could a reader draw from such an account? Who would want to believe that they never met again, never fulfilled their love? Who would want to believe that, except in the service of the bleakest realism? I couldn't do it to them…When I am dead, and the Marshalls are dead, and the novel is finally published, we will only exist as my inventions… No one will care what events and which individuals were misrepresented to a make a novel. (*Atonement* 371)

In fact, there is an "absence of atonement in *Atonement*" (Pastoor 203). It is eventually a mystery whether the title of the novel refers to Briony's atonement, or to the absence of atonement when there is a need for redemption. Briony the author is still in many ways the same thirteen- year- old eccentric girl. She is still that little girl who likes to be at the center of attention, obsessed with order and control, and even considers herself as "God" and believes that there is "[n]o atonement for God" (371).

7- Angel or Demon?

Thus far, is Briony an angel, or a demon in disguise? To answer this question, it is necessary to refer again to her childhood. Briony, at the beginning of the novel, is described as an innocent child, who is not fully aware of her actions, and above all is not fully knowledgeable about the outer world. She is that girl whose "wish for a harmonious, organized world denied her the reckless possibilities of wrong-doing… Nothing in her life was sufficiently interesting or shameful to merit hiding" (5). The revelation of her secrets without doubt accuses her; after all, she commits a crime, but her youthful naïveté and the mystery of her motivations excuses her and means that she did not understand what she is doing, and acts without full knowledge. However, Briony's upbringing circumstances turn on the button of the disturbed child inside of her, which makes her able of mischief without repenting. Even though she experiences the guilty feeling, and at least she thinks she is seeking atonement, by the end, all that she does serves her own needs and mirrors her fiendish side.

Thus, Briony can be both angel and a demon. She sometimes plays the role of the victim who needs greater protection from abuse and neglect, and sometimes she plays the role of the victimizer who makes the streets unsafe for adults. This leads to say that McEwan's child characters offer readers a new and dynamic vision of childhood that defies previous images of the child that have been explored in the previous chapter. This is similar to William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies (1954)*, where the children are let alone without any adults' guidance. They become able of evil deeds, through which their actions become nothing more than representation of brutality and violence. Thus, child goodness is explored in opposition to their ability for doing harm. As the child can be angel, he/she can also be demon. This leads to say that it is not solely because of Briony's parents that she is capable of mischief, but their absence prevents her from correcting the mischief, or even perceiving it as mischief. For this reason, children are not represented as unconditionally good in Contemporary fiction.

McEwan's complex and dynamic representation is a good example of how Contemporary writers approach the concept of childhood that reflects the new conditions of children in a world where they have to bear more burdens than their age allows. In such a deconstructed world, and with such burdens, children can stray from the natural course of their lives which perverts and violates their innocence. That is why contemporary fiction deconstructs the long-held idea, throughout centuries of literature, that a child is an angel born unconditionally good. While it is undeniable that the child comes into the world as a blank slate or "Tabula Rasa", he/she can "be gently acculturated by omniscient adults" (Sorin 13). This acculturation, as with Briony, does not have to be done through direct instructions, but can be indirect by absence of parents (both physical and emotional), or by failure to instruct and prevent fiendish tendencies, thus creating the demon. The child in contemporary literature can be innocent and good but can be also brutally twisted and able of evil.

CONCLUSION

This study traced the representation of children in literature and the reasons behind its changes, from the early years of the medieval period to the present day. It explored the psychological perception of the concept of childhood in the light of Sigmund Freud's "Family Romance" and Erik Erikson's eight stages of psychological development. Furthermore, this thesis examined how Ian McEwan depicted children in his contemporary novel *Atonement*, which is a part of a long list of works where he gives various images to the children in different manners of narration, by showing how they act and react.

The nature of the child took different shapes across different times. In the Middle Ages, there was no such thing as the concept of "childhood." Even though parents had love and care for their children, they did not think of childhood as a distinct, separate phase. For them, children were nothing more than miniature adults, they had no special needs except for nurture, and were supposed to perform adults' duties. Childhood was not seen as a phase of innocence and protection as it was expected to be. In contrast, writers of the Romantic period created an unbreakable connection between childhood and nature, thus, they viewed the child as a state of innocence and purity. They considered the child as a mirror of their self-nature and purity. He/she is sacred and is in a need of protection.

Yet, the depiction of children during the Victorian era took a different path. New ideas about children appeared, in which they became a symbol of the suffering and misery of the life of the poor. Since children were the main victims of the Industrial Revolution, Victorian writers tended to use them as a way to reflect the unfairness and bleak social circumstances. The exploitation of children under the name of putting them to productive work was everywhere. The time that child was supposed to play and enjoy his/her childhood, he/she was working just

like adults regardless of age or gender. However, the nature of the child did not receive much interest during the Modernist period. The effects of the two World Wars caused on the world forced the modernist writers to portray children through a neutral stance. And in many cases, the child became a significant way to escape the traumatic post-war life.

