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on Briony's entire life, and she feels that her atonement can't be gained, but in her heart she knows that her attempts might be the first step toward salvation. She tries her best to gain internal atonement first and makes a compromise with herself first before anyone else.

8. Dominic Head, p.156.
11. Ibid, 10.
15. Ibid.
An intricate story, the entire narrative itself proves to be the central character’s attempt at finding atonement and regaining some semblance of harmony before her death: Briony’s/McEwan’s title word comes from the Middle English ‘atonement’ and signals her desire to regain peace by atoning for her false accusation of Robbie.\(^{17}\)

As mentioned previously, the title is closely related to the events, structure and style of the novel, which leads the reader into a dark tunnel, unable to perceive the right path for their fair judgment about the incidents of the novel. In the end only, the readers are able to grasp the dominant voice of the novel.

The novel may focus readers’ attention on the crime of its narrator, Briony, who as a child falsely accuses her sister’s lover of being her cousin’s rapist, but McEwan thinks that unbending social tendencies, including sexual hypocrisy and class partiality, have made Briony’s accusation almost unavoidable. Atonement tackles many of the concerns that McEwan has found out throughout his works: the analysis of stylish celebration; the resistance to change or atonement and the yearning to the past; and the assertion that sexual ethics and social satisfaction are rooted in and generative of the political conditions of twentieth-century Britain.\(^{18}\)

Briony leaned back against a wall and stared unseeing down the nursery’s length. 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 special moral for her wrapped in a mystery. But she knew very well that if she had not stood when she did, the scene would still have happened, for it was not about her at all. Only chance had brought her to the window. This was not a fairy tale, this was the real, the adult world in which frogs did not address princesses, and the only messages were the ones that people sent (Atonement, p. 10).

It is important to realize that McEwan’s story aims to transform both characters and readers: one comes to notice that threat extends, beyond the unconventional narrator, into the conventional world that passes for normal. The landscape of London, whose physical beauty might provide some contrast to the narrator’s moral blight, in fact, seems to resemble it. The sense of ending prevails
and this association can be seen obviously in Briony’s case. Through her work onward, she almost has surrendered and dissolved her entire will to her workmate sister Drummond, and allowing her real thoughts to be directed approximately entirely by fear of this person’s disapproval.\(^{15}\)

Throughout the novel, the moral crisis is not only confined to Briony in her conduct toward her household and the ordeal she has instigated in that house. The loss of morality is extended into the milieu of the novel itself, on one side, the case of war and the consequences of that brutal war on people. On the other side, the immorality of the politicians who would turn up blind eye to the atrocities of war,

_They passed the walking wounded who could go no further. They sat like beggars at the side of the road, calling out for help, or for a mouthful of water. Others just lay by the ditch, unconscious, or lost in hopelessness. Surely there would be ambulances coming up from the defense perimeter, making regular runs to the beach. If there was time to whitewash rocks, there must be time to organize that. There was no water. They had finished the wine and now their thirst was all the greater. They carried no medicines. What were they expected to do? Carry a dozen men on their backs when they could barely walk themselves? (Atonement, 59)_

These are some real images and experiences of war that McEwan heard from his father who participated in Dunkirk part, and memorized in most of his other novels. For example, in his novel Saturday (2005), McEwan expresses his misgivings about the real motives of war on Iraq, and through his protagonist, Henry Perowne, he inquires about the reliability of these reasons of the invasion of Iraq. McEwan has brought to surface the theme of war in his novel in order to show how things that are in our control that may be taken out of hand, can lead to consequences that are not in our control.\(^{16}\)

If the novel is investigated deeply, it is found out that Briony, the budding writer in the beginning of the novel, is different from Briony in the middle and the end of it. The sense of loss and guilt dominates her life after her erroneous judgment. Peter Childs comments on this view:
Briony’s, “cynical attempt to win forgiveness for what could never be forgiven” (Atonement, 45), but still she has to search for forgiveness and salvation for the crime she committed. The narrator tells the story from different angles; she evaluates other characters’ thoughts and reactions depending upon her own knowledge of their persona. In retelling the story, it is clear that the narrator has the tendency to make up a story, or rather avoid facing the truth, to improve her novel. Briony’s confession about her atonement was not entirely truthful, and made the reader raised a question about the reliability of the narrator. The picture becomes more vivid when the details of Briony’s moral transformation are examined. (13)

