A Žižekian Reading of Linguistic and Objective Violence in Ian Russel McEwan's 'The Child in Time' and 'Black Dogs'

Manoochehr Najafi[1], Javad Yaghoobi Derabi[1*], Ali Salami[2]

[1]Department of Literature and Foreign Languages, Karaj Branch, Islamic Azad University, Karaj, Iran

E-mail: nmanuchehr@yahoo.com

E-mail: jyderabi@kiau.ac.ir

[2]Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

E-mail: Salami.a@ut.ac.ir

*Corresponding Author's Email: jyderabi@kiau.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore how Žižekian concepts of 'violence' and 'interpassivity' were interpreted in Ian Russel McEwan's novels, "The Child in Time" (CIT) and "Black Dogs" (BD). Žižek distinguishes between subjective (physical) and objective (systemic/structural and symbolic) violence, highlighting their disparities. Subjective violence can be attributed to specific individuals. Subjective violence cannot be fully understood without considering the broader context of objective/unseen violence from which it emerges. There are two different forms of objective violence: symbolic violence of language, and systemic (or structural) violence of political and economic systems. These novels were selected for their notable political nature in McEwan's oeuvre. The study found instances of objective and subjective violence in both novels, with objective violence being more prevalent in "The Child in Time" and subjective violence more noticeable in "Black Dogs." Moreover, "The Child in Time" exhibited specific cases of interpassivity, while "Black Dogs" showcased a prominent manifestation of counter-violence. McEwan's purpose is to scrutinize violence as a general concept; that is, violence is subject to its contextual framework for justification. This study contributes to novel perspectives on the presence of violence and the validity of implementing counter-violence in society.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings have an innate moral essence, but their societal conduct is shaped by the cultural circumstances in which they are situated (Louvel et al., 2016). McEwan's novels vividly depict social constructs strongly shaped by themes such as power struggles, interpersonal conflicts, personal and public tensions, socio-political unrest, and the constant evolution of individual and collective identities in society. The author's literary works delve into crucial modern-day concerns, such as the ramifications of political structures and overindulgent self-centeredness, male aggression and gender dynamics, the convergence of scientific inquiry, reasoning, spiritualism, ecology and the natural world, affection and purity, and the pursuit of an ethical perspective.

"The Child in Time" focuses on the distressing subject of a kidnapped child and stands as McEwan's first novel that critiques Thatcher's Britain. The socially engaged novel intricately weaves together personal and public concerns, shedding

light on the influence of socio-cultural and political factors on individuals' private lives. This, in turn, leads to the outbreak of a wide range of violence, counter-violence, and interpassivity representation. The narrative primarily explores themes such as marital tensions and the breakdown of families. Often regarded as a dystopian ecofeminist critique of Thatcherism (Garrard, 2009), "The Child in Time" highlights a prominent instance of structural violence portrayed through the publication of the Authorized Childcare Manual. This Manual reduces parents to mere puppets, dictating how they should rear their children. In an attempt to evade the brutal violence that surrounds him, the central character Stephen, and his companion Charles often seek refuge in their childhood memories. McEwan's novel portrays childhood as a perpetual state of being marked by a sensation of unbridled liberty (Roger, 1996).

McEwan's fifth novel, "Black Dogs," digresses his previous works in terms of theme and style. It employs a narrative structure centering on memory and retrospection. The novel oscillates between past and present recollections of its characters, offering insights into the evolution of moral, social, and political attitudes following the aftermath of World War II. Whilst "Black Dogs" was published in 1992, it deals with events set in the 1940s. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the conclusion of the Cold War in 1989 served as catalysts for McEwan, prompting him to craft a narrative that exposes the inherent cruelty and violence existing in society.

The word violence is a Latin word that means violation and infringement. Violence is a normative concept interpreted based on existing norms, and as John Locke admitted, if violence is the issue, then violence is also the answer (Bauchi, 2005). In its 1996 assembly, the World Health Organization (WHO) described violence as the intentional application of any form of violence that causes any type of physical or psychological injury (Etienne et al., 2002). Galtung first mentioned that invisible structural violence leads to a socio-politico-economic structure. They include, among others, insufficient schooling chances, biased sexual orientation toward gays and lesbians, cruel working conditions, social injustice toward ethnic minorities, and the like. The injury it causes is more gradual and the recovery process is lengthy and challenging (Winter & Leighton, 2001).

Casademont (2010) asserts that the represented violence in the authors' works reflects the violent nature of our society; there is even more violence behind the represented accounts. By so doing, McEwan aims to explore "how a violent impulse grows inside us and makes us capable of such acts of violence" (p.56.). As Jameson (1989) once held, the teaching aspect of contemporary works of art has been eliminated and these arts have strived to delight readership. In his works, McEwan employs the technique of portraying psycho-social issues and subverting conventional moral values to highlight the innate bestiality of mankind. This, in turn, encourages the reader to distinguish the roots of evil and explore potential solutions (Zeffer, 2023). Influenced by his family background and social circumstances, McEwan possesses keen awareness of politics and history. He employs literary creation as a critical tool to represent historical events and societal realities.

