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MASCULINE CRISIS IN IAN MCEWAN'S *THE CHILD IN TIME*

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ABSTRACT

Crisis becomes an inescapable entity in masculinity of men. Crucial events all through the centuries such as feminism, the world wars, economical problems, etc led men toward crisis, so a man in postmodern era is in danger and must do a lot in order to protect his masculinity. Ian McEwan's works are mostly devoted to men who try to find their places in postmodern world. This paper intends to utilize one of his novels *The Child in Time* and applies masculine crisis on the male protagonist of the novel. He has lost his daughter two years ago in the supermarket which is the turning point of his life and threatens his power and authority as a father. Another factor which pushes him more into crisis is womb envy. He needs to be father once more, so he needs a woman and more clearly he needs a womb. He tries to remain father by keeping Kate alive in his mind and continuously looking for her. Stephen Lewistries to recapture his power and deal with his womb envy all through the novel. The researcher discusses the masculine crisis in this novel by using Judith Butler's theory of gender and other critics on masculinity and womb envy.

Key words: gender; masculinity; masculine crisis; power; womb envy

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INTRODUCTION

The term 'crisis' has become prevalent in the field of masculine studies and is not just a contemporary experience of men, but it has been with men as long as masculinity has existed. As masculinity is a gender identity, it is wise to discuss gender first. M. H. Abrahams gives a definition for gender criticism:

Like the gender studies of which it is a part, is based on the premise that, while sex (a person's identification as male or female) is determined by anatomy, gender (masculine or feminine in personality traits and behavior) can be largely independent of anatomy, and is a social construction that is diverse, variable, and dependent on historical circumstances. ... The distinguishing attribute of gender studies has come to be their special attention to the roles of males, and of conceptions of masculinity, in the course of social, political, and artistic history. (113)

Judith Butler also thinks that gender is different from sex and she says in her *Gender Trouble* that, "gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. The unity of the subject is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex" (8). In addition Butler mentions gender as a performative entity:

In this sense, *gender* is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. (34) She explains that, "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible" (193). As a matter of fact, masculinity as a gender identity is not a biological entity, but a constructed one, so it is not fixed. Kimmel and Aronson in *Men and Masculinities* discuss that, "Although we experience gender to be an internal facet of identity, the concept of masculinity is produced within the institutions of society and through our daily interactions." (503) Therefore, masculine gender can go under crisis and this crisis heightened toward the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of twenty first century.

There are some turning points in masculine history. George L. Mosse in his *The Image of Man* writes there were certain turning points in the history which affect on men although not fundamentally: such as the fin de siècle, when women began to demand their rights and did not accept their traditional places anymore. The movement for women's right threatened masculine gender and led toward the construction of modern masculinity. (78) A new way of life, new technology, economy, etc are all the factors that has influenced masculinity. And homosexuals who wanted equal right as well were problematic for masculine men because being a homosexual gave an effeminate face to men; therefore, they could be labeled as an outsider which is not accepted for men who wants to be masculine. (83) The events and situation at the fin de siècle led to the crisis of masculinity. "The masculine ideal was in crisis at the fin de siècle even when its basic contours remained intact" (Mosse, 98). The feminist movement and Homosexuality were the anxiety of males even after the world wars. These factors caused crisis in masculinity, but crisis and masculine crisis are not just bound to these elements." Crisis is used extensively to refer to a wide range of different things; even within the tighter parameters of discussions about masculinity, the term is polymorphous" (Godfrey,11). Mosse discusses that so long as men suppressed women and dominated them and there was clear difference between the sexes, men enjoyed their power. But the time women started to want their rights and independencies, men's masculinity as the sole ruler and superior in the family and society vanished. (144)

