VALUE PLURALISM IN IAN MCEWAN'S *BLACK DOGS* AND *SATURDAY*

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Abstract. Ian McEwan, an influential and provocative British novelist and short-story writer, has addressed a variety of issues, distinguishing himself as a socially and politically engaged author. This paper explores contemporary liberalism as depicted in two of McEwan's novels, *Black Dogs* and *Saturday*, both charged with moral complexity. The analysis is approached from the perspective of value pluralism, which recognises the plurality of morally correct yet incompatible and incommensurable principles or values. These values may conflict with each other, but since all are correct, the conflicts remain unresolved. It is the author's belief that the novels highlight value pluralism through characters who, while navigating a pluralist environment, disclose the challenges and limitations of liberal democracies. The theoretical context this paper relies on is based on ideas of Isaiah Berlin and his notion of value pluralism.

Introduction

An influential and provocative British novelist and short-story writer, Ian McEwan has explored a variety of issues, establishing himself as a socially and politically engaged author. His realist literary canon, along with his articles and interviews, reinforces his atheist, liberal-humanist stance. McEwan's readers have the opportunity to experience both the changing of the millennium and the challenges of their own time through the experience of his characters, who struggle to reconcile their private lives and the changing world. The aim of this paper is to approach two of McEwan's novels, *Black Dogs* and *Saturday*, from the perspective of value pluralism, also referred to as liberal pluralism, whose founding father was Isaiah Berlin. Berlin's starting point was the observation that, instead of there being only one value, there are actually different value systems, which—similarly to the values within those systems—cannot be ranked in terms of importance and validity. Value pluralism, in other words, entails a plurality of moral principles that are all morally correct, incompatible, and incommensurable, which not only poses a challenge to governments when defining and restraining civil liberties but also lets conflicts remain seemingly unresolved. The political and social contexts of the novels highlight value pluralism in contemporary society, portraying characters who, while navigating a pluralist environment, disclose the challenges and limitations of liberal democratic societies. These depictions also illustrate the extent to which McEwan is willing to accept or critique culture and its dominant values. The theoretical context this paper relies on is represented by the ideas of the aforementioned Isaiah Berlin and his notion of value pluralism.

Liberalism and the Origin of Value Pluralism

Liberalism sprang during the 17th and 18th century, as the most important political project of the Enlightenment, leaving behind theology and focusing on rationality, universality, scientific progress, personal autonomy, and human rights. The term itself encompasses various ideas and theories, many of which

are so contradictory that liberalism has been torn between two controversial epistemological commitments, leading to the formation of two competing versions of it: a narrow or perfectionist liberal world view, later challenged by a broad or pluralist one. The former assumes that individual authority relies on core values crucial for the development of humanity's unique capacities and the achievement of human perfection. The latter, also known as value pluralism, insists on the existence of many morally correct and irreducible values of equal importance, which demand and justify a liberal and tolerant political system (Hardy, 2002, p. x).

That reality is quite complex, i.e., plural, consisting of a vast variety of possibilities, choices, and interwoven experiences (Berlin, 1959/2002, p. 237), was a pillar of Isaiah Berlin's philosophy. His essays not only contributed greatly to a renewal of interest in political theory, but they have also remained the starting point of consideration of the meaning and value of political freedom. Namely, as it became evident that the ideals of the Enlightenment were not and could not be fulfilled, the rise of mass society and nation state threatened to replace the Enlightenment's insistence on individualism, rationality, and scientific objectivity. In his essay *Two Concepts of Liberty* (1969/2002), which is considered to be his best-known contribution to political theory, Berlin proposed that there is not such a thing as absolute certainty and that it is not possible to reduce everything to a single model or standard. Both proposals are central to understanding his ethics and philosophy of humanities, which aim to protect cultural and moral diversity from being underestimated. Berlin's thoughts on pluralism began negatively, by defining the opposite viewpoint, monism, which assumes there must be only one true answer to all questions, there is a dependable path to discovering true answers, and true answers must be compatible with one another. Berlin, on the other hand, claimed that none of these assumptions can be true, as there are many genuine values, which may—and actually do—come into conflict. The collision of values is an intrinsic feature, the essence of human life, and it should not be expected that such conflicts should be resolved, or that they should not appear (Berlin, 1969/2002, p. 214). Finally, it is normal for values not only to be incompatible but incommensurable as well, which implies that there is no common measure of ranking values in terms of importance (p. 215). In other words, Berlin claimed that a perfect life promised by the prevailing monism is simply unfeasible.

If conflicts of values are unavoidable, then avoiding unbearable suffering of human beings when solving them should be the utmost priority. In *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Berlin warns against great suffering caused by distorted interpretations of political liberty, distinguishing between positive and negative liberty (1969/2002, pp. 178–179). Negative liberty, defined as *freedom from*, supposes that there are no restrictions imposed by other people (external constraints), whereas positive liberty, defined as *freedom to*, presumes the ability

to pursue and attain one's goals. Considered to epitomise genuine values, both negative and positive liberty should coexist and be balanced. Unfortunately, according to Berlin, positive liberty is prone to being misused and turned into monism, which in many historical contexts turned out to be fatal (p. 216). This usually happens when individuals are denied the opportunity to make choices for themselves on the assumption that they will not make the right choice (p. 180). That is why the existence of pluralism, especially in political and social upheavals, is not only desirable but necessary (p. 216).