McEwan maintains that history and cultural studies can be meaningfully realized through fiction. For instance, in "Black Dogs," the novel encompasses family debates surrounding historical events and incorporates significant occurrences from late-twentieth-century Europe, such as the aftermath of World War II, the German concentration camps of the 1940s, and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, among others. It serves as a portrayal of the crumbling civilization of the contemporary era.

This study, hence, examines Žižek's theory of violence, focusing particularly on the roles of subjective (physical) and objective (systemic/structural and symbolic) violence. Additionally, it focuses on the influence of ideology and ideological institutions that instigate violence. Furthermore, it touches upon emotional violence, a special type of violence that occurs between partners due to mal-relationships. The present research is an attempt to explore and identify the various forms of violence, interpassivity, and counter-violence as well as the impact of ideology in resorting to violent measures in McEwan's "The Child in Time" (1987) and "Black Dogs" (1992).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Johan Gultang (1969) first introduced the term structural violence to refer to any obstacle to human potential; marginalization, social inequities, unequal access to political power, economic growth, education, and exclusion of gays and lesbians are some obvious examples. Galtung's research focuses on the visibility and invisibility of different types of violence: direct violence with its emphasis on the identifiable and visible human agent; structural violence with its focus on economic, political, and

social structures; and cultural violence (language, history, and religion) that acts as a legitimate basis for the two other types of violence (Galtung, 1969). A clear example of such violence in "The Child in Time" is the presence of countless street beggars in London. To recognize structural violence, we should ask how and why we tolerate it. Critic Phelan (2007), drawing on narrative ethics attempts to focus on the darkness and weakness of human nature in "The Child in Time". He holds that this novel has a wider socio-political scope than McEwan's previous novels. Phelan asserts that narrative ethics is a necessary element of narrative judgment. He does not deal with violence in his criticism; rather, he emphasizes three overlapping judgment criteria: the elements of the narrative (narrative judgment), the moral value of characters and actions (ethical judgment), and artistic quality of the narrative (aesthetic judgment) (Phelan, 2007). Other critics have worked on themes related to childhood such as the child's emotional and intellectual development, child within, regression to childhood, and childhood memories (Attridge, 2017; Hanh, 2010; Roger,1996). Dominic Head holds that "The Child in Time" represents the influence of the new physics. He believes that McEwan's novels confront two cultures of the sciences versus the humanities, stressing the importance of science in a dehumanized world (2013).

Several studies have dealt with violence and interpassivity in the related literature. For example, Hartmann (2017) noted a lack of research that uses non-reductionist methodological approaches to study violence in the field of sociology. This study aimed to use insights from social theory and recent advances in the field of sociology to study violence, and sought to promote a dialog that uses different strategies to describe "violence." This dialog is achieved by combining methodological approaches that go beyond micro- and macro-reductionist accounts. Hartman notes that violence should be considered as a social construct in its appraisal.

In addition, other studies have dealt with objective violence, one of which was the work done by Zirnsak. The researcher noted that the lack of detail on the topic of objective violence proposed by Žižek represents an opportunity for a joint philosophical project. The nature of Žižek's works makes them applicable to different research contexts (Zirnsak, 2019). Moving on to the concept of interpassivity and psychoanalytic theory, Kudryashov states in their study that the concept of interpassivity is of great importance for understanding the interaction between individuals and media. The original interpretation of interpassivity is crucial when it comes to issues related to pleasure, unconscious fantasies, and beliefs in people's interactions given that these elements cannot be fully understood without considering interpassivity (2023). Thus, using Žižek's works, it is of great importance to study violence concerning interpassivity to shed more light on the social phenomena represented in literary works. Žižek refers to the Big Other's role in interpassivity in letting the others perform the actions on our behalf. He holds that the interpassive subject is a bystander; we give permission to the Other to make my experience instead of me, while I am doing something else. Žižek suggests the "chorus" and "canned laughter" as ancient and modern equivalents of interpassivity. Despite a wealth of knowledge on the representation of violence, identity, and literary works using various critical lenses, much less scholarship exists on how violence and interpassivity are represented and enacted in McEwan's novels.

In "Black Dogs," McEwan seeks to evoke apprehension of the past. He asserts that the primary undertaking of contemporary writers lies in depicting existing violence in society. McEwan's focus lies in exploring "how a violent impulse grows inside us" (Casademont, 2010, p. 56). Emmanuel Levinas asserts that ethics is defined in relation to the other; man (being) has responsibilities towards the other and should answer the other's call for help. In "Black Dogs," the protagonist develops ethical awareness towards the end of the novel. Literature creates an opportunity to provoke sympathetic feelings toward Characters' thoughts and perceptions (Gregory, 2010). McEwan in "Black Dogs" represents man's infinite desire for power and wealth which creates violence and he looks for a cure for that violence based on Levinas's ethics. His cure includes responsibility, affection, and sacrifices. We must develop a sense of responsibility for both the alive and those who have been repressed and marginalized throughout history. The novel "Black Dogs" emphasizes the moral aspect of remembering and condemns indifference or silence since it helps the violent action to continue (Gregory, 2010). Arthur Marwick states that history helps individuals and communities to locate themselves. Humans are tormented by their pasts and their society. McEwan in "Black Dogs" depicts humans live with rather than escape the past (Wood, 2012).