The World Wars also had a great role in changing the way masculinity used to be. "World War I (1914-1918) changed the society, which led to a change in gender relations." (Hansen,31) Men went to war and women remained and had to cope with the problems. "The two world wars transformed the lives of both men and women" (Beynon, 13). Women in the absence of men entered into the industrial world; men returned from the war and wanted their places back and searched for jobs. Men were both traumatized by the war and they also could not find a job because of economical crisis. The year 1929 was a Great Depression for the world of work, "throughout the bleak 1930s millions of men were unemployed" (Beynon, 14). So men could not fulfill their role as a breadwinner for their families any longer. After World War II (1939-1945), people looked for a way to come out of their miseries because of the poor economy. These economical poverty and changes in the role of societies led men toward crisis. "Following World War II, men, in attempt to find a role in society, struggled with their masculinity" (Abshier,1). Feminist movements after the wars, deeply affected men and their position as masculine ones. "Men and manhood have been lifted out of a deep unconsciousness by feminism" (Horrocks, 12).

It seems that gender subjects and problems are related to women because the majority of discussions have always been on women and how they have been suppressed all through history and how they have tried to change and rebuild their position in society, family, culture, and even politics. "This has meant that generally

the analysis of men and masculinities has been subordinate to the overarching themes of female oppression and female liberation" (Horrocks, 9). So looking for masculine gender may seem odd at first because it seems that masculinity has an obvious meaning and men are the ones who are in power. Todd W. Reeser in his *Masculinities in Theory* states, "Masculinity seems like an obvious thing, something we can and do take for granted. We know what it is when we see it: it is commonsensical, produced by testosterone or by nature" (1). It has been decades that women and feminists are the ones who talked about gender damaged and inequalities all over the centuries as a weaker gender and look for gender equality. "Gender equality means that males and females have equal opportunities to realize their full human potential and can contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural and political development" (Jasmani, 61). But recently having masculine gender can be harmful as well for men because both genders are active in society, politics, etc and men are not the only ruler; it is not really a promotion to have a masculine identity anymore. As a matter of fact, gender contains not only femininity but also masculinity within it: "Yet, men are gendered. Masculinity is unlikely to be an aspect of biology or nature, but popular thought sometimes believes that it is beyond question or analysis, that it is not so much dominant as 'normal'" (MacKinnon, ix). Gender study can discuss men and their trouble as well as women; this thesis focuses on masculinity and its crisis because when masculinity becomes troublesome the masculine crisis is on its way to capture men: "Masculinity is a crisis for men today - that the masculine gender is a precarious and dangerous achievement and is highly damaging to men. ... They feel abused, unrecognized by modern society. While manhood offers compensations and prizes, it can also bring with it emotional autism, emptiness and despair" (Horrocks, 1). When men are not powerful as they used to be, their masculinities go under threat. Asim Karim and Zakia Nasir use South Asian Diaspora writers who talk about sex discrimination and gender inequality in their paper "Multiculturalism and Feminist Concerns in South Asian Diaspora Novels". They mention the female protagonist who migrates to London and wanted to learn English, but her husband does not let her because he is afraid of losing power and control over her. "Her interest to learn English is rejected because language gives power and power is one thing men would never give to their women. ... explicates his insecurity and fear of losing control" (128). Men have always been in fear of losing their power and authority even men who live in western countries; therefore, men are in fear and anxiety of losing their masculinities because masculinity is equated with power and authority; the things that put men in fear of losing their masculinity lead them toward masculine crisis. "Men's anxieties about challenges to or loss of their manhood have been variably characterized as 'crises' or 'unease' in which men must deal with the 'problem' and 'contradictions' that may 'imperil' their manliness" (qtd. in Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 2).

This study displays masculine crisis in *The Child in Time* (1987) a novel by Ian McEwan. He is a British author whose writing career is divided into two stages. In the first stage he uses the stereotypical characters such as the father of the family in *The Cement Garden* (1978) who is a powerful person who commands his family whereas the mother is submissive and weak. But this way of using stereotypes are not seen in his later fictions. In his later fictions the male characters are looking for having superior positions and women mostly have positions in society. Therefore, the issue of gender exists in his works explicitly or implicitly. The path is already ready for masculine crisis in *The Child in Time* because it is after the world wars and the society, politics, ruling, education, etc are not just belong to men. Hence, men cannot prove their masculinity with being the only ones who act in society. Although this novel is much about Stephen and his thoughts, actions, and feelings, but the women are represented as the ones who have positions in society and have power. Stephen's wife, Julie, is a musician and Thelma, Stephen's friend's wife, is a professor of physics which could be a danger for masculinity of men. "McEwan's hero could be diagnosed as suffering from an onslaught of feminization, which not only emasculates him but moreover threatens to dissolve the very foundations of the self" (Lea and Schoene, 115).