She undergoes bitter and clashing feelings of shame and isolation from society, the sinner’s internal feelings of the related moral society’s adverse reaction and the partial collapse of relationships with the surrounding people. Within five years of her ongoing agony, Briony initiated a training as a ward nurse. At this point she has realized how intensely she victimized Robbie and Cecilia. Shame and disgrace hovered over her life associated with a kind of self-hatred where she described herself as “weak, stupid, confused, cowardly, evasive” (Atonement, 82). Definitely, she has looked for her lost self-confidence in her ability but there is no enough power in her soul to regain her natural balance. She has abandoned the dearest dream of her childhood, and the major project and sustaining practical vision in her life, that is to become a writer. (14)

Briony has internalized and bear the trauma of her victims’ judgment, which placed her in a state of deep moral confusion, and this has dramatic consequences for her sense of realizing her real pure identity. This is how she describes her new life on the ward:

This was her student life now, these four years, this enveloping regime, and she had no will, no freedom to leave. She was abandoning herself to a life of strictures, rules, obedience, housework, and a constant fear of disapproval. She was one of a batch of probationers—there was a new intake every few months—and she had no identity beyond her badge (Atonement, 66).

It is quite obvious that the shameful experiences and the abolishing of identity are closely associated with the disabling of action
judge it, as readers do, or investigate the world in the eye of the observer rather than the writer, which is a back-breaking and unbearable childish mistake. In the coda of the novel, the reader learns that Briony is agonized within herself in an attempt to accommodate her guilt. The reader discovers that Cecilia and Robbie died leaving Briony with bitterness of her sin, which cannot be atoned in real terms. Morality and narrative are interlaced skillfully in most of McEwan’s novels, which tackled moral dilemma that facing the characters. McEwan’s concern, in part, is to create some conditions and situations which enable the characters to confront their own dangerous whims and fears as an self-centered recreation of a scene at a fountain.\textsuperscript{(11)}

\textit{But the strangeness of the here and now, of what passed between people, the ordinary people that she knew, and what power one could have over the other, and how easy it was to get everything wrong, completely wrong. Cecilia had climbed out of the pond and was fixing her skirt, and with difficulty pulling her blouse on over her wet skin. She turned abruptly and picked up from the deep shade of the fountain’s wall a vase of flowers Briony had not noticed before, and set off with it toward the house. No words were exchanged with Robbie, not a glance in his direction. He was now staring into the water, and then he too was striding away, no doubt satisfied, round the side of the house. Suddenly the scene was empty; the wet patch on the ground where Cecilia had got out of the pond was the only evidence that anything had happened at all. (Atonement, p. 10).}

This scene triggered the adolescent unforgiveable violation of codes of morality against Cecilia and Robbie. She dared to break her own sister because of jealousy and this incident exceeded all moral commitments toward Cecilia. She tried through her naive mind to fabricate a story that convinced no one except herself. The coda of her patience reaches its zenith when she sees Cecilia and Robbie in the library making love.

Nicholas Lezard states that, “the novel is itself the act of atonement that Briony Tallis needs to perform; yet we are very much in the land of the unreliable narrator, where evasion and mendacity both shadow and undermine the story that is told.”\textsuperscript{(12)} To atone is to seek forgiveness for one’s sins. The whole novel revolves around
McEwan constructs the moral burden in this way to setup Briony’s attempt to receive atonement through taking action. McEwan draws a map of action to be followed, which allows Briony to act, where any imaginative novelist looking for salvation will take or give her sister and Robbie a happy ending through her novel. The thought that the two separated lovers reunite at an old-fashioned “cottage in Wiltshire” (Atonement, 194) increases the chances of happy reunification, and the pleasure of a life that Briony could provide to Cecilia and Robbie in reality when she could only tell the truth but now this chance is only applicable through her novel. Dominic Head refers to this idea when she says that “the theme of guilt and atonement is inextricably linked to an investigation of the writer’s authority, a process of self-critique conducted through the creation of the writing persona Briony Tallis”.

McEwan engineers the structure of the novel by including various notions, concepts and philosophies, but what is obvious here is the notion of breaking ethical and moral standards by Briony and how she attempts to weld the fracture. In this respect, David K. O’Hara refers to “the strategy Briony uses to quench blazing fire of guilt, shame and moral thirstiness through enlisting herself into nursing to feel the moral responsibility towards others, especially the injured ones.” On the same point, Daniela Pitt refers to the moral dilemma:

*The protagonists in the novel evolves an awareness of the fragility of happiness and a greater acknowledgement of moral responsibility. The humanistic recognition that moral values are founded not only on human nature but also on human experience becomes the character’s means of coping with trauma and violence. The coda of Atonement reflects that the protagonist’s greater empathy can result in a meaningful existence even if that existence is short-lived, as in the case with Briony who is a victim of vascular dementia.*

McEwan attempts to consider some apprehensions that humanism and liberalism undergo in the present-day such as the challenges of existence in a fluctuating world, the ability to constitute a balance between moral responsibility and individual freedom. The author as any reader, he analyzes Briony’s behaviour whether to
Briony is haunted by the moral commitment and responsibility that she violated against the closest person to her, and at the same time, this grave deed transforms her more discreet woman seeking redemption for her moral crisis. She wonders, “how guilt refined the methods of self-torture, threading the beads of detail into an eternal loop, a rosary to be fingered for a lifetime” (Atonement, 43).