The selected novels portray violence in a comprehensive manner as a concept, and their investigation probes the defensibility of violence in certain contexts. "The Child in Time" highlights objective violence particularly represented through the Childcare Manual. This Manual dictates the desired methods of child-rearing imposed by the government's ideology. On the other hand, "Black Dogs" can be interpreted as a representation of the potential for human salvation throughout history. As June implies, the foundation of all evil and violence is entrenched in human nature, pushing individuals

to harm others in chase for authority and personal advantage. The answer to emancipating humanity from this cruel fate can be found in expressing love, duty, morality, and tolerance towards fellow humans, regardless of their position, race, or nationality.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Slavoj Žižek, a prominent political philosopher and founder of the Society for Theoretical Psychoanalysis in Ljubljana, is often regarded as a cultural critic, philosopher, and sociologist, known for his unique approach that combines German Idealism with Lacanian psychoanalysis to examine cultural phenomena. After the publication of his first book in English, "The Sublime Object of Ideology," in 1989, Žižek gained global recognition. Deciphering Žižek's work can be tough, not due to intricate jargon or references to other scholars, but because of his distinctive writing approach that contradicts conventional guidelines.

Rather than presenting a clear thesis statement and systematic chain of analysis, his arguments often unfold through spontaneous jumps and associations. This unconventional approach is particularly noticeable in his non-academic writing, contributing to the occasional misinterpretation of his work. Žižek primarily focuses his critique on the Western capitalist system and incorporates narratives and quotations from literature and movies into his writings. His theory is built on three main sources: Hegelian dialectics, Karl Marx's critique of political economy, and Lacan's psychoanalytic discourse approach. He identifies himself as Hegelian. Žižek interprets Hegel through the lens of Lacan's psychoanalytical theories about the subject and unconsciousness. Furthermore, he interprets Lacan from the perspective of Hegelian dialectics.

In the first chapter of "SOS Violence," Žižek (2008) differentiates between types of violence, namely objective and subjective violence. According to his assumptions, objective violence can be systemic or symbolic violence. He identifies structural (systemic) violence as the first type which is inherent in a system. This form of violence encompasses both direct physical harm and delicate forms of threat that maintain the power relations of authority. He draws a comparison between capitalist systemic violence and the Lacanian concept of the Real. For Žižek, Lacanian "reality" is the social reality of people while the "Real" is the complex abstract logic of capitalism that determines and influences social reality (Sharpe, 2017). Žižek stresses the separation between subjective and objective violence and interprets subjective violence as being noticeably connected to specific actors, while objective violence comprises symbolic violence ingrained in language and the systemic violence that emergs from the regular functioning of politico-economic systems, substantially influencing the lives of average individuals (Žižek, 2008, p. 5).

Žižek then adds that the systemic violence of capitalism is uncanny and cannot be attributed to specific individuals, but is completely structural and anonymous. Structural violence is the outcome of a global capitalist economy and the political support of neoliberal capitalism. Thus, structural violence has emerged under the global hegemony of liberal- democratic capitalism (Bryar, 2015). Potential outcomes of this violence encompass inequities in power and wealth distribution, general life chances with more tangible ones including rising house prices in London that displaces families or makes them homeless, or the demolishing of the coal mining and shipbuilding industries exerting destructive effects on the communities in the North East of England. Additionally, Žižek defines "subjective violence" as the most visible form of violence such as physical attacks and killings perpetrated by identifiable individuals. He also discusses "symbolic violence," which is rooted in language and its usage, particularly associated with the hegemonic power of the master signifier (Žižek, 2008).

Objective violence is the background and root cause of subjective violence. Hence, to understand subjective violence we should unfold the various types of objective violence. Žižek (2008) initially employs the concept of systemic(structural) violence to point out that certain social structures and institutional practices such as political interactions or capitalist mistreatment lead people to engage in subjective violence, both on an individual level (through fights and killings) and on a collective scale (through uprisings and wars). He claims that if one disregards systemic violence as their invisible background, then the "eruptions of subjective violence" will appear irrational. Žižek raises the concept of "Violence" by mentioning that when one thinks about violence, it conjures up criminal acts, terrors, civic conflict, war, and the like. To grasp violence, one must take one step back and look at the violence in the background that causes this subjective violence (Žižek,2008, p. 9).