As lifestyle change and adult expectations alter due to many reasons including globalization and technological development, the concept of childhood appears to gradually change and evolve. The portrayal of children in the postmodern period takes different shapes. It sheds light on more disturbing and complicated facets of childhood. Contemporary writers seek, most of the time, to depict the child's innocence under threat. They deconstruct the usual idea of childhood and try to use the child as a way to express the adults' world. The child, for them, becomes nothing more than a reflection of adults' anxiety. Children's innocent nature becomes as abnormal and corrupted as it has never been before.

Reading McEwan's *Atonement* from a psychological point of view, mainly based on Sigmund Freud's "Family Romance" and Erik Erikson's eight stages of development, deeply demonstrates children's depiction in contemporary fiction. It allows following the protagonist Briony Tallis and her psychological development over more than sixty years, from Briony the child to Briony the author. McEwan's novel shows how childhood experience can affect one's life and the chaos Briony's misconceptions created throughout the novel are testimony to that. It investigates Briony's obsessive sense of order, which followed her hand in hand throughout her life.

Furthermore, this thesis examined the idea of how parental absence can negatively influence the child's psyche. The absence of Briony's parents, who are supposed to be the source of care and love, causes her to escape from reality and create her imaginary world. Thus, she loses her trust in the outer world and she fails to succeed in achieving Erikson's first stage

of development “Trust versus Mistrust.” Briony’s childhood, spent among books, stories, and adult issues, remains unfulfilled. The fictional world inside her head and the real world around her collapse into one inhibiting her from achieving Erikson’s third stage “Initiative Vs. Guilt.” Moreover, the novel explores how Briony accomplishes Erikson’s fourth stage of development “Industry versus Inferiority,” due to her high sense of confidence in both herself and her stories, which are all that her life revolves around. Maybe the old Briony somehow differs from when she was a child, but her personality remains the same, which situates her in the fifth stage of development “Identity versus Role Confusion.” She is unable to set her desires, unclear about her thoughts, and feels insecure. When Briony is in the last years of her life, she reaches the last stage of development “Ego Integrity versus Despair,” through which she experiences different flashbacks. However, though she feels responsible for the death and the separation of her sister and Robbie, and she uses her writing to create a happy ending to the couple, the genuineness of her feelings becomes highly questionable towards the end of the novel. This latter revelation leads the reader to believe that Briony has actually been a twisted child.

Besides, this work also discussed the metaphorical and the physical violations that the adults may cause to the child such as the case for Briony’s cousin Lola, who is later faced with traumatic problems due to her marriage with her rapist Paul Marshall; and the case for Briony whose childhood is metaphorically violated. Despite the fact that Briony has been the main reason behind Cecilia and Robbie’s lives falling apart, her family has partly allowed the chaos to take place. The absence of her parents’ emotional and moral support and guidance in addition to their irresponsible neglect regarding her unusual tendencies as a child caused Briony to commit mischief and believe it right to be so. The guilt she later manifests and her attempts for atonement might actually be just a façade she puts on as a person in order to satisfy the writer in her as the epilogue of the story suggests. McEwan’s novel deeply conveys the idea of

individual guilt within the greater context of collective responsibility. Indeed, Briony seeks atonement for her unforgivable crime, but there is "an absence of atonement in atonement."

Although McEwan's Briony portrays the disturbed and abnormal child, who can be a source of harm, she also represents the innocent child who is unknowledgeable about the risks of her actions. This leads to the conclusion that Briony can be both angel and a demon. She may not be unconditionally angelic, yet her demon side is a result of adult acculturation to a great extent. Consequently, Ian McEwan's *Atonement* strongly reflects the image of the child in contemporary literature where the child can be both angel and demon.

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الملخص

الطفولة هي أكثر الأوقات التي لا تنسى في حياة أي شخص. هي بداية كل قصصنا ومغامراتنا وأصل معظم حزننا الدائم، يأسنا وقلقنا الدفين. لذلك تسعى هذه الرسالة للكشف عن مشكلة تصوير الأطفال في الأدب المعاصر، مثل رواية إيان ماك إيوان **التكفير**. وتقدم هذه الدراسة نظرة شاملة للجانب النظري الذي يتضمن نشأة مفهوم الطفولة. حيث تناقش مختلف التصويرات الأدبية للأطفال من فترة العصور الوسطى إلى عصر ما بعد الحداثة من أجل فهم التغييرات المهمة التي طرأت عليه مع مرور الوقت وكذلك الأسباب الكامنة وراء هذا التحول. وتبحث هذه الرسالة في التطور النفسي لبطلة رواية **التكفير** من خلال المفاهيم الفرويدية بالإضافة إلى مراحل النمو المقترحة من طرف إريك إريكسون لفهم مخاوفها وانعدام الأمن لديها وتصرفاتها المربكة وشعورها بالذنب والحاجة للتكفير. وبطريقة مشابهة تستكشف الرسالة بطلة الرواية بريوني تاليس كممثلة لصورة الطفل في الأدب المعاصر من أجل معرفة ما إذا كانت ملاكًا أو شيطانًا أو مزيجًا من الاثنين. ولتحقيق هدف هذه الرسالة، سيتم استعمال نظرية علم النفس بالاعتماد على" **الرومنسية العائلية** " لفرويد ومراحل التطور النفسي لإريكسون.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ماكيوان، فرويد، إيركسون، الطفولة، ملاك، شيطان.