The consequence of her guilt is that she undergoes a self-torture that accompanies along her life. The sense of guilt is circular and cannot be ended like the rosary, “to be fingered for a lifetime.” Atonement is a novel within a novel in a certain frametale especially if it is known that Briony herself is the author who tried to have authority over people as she did in her fictional world. Based on this, Briony becomes a Prometheus-like figure who has to suffer the bitterness of several misdeeds, the first is that her role as a character, which turns the events crucially in the novel and to be the source of misery for others, the second thing is that she is the controlling voice in the novel in the sense that she views the incidents from her perspective only and tries to arrange things according to her immature mentality. The third thing is that she could not find any possible way for forgiveness only through writing the novel, in which “a world could be made in five pages” (Atonement, 3).

Briony’s sense of guilt toward her sister never leaves any opportunity of compromise. Briony’s second attempt for forgiveness is described by McEwan through the details of Cecilia’s room, which is used in the third part of her novel. McEwan succeeds to employ this lost opportunity to describe how Briony’s feelings and sense of guilt draw that image. The walls were papered with a design of pale vertical strips, like a boy’s pajamas, which heightened the sense of confinement. The lino was irregular offcuts from downstairs, and in places, gray floorboards showed. (Atonement, 81)

The sentence of imprisonment does not only mean Robbie’s real jail, but it is also the judgment Briony has issued on her sister and herself because she has made the cage that separated Cecilia from the man she wants and that separated Briony from her sister, Cecilia and her family’s old friend, Robbie. So She issued a sentence and implements it by herself.
Briony’s immediate feeling was one of relief that the boys were safe. But as she looked at Robbie waiting calmly, she experienced a flash of outrage. Did he believe he could conceal his crime behind an apparent kindness, behind this show of being the good shepherd? This was surely a cynical attempt to win forgiveness for what could never be forgiven. She was confirmed again in her view that evil was complicated and misleading. (Atonement, 45)

On one night, Tallis family hosted their young cousins at their estate, but the guests got lost outside the estate for hours. One of those young girls was raped by Tallis’s house guests. Briony, based on the last scene she saw between Robbie and Cecilia, and pushed by her mixed and unreliable emotions, she claims, mistakenly, that she sees Robbie rapes the girl. According to the testimony that Briony presented in the court against Robbie, and due to her clashing feelings, Robbie spent, unjustly, several years in a jail. He agreed to enlist in the army in France during the 2nd world war in return for his freedom. Long period of time spent, Briony attempts to atone her deed against her sister and Robbie. She tries several times to contact her sister, but all her endeavours are in vain. (4)

In the second part, we have some bleak events of the retreat of British forces to Dunkirk in the second world war in France. This section portrays Robbie in his suffering and the agony of Briony’s immature speculations that led to waste his life, in addition to the separation from Cecila. While part three reveals that Briony has been trained as a nurse to treat the injured soldiers and minimise their sufferings. The end of this part witnesses the meeting of Cecilia and Robbie, and how they become victims of suspicion in a reference to the corruption of the judicial system at that time. The fourth and final part conveys the readers to the twentieth century. Briony remembers the preceding decades when she returned to celebrate her seventy-seventh birthday in the Tallis house. To honour her, her family acted her ambitious melodrama The Trials of Arabella. The play challenges the time that changes everything except her memories. But it gives the readers the insight of Briony’s thinking, and what she wants to prove for others. Those changes are at the heart of the narrative. (5)
Keywords: Briony, metafiction, atonement and guilt.

Due to Briony's blind mistakes and misjudgments, she suffered a nightmarish life, which makes her seek for forgiveness but she never gets it. The sense of guilt that is associated with jealousy paved the way to her biggest accusation of Robbie. The moral dilemma is quiet clear in the title of the novel itself where the reader can grasp a mixture of peculiar senses in the title of the novel itself. The word 'atonement', is a biblical word, which indicates that someone has committed a sin or mistake and needs forgiveness.\(^1\)

Atonement (2001) is a work, which has a unique metafictional dimension that gives the whole novel a different interpretation. The reader can’t find a landmark to guide him in this work, only in the last part of the book when the reader discovers that the story is narrated by a fictional old author, Briony Tallis, “she was one of those children possessed by a desire to have the world just so,”\(^2\) who appears in the first two parts as one of the characters of the story.\(^3\)

In Atonement, Briony Tallis who passes through that moral ordeal is a young girl who, “was hardly to know it then, but this was the project’s highest point of fulfillment. Nothing came near it for satisfaction, all else was dreams and frustration” (Atonement, 3).