Žižek also critiques the so-called 'humanitarian capitalists.' He claims that people only see the seemingly benevolent deeds of humanitarian capitalists, while the systemic violence that such capitalists have created to earn income for their seemingly good deeds remains invisible. This could be the case that people appreciate the good deeds of King Leopold II for

the Belgian people, including museums, parks, and public buildings, but they do not see how his cruel exploitation of natural resources in the Congo leads to a kind of genocide there. The perpetrators of systemic violence gain far less attention in contrast to the perpetrators of subjective violence. The agents of systemic violence are sitting targets for violent reactions because they mistakenly believe they are doing wrong when harming people or take the harm as inevitable. Thus, the higher the position, the greater the responsibility for the perpetuation of detrimental practices and the concealment of their failures behind the guise of so-called good deeds (Taylor, 2010). Symbolic violence is created by the symbolic order (language); for instance, how men and women are classified based on some rigid gender stereotypes, excluding a wide range of gender identities. The law of man is the law of language insofar as violence is embedded in linguistic structures, and the material world is constructed through the realm of discourse. When a certain action is judged to be violent, this judgment is always made based on what is normal and appropriate behavior. All in all, language is the matrix that encompasses all human activities and relationships (Žižek, 1991; Boliaki, 2005). Therefore, in Lacan's scheme of the four discourses, the master's discourse is the founding discourse(ibid.). The master's discourse is the dominant discourse of the era. Neoliberalism, for example, is the master discourse of the present which turns the logic of the market into the governing principle. It is presented as autonomous and intrinsically convincing (Zwart, 2022).

Žižek (2008) regards the symbolic order as the Lacanian concept of the Big Other, which is the unwritten law of society and acts as a second nature to human beings; the first being The Unconscious. Lacan (1953) in his well-known maxim noted that "the unconscious is the discourse of the other (p. 126) ", implying that the Other is the very symbolic order in the realm of speech and culture. That is, the effects of discourse and the repressed signifier can be seen in the unconscious and its byproducts such as dreams, jokes, and literary works. (Evans, 2006). Language controls and directs my actions; it is the sea in which I swim, and yet it remains difficult to understand. Žižek (2008) further observes that upon regarding something as violent "when we perceive something as an act of violence, we measure it by a presupposed standard of what the "normal" non-violent situation is- and the highest form of violence is the imposition of this standard with reference to which some events appear as "violent " (p. 64).

Žižek uses the example of VCR to refer to the Big other's role in interpassivity, that is letting the others (for instance the authorities) perform actions on behalf of us. Žižek connects the concept of interpassivity to Marx's notion of "commodity fetishism" and Lacan's "Grand Autre" or "Big Other". The underlying theme of these concepts converges on the idea of "displacement "which includes the displacement of things for people, the displacement of signs for signifiers, and the displacement of unconscious objectivity for subjective experience. Hence, the act of outsourcing or delegating enjoyment or consumption implies a lack of personal enjoyment of the activity. Interpassivity is regarded as a global aspect of human subjectivity. In the Lacanian sense, interpassivity is defined as staying away from enjoyment and subjectivity toward the Other. The interpassive subject is not a victim, but a bystander (Oenen, 2016). It appears odd; however, providing some illustrative examples is essential here. Take the case of some people recording TV programs instead of watching them, or some recovering people from alcoholism preferring to have others consume alcohol in their stead. In general, one takes pleasure in the pleasure of others.

According to Foucault, societies are regulated by logocentrism, the belief that language and words lead to truth and external reality. He argues that knowledge is shaped by discourses filtered through ideology and hegemony (Bertens, 2012). As Hegel nicely observed, the word is the killer of the thing, meaning that symbolic representations of entities exert control over them. Human beings are capable of greater violence than animals because of our ability to speak (Žižek, 2008). As such, Žižek notes language creates inherently transgressive human desire. Even authors considered as timeless and autonomous are the byproducts of discourses that have evolved (Lodge, 1999).

Žižek posits that since systemic violence cannot be attributed to specific individuals, counter-violence or reactive violence does not apply to systemic violence. For instance, social injustice can be addressed through various methods, including internal institutional reforms, nonviolent protests, sanctions, collective strikes, lobbying, and elections. Therefore, counter-violence is generally applicable to subjective violence. This study focuses on how the characters gain insight into the prevalent ideology. Ideology, based on Žižek's (1993) definition, is an inevitable aspect of all thinking that shapes reality and cannot be overcome.

<center>**PRACTICAL READING, DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**</center>

Violence in "The Child in Time"

 The opening scene of "The Child in Time" depicts the heart-wrenching loss of Kate, the protagonist Stephen Lewis' three-year-old daughter. This scene reflects the concept of subjective violence. The obvious structural violence that permeates "The Child in Time" is the publication of The Childcare Manual. This Manual positions parents as mere puppets, guided in child rearing to produce docile citizens according to a prescribed ideological formula. It implicitly represents psychic violence and terror. It functions as a recipe to bring up 'desirable, docile, and better' citizens who are loyal to the state. The manual symbolizes a totalitarian government striving to exert control over citizens' life choices from birth (Head, 2007). As a symbol of a controlling political context, the Manual can be seen as a reflection of the prevailing ideology and dominant thoughts (systemic violence) of the time. Here are some exaples from the Manual:

> … and for those parents who have been misguided for many years by the insipid self-appointed childcare experts (p.8); Funding public transportation in the minds of both the government and the people has been connected with the rejection of individual freedom (p.8); Make it clear to him that it is time to leave for school, for Daddy to go to work, for Mummy to take care of her responsibilities (p.25).