In addition, it is also after the world wars and industrial revolution, so the men are more than ever in danger of crisis. Hansen mentions this situation as:

Equality between genders, and women becoming liberated, educated and financially independent, are all factors that have eliminated many of the former pre-determined male roles, such as being the

sole provider, protector and head of the family. There has been much talk of a so called 'masculinity crisis' where some men are feeling unsure, lost, depressed and emasculated by the demands of postmodern society. (3)

This masculine crisis is the afterward of the uncertainty about male's gender and their losing absolute power in the post modern era. As Arthur Brittan explains, "the presumption is that this crisis was brought about by the erosion of male power in the workplace and in the home...however, all this has changed. They have lost their sense of gender certainty, their sense of place in the world" (qtd. in Godfrey, 18).

*The Child in Time* is the third novel by Ian McEwan and a revolutionary one, because his way of writing has changed from this novel on. Weich noted: "The turning point for [him] was *The Child in Time*, when political, moral, social, comic, and other possibilities moved in" (qtd. in Koblrová, 10). McEwan in his first works uses shocking themes which are taboo such as sex, adultery, murder, etc and has been called 'Ian Macabre' because of these harsh subjects. Eileen Batters points out that, "in his third novel McEwan has shifted away from the grotesque extremes and has instead become concerned with disturbed and disturbing psychological trauma" (qtd. in Reynolds and Noakes, 72). It contains so many issues and subjects such as: childhood and adulthood and their relationship, the British future in politics and society, theory of time and law of physics, the existence of inner child in adults, trauma, family, the relationship between men and women, etc. This study applies masculine gender and the things which lead toward masculine crisis. "The novel's themes are uncontrollable life-factors and the social construction of gender" (Childs, 175). As is discussed later, sex and gender are not directly related and gender is unstable rather than fix. When a child is born as the male sex, it does not mean that he is going to have his masculinity forever; therefore, he is in danger of losing his masculinity all through his life. "This separation of 'culturally constructed' gender from 'biological' sex has been very important in terms of the effort to overturn the traditional assumption that 'biology is destiny'" (Morrison,95). This study inspects Stephen Lewis's masculinity and its crisis and the end result of this crisis within the parameters of gender studies, masculine studies, and critics of womb envy.

#### **Losing the Position of Fatherhood and Authority**

*The Child in Time* begins with Stephen Lewis's daydreaming and going backward in time to a day of abduction of his three-year-old daughter, Kate, from the supermarket two years before while they both were there on a Saturday morning. This event is the critical moment for Stephen and subverts his life. It takes everything he has, his position as a father, as a husband, and as a responsible man of the family. He fails in keeping his daughter safe and loses his power and authority, thus his masculinity goes under threat. "*The Child in Time* explores and examines the problem of male identity and changing gender statuses" (Stolarek,192). Masculine critics discuss the concepts about males and their situation through time. They agree on the field of power, virility and authority which a man needs in order to be a real man. Losing power is equated with masculine crisis. This paper starts with the male protagonist's failing to keep the possession of power.

In that specific time in the supermarket after abduction of Kate, all the men are fathers apart from whom they really are and what they wear: "There were other members of the supermarket hierarchy in brown coats, white coats, blue suits, who suddenly were no longer ware-housemen or sub-managers or company representatives, but fathers, potential or real" (McEwan, 5). By losing Kate, a big part of Stephen's masculinity has gone too. Along with failing in keeping Kate safe and losing her, Stephen loses his position as a father. This is a big damage for his masculinity and the destruction of his relationship with his wife is the other damage for it. Stephen loses his place as a father and patriarchal power. "The father has been the source of authority within the family" (Seidler, xii). He is not the head of their family anymore because there is no family anymore; Kate is gone and Julie has left Stephen. After Julie's departure, he comes to know the true nature of his loss, his loss of true maleness. The forfeiture of his position of fatherhood and his position as a husband threaten his masculinity. In this way, he needs to continue being a father as a masculine man even a father for a phantom child.