The novel is divided into four parts happen in different periods of time, and each period has its different kind of interpretation and understanding of the characters themselves or realization of their true identities. England of the year 1935 is the place of the first part of the novel where the Tallis family lives at the rural house, which is the cradle of budding love between Briony’s sister Cecilia and Robbie, the son of a poor cleaning woman where they live with them at the same estate. Briony’s curiosity and naivety misapprehends this kind of romantic relationship as a sexual assault on the part of Robbie, and she attempts, for vague and various motives, to convince herself that Robbie is a rapist,
ملخص البحث

تعد رواية أيان مكوين (التكفير) 2001 عملا لما وراء السرد بكل معنى الكلمة فهي تعنى بدراسة غموض الابداع و اخلاقيات الادب. فالرواية تحاول سبر اغوار روح الفنان. فهناك حرب بين الإبداع و الاخلاقيات في هذه الرواية المثيرة للاهتمام. تشير كلمة (التكفير) الى وجود جريمة و هذه الجريمة ارتكبت بحق الحياة و الاخلاقيات. و نتائج هذه الحرب سواء كانت شخصية و سياسية يمكن الاحساس بها في هذه البانوراما. فالرواية هي دراسة لما قبل و بعد.

حاول مكوين الغوص عميقا في روح الشخصيات لنقل مشاهد سريعة لردودهم و استجاباتهم لمختلف المسائل و خاصة الالتزام الاخلاقي و هي ما يركز عليه هذا البحث. ان الحدث ذو الاهمية البالغة في حياة الفتاة التي وصلت الى عالم البلوغ هو رؤيتها الغير مقصودة لمشهد النافورة. حيث شاهدت برايوني اختها تقيم علاقة مع روبي تيرنر. حاولت برايوني تفسير هذا الحدث طبقا لما تعرفه عن بنية العالم السردي للقصص الخيالية باعتباره عرضة للزواج.

يركز هذا البحث على البعد الاخلاقي للرواية و الاحساس بالذنب الذي شعرت به برايوني و مساعيها للتكرير عن أكبر ذنوبها تجاه اختها سيسليا و روبي، ابن المنظف في قصر تاليس. ندرك في نهاية الرواية أن الرواي هو كاتب الرواية و ليس الكاتب الحقيقي. قامت برايوني بكتابة عملها (محاكمات ارابيلا) كاحدي الطرق للتكرير عن نفسها و الخلاص من افضع ذنوبها تجاه اختها.
Abstract

Ian McEwan's Atonement (2001) is a metafictional work in the best sense; a study of the mystery of creativity and the morality of literature, it grasps the psyche of the artist. Morality is at war in this stimulating novel.

The word "atonement" refers to a crime, and a crime is committed against life and its moralities. The catastrophic consequences, both personal and political, are felt throughout this historical chronicles. The novel is a turning of the pages of before and after, and of crime and punishment. McEwan attempts to dive deep in the psyche of the characters to take snap shots of their reaction and response towards different issues, mainly the moral commitment, the focus of the paper.

The most crucial incident in the girl’s realizing maturity is, however, her unintentional observing of the scene by the fountain.

Briony sees the affair taking place between her sister and Robbie Turner. She tries to interpret it according to the structures she knows from the fictional world of the fairytale stories, as a proposal of marriage. This paper focuses on the moral dimension of the novel, and the sense of guilt which is felt by Briony, and her attempts to atone her biggest guilt against her sister Cecilia and Robbie, the son of the cleaner in Tallis house.

In the end of the novel, we realize that the narrator is the author of the novel rather than the real author, and writing The Trials of Arabella is one of the ways that Briony uses to atone herself and to get salvation of her nightmarish guilt, which she causes for her sister.
THE MORAL CRISIS IN IAN MCEWAN’S ATONEMENT

أخلاقيات الأزمة
في رواية أيان مكوين (التكفير)

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Thanks be to the Creator of the Universe and peace be upon the most eloquent, Abialqassim Mohammed and his immaculate posterity; the concatenation of his pure career.

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In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Allah will Raise up to suitable ranks And degrees, those of you Who believe and who have Been granted knowledge And Allah is well acquainted With all ye do.