Such examples show the omnipresence of systemic violence in a strict socio-political setting. Throughout the novel, McEwan examines how far the authorized government may perpetrate violence against families through the publication of the Childcare Handbook. McEwan attempts to reveal the emotional turbulences beneath a well-organized social appearance (Head, 2002). The more one reads the Manual, the more controlling the government appears. Here are more examples:

> "It is true that the more a father is engaged in the routine work of child care, the less authority he will have" (p.45); "Like our forefathers, from love and respect to family we get our sincere fidelity to the country" (p.62). "Those who cannot have enough sovereignty over their children should think about the regular use of warnings and rewards" (p.109); "Writers of The Childcare Manual emotionally overlooked the fact that children are selfish, and it is natural since they are encoded for survival" (p.137); "There is a similarity between childhood and disease, the condition which is a physically and mentally harming emotions, opinions and reason, and the gradual recovery from which is to grow up" (p.157).

For Lacan one way to tell the truth without being implicated in structural violence and censorship is to fabricate falsehood; telling stories and speaking metaphorically can lead to speaking the truth (Parker, 2004). One of Žižek's favorite ways to do counter-violence against the systemic violence is to tell jokes. Žižek holds that one can achieve the desired intention by initiating with a denial and articulating the truth, and by intentionally incorporating oneself into it. In psychoanalysis, Humor exemplified through jokes, serves as a venue for the safe articulation of truths otherwise sugar-coated in playful contexts. Therefore, for Lacan, a joke shows how to reveal the truth by telling lies, making the essence of censorship more noticeable in ideology. Below is a typical Žižekian joke originating from the ex-German Democratic Republic. A German man found a job in Siberia. He knew his letters would be checked, so he told his friends a secret: blue ink means truth, red ink means lies. After a month, his friends got a letter in blue ink. It said life in Siberia was great with lots of food, big houses, Western movies, and pretty girls. But, there was no red ink in the shops (Parker, 2004). One way to depict counter-violence is avoidance and negation. Identifying the Manual with the Grand Narratives, McEwan ironically and covertly depicts the "decline of legitimating power of the grand narratives" (Lyotard, 1984, p. 38), likewise, the Manual. Thus, McEwan emphasizes the stupidity of such authorized recommendations. The avoidance of the Authorized Manual is an example of counter-violence.

Two years before this event in the narrative, Kate had gone missing while accompanying her father to the supermarket checkout counter. At a momentary lapse of Stephen's attention, he realized Kate was no longer by his side. The search for the missing child significantly affects the moral compass of the main characters. A prominent instance of structural violence prevailing in the narrative is in tandem with the publication of The Childcare Manual. The Manual treats parents as mere pawns, instructing them how to rear their offspring. It symbolizes a totalitarian regime, seeking greater control over the life choices of its citizens, aimed at cultivating a populace that is aligned with conformity (Head, 2007). The Manual can be seen as the embodiment of the ruling class ideology (systemic violence) in a dictatorial government. McEwan employs "The Authorized Childcare Handbook" in "The Child in Time" to satirize unjust government interference and structural violence in child-rearing. For instance, the handbook underscores the conventional parallelism between childhood and

ailment, framing childhood as a "physically and mentally disabling condition" that erodes emotions, perceptions, and reasoning, necessitating a gradual and challenging convalescence known as maturation (McEwan, 1987, p. 157).

The Childcare Manual may reproduce systemic violence by representing a regulated perspective for cultivating a compliant progeny. The outcome would manifest as various forms of subjective violence inflicted on the population in general, and children in particular. In this way, the government encourages "interpassivity", a concept coined by Žižek and Robert Pfaller. Interpassive works are self-fulfilling, that is, one enjoys through them or delegates enjoyment, activity, and belief to others. It can be understood as passive resistance, which is a sort of distress call of modernity. Lacan posits that in Greek tragedy, the "Chorus" emotionally resonates with the audience's sentiments. Žižek suggests that its contemporary equivalent is the "canned laughter" employed in comedic scenes. Žižek describes this phenomenon as the "objective status of belief", in which the object believes, feels, and laughs on behalf of the subject, leaving the subject internally free from responsibility (Pfaller, 26).

Passivity is one of the outstanding aspects of Stephen's personality, so much so that his tennis trainer impugns him: "You're passive… You wait for things to happen…You take no responsibility" (Child, p. 175). Stephen's unresisting concurrence to reality represents his submission to the existing issues, indicative of his passivity and subjectivity (Delrez, 1995). Thus, a dominant ideology encourages people to be passive toward the ruling power striving to marginalize the opposing discourses and prevent them from undermining the dominant power (Yazgi, 2022). Systemic and symbolic violence that can lead to subjective and visible violence runs throughout the novel. Some examples are The Childcare Manual for parents, privatization, and the Beggars Act. Marx and Engels regard revolutionary violence as incidental and justify violence when the need arises. This has been exemplified during the growing proletariat class consciousness to eliminate social injustice (Finlay, 2006). Žižek refers to such violence as redemptive violence that during the revolution the oppressed are transformed into active agents to emancipate themselves (Finlay, 2006). He repeatedly uses the universality of violence; however, by 'violence', he does not intend to justify the violent actions perpetrated by street gangs. Instead, he suggests an eruption to oppose deep-rooted ideological predicaments (Vighis & Feldner, 2007). Here are more excerpts of the novel foreshowing imminent revolutionary violence:

The police are armed. Stephen appreciates "the smell of oil and leather of their polished gun holsters" (p.17). Education is "an unpleasant, withered profession; schools are up for sale to private sectors, and the leaving age will soon be lowered" (p.26). "Ambulance companies are private businesses "(p.194). "The southern English countryside has been turned into a vast conifer plantation so that Britain may be independent in wood" (pp.115-119), and the Government has funded a silly all-day television channel "focusing on game and chat shows, commercials and phone-ins" (p.143). "Only one newspaper does not support the government that has been in power for so many years" (p.211).