Stephen is there with Kate when she is kidnapped, so his authority goes under threat when he fails in keeping his daughter safe. As a matter of fact, he is emasculated because masculinity is equated with power

and authority. "Masculinity is very often tied to power, whether in government, the household, or the military" (Reeser, 7).

He simultaneously feels guilty about the accident. "Stephen in *The Child in Time* lives with the guilt of losing his only child and his handling of the situation afterwards" (Senekal, 102). This feeling of guilt weakens him and emasculates him, so he tries to justify himself by accusing Julie of unfaithfulness to their marriage. Stephen claims that she needs an excuse to leave Stephen, she was the one who kidnapped Kate with the help of one of her new or old lovers, and now she lives with Kate in secret. Although he knows that none of these thoughts are real, but thinking like this makes him feel better. Stephen defends himself by being a victim of the accident which proves that Julie is guilty instead of Stephen, he is not weak, and he is a real man. In order to show himself powerful and justify himself from any accusation of being weak and emasculated, Stephen tries to explain to Julie as a weak person who prefers to accept that Kate is gone rather than fight it out. "By becoming the symbol or carrier of the despised male unconscious lack and envy, the idea of woman as vulnerable and lacking allows many men to feel potent and in control" (Minsky,114). Stephen claims that he is innocent in this accident. "He had gone out searching for their daughter while she sat at home. When he had failed to find her, Julie had blamed him and left" (55). He has done whatever he could to find Kate, but Julie just sits in her house and does nothing. She is the one who is weak. "Meanwhile, to be a 'real man' has traditionally meant to adventure, colonize and progress" (Morrison 95).

Stephen acts as an active man in searching for his daughter, searching the streets, placing ads in local newspaper and offering a generous reward for information, passing enlarged photographs on bus shelters and walls, ... and at the end dealing with the symbolic and the numinous. "To be a man it is not simply enough to be: a man must do, display, prove. ... for their 'masculine' endeavours – those that incorporate a display of daring and courage. As Prime indicates, no pain, no gain" (Macdonald,103-4). But Julie goes to a monastery in order to release herself from the thought of Kate and she starts living in the country instead of staying with her husband. Stephen is active in his sorrow and keeps looking for Kate, but Julie is a passive one in confronting the disaster. The contrary use of stereotypes is seen in the novel that women are passive and men are active to empower Stephen, as the narrator says, "They went their different ways, he with his lists and daily trudging, she in her armchair, lost to deep, private grief" (8). MacKinnon declares that, "one particular understanding of masculine and feminine for Freud was as metaphors for 'active' and 'passive' respectively" (6). Before the accident, Stephen was a good husband and a good father and he was far from the traditional masculine definition. He loved his wife and his daughter. But after the accident and the departure of Julie, the situation has changed. The traditional descriptions of men and women emerge in order to recapture the power and get rid of the danger of emasculation. "The stories show male characters learning to act as traditional males to try to dominate and, indeed, abuse female figures" (Malcolm, 35). Stephen declares his hateful feelings toward women and how they fail in confronting problems. It is Julie who could not bear the burden of the sorrow anymore and leaves Stephen and this is a traditional description of femininity that they are weak and cannot manage and struggle successfully in spite of difficulties. Stephen behaves like a masculine man and never gives up on Kate. "McEwan mainly compares Stephen's desperate search for Kate with the lethargy into which Julie falls and thus demonstrates the distinctness of their grief" (Kobrlóvá, 30). A real man is the one who is powerful and can endure the pain and Stephen as a masculine man should endure the pain of losing his daughter. "This helped shape an idea that men need to prove their masculinities by showing that they can endure pain" (Seidler,5).