A particular type of violence identified in the novel is referred to as 'emotional violence' or 'invisible violence.' Emotional violence occurs between close partners and is regarded as an invisible reason behind some faulty relationships. Some harmful effects of emotional abuse include "depression, lack of motivation, confusion, difficulty concentrating and making decisions, low self-esteem, feelings of failure or worthlessness, feelings of hopelessness, self-blame, and self-destruction" (Engel, 2023, p. 7). Other acts that can be considered emotional violence are "name-calling, ridicule, reproach, abuse, criticism, and jealousy, which can be used to gain power and control over another person" (p.10). Although acts of physical violence that are observable tend to be more readily recognized by individuals and establishments, there is substantial proof indicating that the consequences of emotional or psychological harm are typically far more profound and "have lasting effects on the person" (p.12).

In "The Child in Time", Julie, unable to forgive her husband for the incident, decides to leave him. Julie's leaving Stephen can be seen as an obvious example of emotional violence (Abbasiyannejad & Pourgiv, 2017). Another example of emotional violence is the publication of the State Child Care Handbook and the passing of certain laws in Parliament that exert psychological and emotional violence on people. The Manual, representing both symbolic and emotional violence, as a tool of the government, was designed to exert total control over child rearing and the children themselves. The satirical use of the term "expert" in the Manual is fascinating. For example, it suggests, "To ensure that children adhere to bedtime, offer them chocolate as a reward because incentives form the basis of economic structures and morality" (McEwan, 2011, p. 109).

To escape the violence, Stephen and his friend Charles regularly retreat to their childhood. McEwan presents childhood as timeless freedom with fragility. Such a fragile state is depicted in Kate's seizure and through the Handbook (Roger, 2002). Everyone has some kind of suffered childhood, hauling this suffering into adulthood as an inner child. It

remains hidden on the grounds of protection, concealment, or ignoring childhood and its memories. The child in us needs to be controlled, otherwise it will cause innumerable problems. One needs to create a balance between the world of adulthood and the world of childhood. The important thing is how to create a balance between these two opposing worlds. For example, Stephen and Charles strive to come to terms with their childhood and react differently. Stephen recovers, but Charles cannot recover and eventually dies. Charles's political career ends unexpectedly with the scandal about The Authorized Childcare Handbook. Then he moves to a village and dresses like a small schoolboy and later dies of hyperthermia in his tree-house. McEwan's novels depict that trauma changes the victim's perception of self, reality, and time (Ayyilmaz, 2022). Stephen was able to overcome the post-traumatic perception of the self and time but Charles could not because Charles gets stuck in his traumatic childhood and is overwhelmed by his traumatic past. Trauma or emotional shock is the result of an overwhelming event that comes unexpectedly and exceeds the person's ability to cope with it at the conscious level (Ayyilmaz, 2022). Since one feature of trauma is recurrence and the traumatized person lives in a state of desperation and meaninglessness, Charles was unable to control his traumatic repetition and could not retrieve his active role in the world order but Stephen was. Stephen fantasizes that Kate is continuing her life somewhere else. He thinks of her "playing in a school garden" (McEwan, 2011, p. 126). Finally, the birth of a new child strengthens his regaining his normal state. Another cause of his return to normality is the healing power of literature on the traumatized individual. Stephen overcomes his trauma by writing novels for children and getting rid of being trapped in a traumatic condition (Ayyilmaz, 2022).

Another controversy associated with the authoritarian regime is the Beggars' Act, a law intended to control street beggars, but which ironically causes more violence than it alleviates their plight. The novel portrays London as a city characterized by abject poverty. The streets are so overcrowded with beggars that it is deemed necessary to control them. Near Parliament Square, Stephen meets a young girl among the beggars whose face brings back memories of his missing daughter. At the beginning of the novel, she can be seen picking up "a still glistening lump of chewing gum" (McEwan, 2011, p. 9) from the sidewalk and beginning to chew. Later, Stephen sees her again, but this time she is lying lifeless in a train station. He tries to cover her with his coat, but when he touches her face, he realizes that she has succumbed to the cold. "Stephen spread his coat over the girl and touched her hand. It was as cold as the surrounding air" (McEwan, 2011, p. 169). Through such poignant scenes, McEwan reveals the harsh reality of poverty. The girl's short and tragic life underlines the hollowness of the government's claims about the welfare of children. This incident represents the structural violence of the ruling class against the marginalized. Žižek blames such incidents on structural violence; he holds that objective violence sits at the background of awareness of everyday life and is anonymous and more difficult to recognize. Žižek condemns capitalism and modern liberalism that they just verbally condemn violence but they practically do nothing (2008).

McEwan more often tries to uncover the harsh reality of society as he often holds that it's not the comforting and agreeable aspects of life that compel him to write fiction, but rather the unsettling and distressing ones (Ricks, 2010). He also states, "Our society is violent, and writers are obliged to reflect this. The important thing is not what is described" but the underlying reasons and motivations for the description. (Casademont, 2010, p. 56). Since McEwan has a strong awareness of politics and history under the influence of his family and the social conditions, literary creation has become his weapon to reevaluate and criticize history and reality. What appeals to McEwan is "how a violent incentive develops inside us" (Casademont, 2010, p. 56).

Violence in "Black Dogs"

"Black Dogs" is a story based on memories. It moves between numerous settings such as an English nursing home, Southern France, Poland, and Berlin in November 1989 during the Berlin Wall demolition. Within a series of family discussions, the novel deals with the conflict between science and mysticism, wisdom and magic, violence, love, and civilization. McEwan believes history can be represented in fiction; therefore, "Black Dogs" employing frequent family debates points out the violent events of the late twentieth century in the history of Europe such as the aftermath of World War II, death camps of Germany in the 1940s, the collapse of Soviet Communism, and the historical moment of the destruction of Berlin Wall in 1989. As such, McEwan in "Black Dogs" represents the collapsing civilization of the present time.

Many of McEwan's other novels are written in the third person, but in "Black Dogs" the events are perceived in the eyes of a young narrator named, "Jeremy" who lost his parents in his childhood; he confesses his attraction toward other people's parents. The events are not represented chronologically. Instead, it revolves around a crucial event in 1946 when June and Bernard were on their honeymoon in a village in France. In the novel, a narrative unfolds with June walking alongside Bernard near the village one day and coming across two wild black dogs. According to rumor, these dogs were used by the Nazis during the war to terrorize prisoners.

The central argument in "Black Dogs" encapsulates McEwan's overarching theme across his works—the issue of whether we are anchored to our past or estranged from it. The novel delves into the cruel nature of our world, consistently engaging with the subject of violence through various contexts. For instance, Jeremy confronts different forms of violence, such as the violence between his sister and her husband, as well as the violent encounter with Skinheads in Berlin. Jeremy perceives violence as something intertwined with larger socio-political circumstances that seep into his sphere of experience. The metaphor of black dogs in the novel can be interpreted as a representation of the hidden violence and hostility embedded within human nature, leading to numerous cruel historical events, including World War II and concentration camps. The innate evil within humans (objective violence) manifests as external violence, destruction, cruelty, and murder (subjective violence).

Miraculously, June managed to escape the dogs, but the encounter had an indelible impact on the rest of her life. McEwan uses the dogs to symbolize the potential for corruption, deviance, and violence in contemporary Europe. Jeremy, during the story, first listens to June's story about her relationship with Bernard and then listens to Bernard's story on the same topic before pondering the two versions. Jeremy serves as an intermediary between this estranged pair. Bernard and June shared a deep love for each other, but following a tragic incident, their relationship deteriorated to the point of intolerance. In the aftermath of the incident, June underwent a transformative process of self-reflection and introspection, realizing that their happiness as a couple was no longer possible. Further, she became convinced that societal evils are a product of the inherent evil in individuals, "the evil I'm talking about lives in us all" (McEwan, 1992, p. 122). For that reason, purifying oneself is essential to eradicate evil from society. Violence is a prevalent aspect of our world, and understandably, this theme is present in the novel. Jeremy's confrontation with various violent scenes such as violence between his sister and her husband or the violent attack by the Skinheads in Berlin are some instances to cite here. Jeremy believes violence is related to macro socio-political contexts and it invades our private world, "in his youth, in her sister's life, in Berlin, in his parents-in-law, in the French family…" (p.17,65,72). To decipher the source of evil and violence, he differentiates between good and evil, and criminal and innocent. This can be illustrated by his niece Sally, who is victimized by parental maltreatment, then endures a cruel marriage, and is ultimately deemed "unfit and excessively aggressive to care for her young son who is now with adoptive parents" (p.68). Like many of McEwan's fictions, " Black Dogs" paints a rather skeptical view of human nature. Indeed, the novelist in this novel demonstrates the universality of evil and deviant wishes in humans. His characters make one think about the paradox between people's public lives and private motivations. McEwan also reveals the violence and tyranny behind apparent politeness, civility and the agony behind apparent relief. As McEwan delineates, one of his areas of interest is the gap between what people truly desire and the expectations placed on them by society. " (McEwan, 1987).