#### **Womb Envy**

Kate keeps on growing for Stephen, "Without the fantasy of her continued existence he was lost, time would stop. He was the father of an invisible child" (1). As a matter of fact, Stephen sees his daughter in other children and looks for five-year-old girls. He sees a beggar girl who is not five years old either, but he imagines her as her own daughter because it is essential for him. When that girl goes toward Stephen, he feels usual ambivalence. Although he knows that none of the girls are his daughter and simultaneously he has the opposing feelings toward them, but he wants to see them like they might be Kate, like he goes on being a father. "As men we have been too ready to accept a universal analysis of masculinities in terms of relationships

of power. This has been partly fostered by men adopting as their own a traditional feminist analysis of patriarchy as power" (Seidler, 31). But this imaginary creation of fatherhood is not enough and Stephen, in a real meaning, needs to be a father. For this reason, he needs Julie because Julie is a woman and she is the one who can bear a child, give birth to it, and become a mother. "For an account of his wish for a child he feels himself at a disadvantage and inferior to the mother" (Klein,172). Stephen as a man is incapable of this power and feels subordinated because men could have never possessed such ability. "For Lacan, male jealousy is about the impossibility of ever knowing or possessing the other. As discussed earlier, he argues that jealousy is related ontologically to the search for the lost object and the desire for something or someone that one can't possess" (Yates,35). Men envy women and their capacity of being a mother, thus they want to destruct it in some ways. The narrator mentions that it is mostly men who make the job of mothers easier and help them, "For three centuries, generations of experts, priests, moralists, social scientists, doctors – mostly men – had been pouring out instructions and ever-mutating facts for the benefit of mothers" (31). Men want to have the entire power but when they see that they cannot be the only power and women have something powerful that they don't, they just envy and want somehow to penetrate it and capture it or destroy it in some ways. Men always want to be superior to women. The narrator cites that, "Women simply enclosed the space which men longed to penetrate. The men's hostility was aroused" (21). The power which men have always envied of it as a Godlike job is to be capable of creating a human being.

Karen Horney is the first one who coined the word womb-envy in 1926 and explained it as male's envy toward female because she can give birth to children, but he cannot. Horney says that, "When one begins, as I did, to analyze men only after a fairly long experience of analyzing women, one receives a most surprising impression of the intensity of this envy of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood" (qtd. in Schultz, 150). It is her response to Freud's penis envy of women. Freud pays attention to the girl's penis envy and thinks it is far more significant than womb envy and even ignores it. Duane and Sydney Schultz in their *Theories of Personality* define womb envy: "The envy a male feels toward a female because she can bear children and he cannot." (150).

Rosalind Minsky in *Psychoanalysis and Gender* talks about the unconscious envy will of males toward women's capacity of creation, but this envy has been denied powerfully and presented the women's penis envy. So womb envy vanishes in patriarchal view. (96) But Horney, Klein, and other women critics oppose Freud. They think that a little boy becomes aware of his lack of creation and this womb envy is even more powerful than a girl's penis envy. "When the little boy discovers that he is not the same as his apparently powerful, creative mother, it is he who feels he is lacking rather than the girl" (Minsky,110). Both Freud and Horney think that childhood has a powerful affect on adult's personality. Men do lots of things to compensate the lack of creation. Duane and Sydney Schultz state that:

Men have such a small part to play in the act of creating new life that they must sublimate their womb envy and overcompensate for it by seeking achievement in their work. Womb envy and the resentment that accompanies it are manifested unconsciously in behaviors designed to disparage and belittle women and to reinforce their inferior status. By denying women equal rights, minimizing their opportunities to contribute to society, and downgrading their efforts to achieve, men retain their so-called natural superiority. Underlying such typical male behavior is a sense of inferiority deriving from their womb envy. (150)

All through the centuries, womb has been defined by men as a dangerous place in order to show that if they do not have it, it is because it is not safe to have it. For example: "in Greek mythology, it was imagined as inhabited by an angry dog. Early Christianity associated it with a place of sin, evil, and suffering. In modernity, it became a place of impurity, contagion, danger, and became linked with hysteria" (Silver, 410). Men always insist on their power and their higher position in contrast with women to undercut women's power of creation. "The insistence of superior power by men over women may indicate underlying feelings of inferiority and enviousness of women's womb-centered power" (Hagen,24). Men, even over the different times through myth, legend, or story, try to be like women and give birth to a child. In mythology, there are men who give birth to a child for example, Athena sprang from the head of Zeus after he had swallowed her mother. "Man's

desire to give birth to children is as old as mankind itself. As noted, the creation of Man, as described in Genesis 2, can be read as a male birth fantasy while the gods Kronos, Zeus, Prometheus, and Pygmalion are known to have conceived the fantasy into reality" (Kanz and Cmiel, 58). Men always in different ways even scientifically create theories to have this power by disempowering women. Robyn Rowland in the paper *New Productive and Pre-birth Technologies* declares:

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sperm was claimed to have carried miniscule versions of man, and woman was merely the vessel that housed the seed. The gradual consumption by male medicine of midwifery and the introduction of the harsher elements of birth, such as forceps or 'hands of iron', have evidenced man's attempts to stop himself from becoming dispensable within the procreative process. (6)

Karen Horney in her paper "Dread of Woman" talks about men's deep and powerful envy of women's capacity of creation. Melanie Klein suggests that, "boys mask and over-compensate for their womb-envy by both an over-estimation of the penis and a displacement onto the intellectual plane" (qtd. in Minsky, 100).

Stephen just like other men envies the womb and this feeling came along with his masculine crisis and his eager to have a child after losing his position as a father. "The insecurities that underpin male jealousy can be discussed in the context of recent discussions about the alleged 'crisis' of masculinity" (Yates, 1). Stephen does not bring himself to look at Julie, he sees himself in her because his childhood came to show itself in her and as Julie is a woman; she is the only one who could bear a child: Kate as a child in itself and more importantly a new child. "womb-envy is the envy man shows, implicitly or explicitly of woman's reproductive functions, especially her power to give birth and mother" (Sharma,2). Julie also undoes Stephen because of her power in bearing a child, but Stephen is going to find Kate by himself and revive a child like giving birth. "In this specific sense boys/men are not creative and have to create other things outside themselves to compete with the potent symbol and actuality of women's biological and emotional creativity" (Minsky,100). Men do not accept that they are weak and want to have the absolute power to be a masculine man. Therefore, they envy whatever women have and they do not: women's womb, women's power in giving birth, and women's Godly power of creation. Stephen wants to act as a real man and be powerful as a masculine man, so he unstopably seeks Kate.

### **Overcoming Womb Envy**

After the events of school, Stephen begins to be himself. Dreams start leaving him. He again answers the letters and starts typing. For the first time from the time of Kate's abduction, he types for two hours and writes an affectionate postcard to his wife and tells her about his feelings. All of these changes happen after he leaves the school, in spite of the fact that he finds out he is wrong about the girl who he follows as Kate. Rowland talks about this part as:

When he thinks he sees Kate playing in a schoolyard, he follows her into school and joins one of the classes (the teacher assumes he is taking part in a parental participation scheme) when Stephen leaves the class part-way through the lesson, he is performing a fantasy that has been his since childhood. In triggering his 'schoolboy dream', the moment marks an end to his depression, despite the fact that the girl he followed was not Kate. (239)

He somehow survives half, so he needs to stick to it and does not let himself turn back to his previous situation. Stephen begins to feel capable of a limited social life; he, little by little, returns to his previous self, but he is still in crisis. "He had no doubt, though, that he was still in the shadows" (65). Even after the school accident, he is in a situation of troubling that the narrative says, "The frail sanity he had established was under threat" (67). He again wants to be busy by learning difficult things such as classical Arabic and tennis, in order not to go back into masculine crisis: "The idea was to shake himself awake by learning something difficult" (64).