Given the Žižekian definition of the "subject" in "SOS Violence" (2008), the figures are in a sense rendered passive by the Big Other and are made subjects and by-products of discourse and ideology. The symbolic order, or rather the symbolic violence of language, transforms man into a subordinate and decentered subject. Violence with its various forms is evident everywhere: in Jeremy's youth; in the sadomasochistic relationship he witnessed between his sister and her husband; his niece Sally is a victim of parental abuse and later a violent marriage; or the violence during Jeremy and Bernard's visit to the Berlin Wall in which neo-Nazis skinheads attack on the red-flag waver; the unbelievable violence of Majdanek; the extreme cruelty of the French father towards his child and Jeremy's reaction to it; the monstrous black dogs. Jeremy's disbelief in the existing value system is a sign of the current generation's disillusionment with the status quo. The ideologies such as Fascism and Communism impose their own forms of violence. The encounter with violence awakens the moral responsibilities of characters and forces them to take a stand. This is why the characters use counter-violence to escape subjugation and conformity to the Other. By depicting this violence, Jeremy hints that in the future both forms of violence, subjective and structural, are evident (Wood, 2007). The subjective violence manifests at the individual level, particularly in the context of family dynamics. For instance, Harper, Jeremy's brother-in-law, is depicted as a profoundly violent individual who periodically disrupts familial harmony.

It's intriguing to observe how the protagonist's moral perspective evolves throughout the novel. Initially, Jeremy lacks the courage and moral attitude necessary to defend the weak. He witnesses a violent attack on a flag-waver in Berlin, yet refrains from intervening and even blames the victim for the attack. However, as the story progresses, he begins to develop a sense of moral responsibility and courage. He stands up for victims and takes action against a Frenchman who is being violent towards his son. It is indeed a powerful illustration of personal growth and the capacity for change. It underscores the importance of learning, empathy, and taking action. It is an example of counter-violence.

McEwan suggests that to address historical violence and oppression, one must substitute inaction and indifference with courage, responsibility, and action. Such a shift is apparent in Jeremy's reaction to the French father at the end of the novel. In the novel, Jeremy's humanitarian feelings are awakened when he witnesses a father being tyrannical toward his child. He can no longer tolerate such behavior and takes ethical action to defend the oppressed. In this instance, he employs counter-violence to protect the victim, empathizes with the little boy, and identifies himself with the oppressed Other. It's a powerful demonstration of how an innate sense of justice can drive one to take action against oppression and violence, even if it means using force to protect the vulnerable. The boy's cry for help is symbolic of the world's misery (McEwan, 1992).

CONCLUSION

This study focused on different types of violence (subjective and objective) in which the main characters of the selected novels are involved. The relationship between history and culture (discourse) plays an important role in McEwan's work. As Hutcheon (2004) argues, history and fiction in Postmodernity are cultural and ideological constitutions and therefore inescapable. The characters in the selected novels grapple with various socio-historical clashes in their lives in such a way that these encounters make them feel desperate and unable to solve their problems. Violence is portrayed in its entirety in McEwan's selected novels, i.e. neither good nor bad; its justification depends on its contextual framework. Some critics see the novel "The Child in Time" as a turning point in McEwan's writing career, a shift from the earlier works of "shock literature" into more social literature (Slay, 1991, p. 10). Other critics believe that there is an "ethical turning point in McEwan's writing career" (Schemberg, 2004, p. 28). The novel narrates a child's sudden disappearance, compounded by the suffering and violence the parents must tolerate to accept a life without their daughter and continue with their despair. In Ian McEwan's "The Child in Time", the narrative elucidates a considerable degree of symbolic and systemic violence, predominantly manifested through the linguistic instrumentality of The Childcare Manual. This Manual, or better to say this symbolic violence, delineates the precise methodologies of child-rearing that the governing body seeks to endorse, to foster a sense of interpassivity and complacency within the populace. Conversely, the eruption of subjective physical violence by the beggars in public spaces can be interpreted as a reactionary counter-violence to the government's imposed structural violence. This juxtaposition serves to highlight the tension between individual agency and systemic control.

The novel "Black Dogs" explores the concept of saving humanity from inherent evil and violence, which is rooted in human nature and leads to power struggles. The solution proposed is love, sympathy, and responsibility towards all humans, regardless of social position or nationality. Here, the main instrument of surveillance over the populace is implemented through language as domineering political discourse. The book focuses on the socio-historical impacts of World War II in Europe and the socio-political issues that led to subjective violence. Characters are portrayed as victims of the dominant ideology (or the "Big Other") which is expressed through signifiers, discourse, and law (Tavin, 2010).

Over time, subjects resist this by implementing especially symbolic counter-violence against the "master code". Žižek argues that violation is central to the establishment of law and that inherent violence exists in the power relations of global capitalism. However, revolutionary violence can liberate one from the effects of law and the unconscious superego order (Wood, 2012; Žižek, 2013). Žižek views revolutionary violence as divine violence, a form of violence that disrupts the existing law (Linden, 2012; Sharpe, 2010). An example of such subjective violence against the government's structural violence is June's rejection of the communist party in "Black Dogs". The findings of this study provided new perspectives in comprehending the presence of violence, interpassivity, and the justification of counter-violence in literary works. The findings suggest that beyond overt subjective violence lies a spectrum of underlying covert objective violence that influences such actions. According to McEwan, the origin of physical violence is rooted elsewhere, prompting an inquiry into the reasons behind its existence, the rationale for employing counter-violence, and strategies to mitigate violence altogether. The depiction of violence in the analyzed works is portrayed as neither inherently negative nor positive; instead, it emphasizes that the perception of violence and counter-violence is shaped and evaluated within the confines of socio-political and economic frameworks.

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