He also attempts to cope with his womb envy through the novel. In a *déjà vu*, the sense that something happened before, Stephen sees his mother and father while her mother was pregnant. His father does not want the baby, neither does her mother. But while Stephen himself looks at her mother's eye through the window of a bar, she decides to keep it because she thinks that those eyes belong to her unborn

child. "He was looking into the eyes of the woman, and he knew who she was. She had glanced up in his direction" (23) His father speaks about abortion and does not want the baby. Clare, Stephen's mother, describes this scene later for Stephen and she says that Douglas was in panic because he could not feel the baby, the baby was inside her not him, and she was the one who carried it. Men are not powerful in all situations but weak in some, so this weakness leads them toward masculine crisis as Clare announces that, "It was her mistake to believe that he or any man could be strong in all circumstances" (72). Weakness is something that opposes to masculine identity, so if he wants to survive as a real man, he must be strong. Putting Stephen there to convince his mother to keep the baby is one way for the narrator to run from the power of women in carrying a baby and men's weakness. Therefore, it is Stephen who impels her not to abort the baby and it was not her own decision. Then when he is in an accident, Stephen helps a driver and pulls him out of the lorry and performs a miraculous task of delivering new life to the driver like giving birth to a child. "There was a head at Stephen's feet. It protruded from a vertical gash in the steel. There was a bare arm too, wedged under the head, pressing tight into the face and obscuring the mouth. Stephen knelt down. He had no reservations about touching the stranger's head" (38). When Stephen peers into a dark chamber where the driver curls like a child in the womb, he pulls the driver out of the lorry like giving birth to a child and feeds him by handing the driver the champagne bottle. The last stage of his remedy is the ninth chapter where Stephen acts as a midwife and brings his own child into life. "The reader perceives the final ninth chapter as an absolute peak of the narrative which definitively ends the last phase of Stephen's grief and marks his entrance back to the normal life" (Kobrlóv,34).

Stephen is relieved by the role which he has in the birth of his child, somehow by being a creator and be more important than Julie in giving birth to a child. "By having his hero, Stephen Lewis, deliver his own child, McEwan is attempting to usurp the privileges of female reproduction (the 'Venus Envy' of the title). According to Mars-Jones, in his effort to compensate for the marginal role of men in the reality of creation, McEwan comes perilously close to excluding women from the process altogether" (qtd. in Chatto, 24).The narrator describes the baby who is brought to this world by Stephen as, "That it was suddenly and obviously there, a person not from another town or from a different country, but from life itself, the simplicity of that, was communicating to him a clarity and precision of purpose" (92). Stephen is the one who acts as a midwife and helps Julie to give birth to the child: "With a creaking, waxy sound the child slid into his hands" (92). The novel has nine chapters which is the symbol for the nine months of pregnancy. "The nine chapter of the book thus appear to have been equivalent or in some sense parallel to the nine months of a baby's gestation" (Childs,175).

#### **CONCLUSION**

The most important cause of emasculation is lack of power and authority and feeling weakness which the protagonist, Stephen, faced after the abduction. He needed to recapture the power, so he needed to be a father again and needed Julie because she was the one who was capable of bearing a child, so Stephen felt envy toward women's ability of creation as womb envy. Stephen struggled successfully with his womb envy by controlling the power of women in creation and bringing his own child into life. Kiernan Ryan has pointed out that the novel's closing nativity can be read as an effort to usurp the mother's absolute right to order it, bringing it once again under male mastery. (52-3)He once more became a father and recaptured his power as a head of a family. He repossessed his masculinity and became a real man again but it does not mean that this masculine crisis will not happen anymore, it is probable at any given time and by any other events. It can find its way back into his life. Stephen, just like other men, needed to prove his masculinity up to the end of his life. "It (masculinity) must be proved, and no sooner is it proved that it is again questioned and must be proved again" (Kimmel, 122).Crisis of masculinity can happen in men's life, vanishes when men recapture their masculinities, and happens again.

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