Berlin's modified and moderated form of liberalism is reflected in McEwan's *Black Dogs* and *Saturday*, which explore moral complexity and offer valuable insights into liberalism, particularly regarding the challenges and limitations faced by modern democratic societies. In his quest for an ethical world view, McEwan examines the balance between irrationality and intuition on the one hand, and reason and science on the other. In doing so, he contributes "to liberal attempts to understand and reach a rational agreement in a pluralist environment" (Cohen, 2014, p. 3). The following sections of the paper focus on *Black Dogs* and *Saturday*, whose protagonists face a challenge to their liberal identity in socio-political contexts that strive to recognise the importance of cherishing the diversity of values in both private and public life.

Black Dogs: Politics vs Spirituality

In *Black Dogs* (1992) McEwan confronts his protagonists with some of the key events of the 20th century, such as World War II and the Cold War, to illustrate how different perspectives, built on disparate values, can transform historical memory, emphasising the importance of historical accountability and moral responsibility. In other words, McEwan explores how the values individuals hold affect both their personal and public crises. Having grown up without parents, Jeremy is triggered by a photo dating back to 1946 to plunge not only into the lives of his parents-in-law and the incident that drove them apart but also into the world history of the second half of the twentieth century, tarnished by evil. Endeavouring to piece together the love story of Bernard and June, the narrator simultaneously assembles fragmented history, recounted through two opposing perspectives. On his quest for truth, Jeremy's attempt to restore the cultural, political, and ideological context that incited evil to emerge may help him bridge the gap between the present and the past, and account for the loss of innocence on a personal and global level.

June undergoes a physical and spiritual transformation brought about by a horrific incident that takes place during her and Bernard's honeymoon in France. During a walk, June's life is threatened by two ferocious black dogs, which Bernard fails to notice due to his preoccupation with labelling insects. At

that point, two devout Communists, with their own personal post-war utopias, faith in rationalism, progress, and the benevolent nature of politics, become estranged: June, confronted with pure menace left behind after the war, turns from rationalism to mysticism, from sensible social engineering to the inward journey and spiritual revelation. Whether a true legacy of the traumatic past or a mere expression that Churchill took from Samuel Johnson to refer to his depression, the two dogs stand, both literally and metaphorically, for civilisation's failure, cultural depression, and continuous political oppression, which recede only to reappear. June's disillusionment with communist ideology and a political world view in general, and her escape into the spiritual realm lead to separation from Bernard, who proceeds to insist on the necessity of social progress regulated and guided by scientific principles.

Not unique to June and Bernard, this separation reflects a broader disintegration of values in post-World War II Europe. Many intellectuals of the time, particularly in the West, were disillusioned by the collapse of their hopes that communist ideology would establish a just world without wars or class oppression. The outcome was widespread disbelief and a conscious suspension of sympathy as a means of shielding oneself from the inherited guilt of the history and humanity that generated the Holocaust. For Bernard, a proponent of science and social engineering, the atrocities can and must be accounted for not by ideology being wrong but by wrong people wrongly implementing political policies. While witnessing the fall of the Berlin Wall, Bernard, now an ex-Communist, acknowledges that his political engagement began with blind faith. Namely, referring to Isaiah Berlin on the fatal flaws of utopias, Bernard tries to explain to Jeremy his willingness to sacrifice human lives for a better future, for a higher purpose (McEwan, 1992, p. 100). However, convinced that he and other intelligent, well-intentioned people cannot be wrong (p. 100), he is eager to ignore the truth and label it as propaganda, or to reshape it so as to save the Party's ideology, to bend facts to make them fit a theory, and to proceed with the good work (p. 100).

As the voice of reason, Bernard accuses June of just swapping one utopia for another. His rationality cannot accept or explain the sinister appearance of the black dogs the way June's intuition does. Ironically, the possibility of truth in the encounter "is not undone by Bernard's science. Indeed, in the narrative structure, it is Bernard's science, his pause to consider a caravan of caterpillars on the pathway and his leaving June to walk ahead alone without him, which makes the latter's animal encounter and experience of transcendence possible" (Goodbody & Rigby, 2011, p. 277). The problem with June's and Bernard's opposing world views is that the characters regard them as mutually exclusive, whereas they should be seen as *complementary*, since each of them is "incomplete and ineffective without the elements inherent in the other" (Tučev, 2007, p. 6). Idealistic as June and Bernard are, they do not and cannot implement the policies they stand for

or exert social impact, as she lacks pragmatism, while he lacks spirituality. It is not that the two are completely devoid of the qualities they seem to deplore in each other; June used to fight for the same communist ideals as Bernard, and Bernard himself is not deprived of altruistic sentiment. What they lack is the realisation that for any social change to be effected, the spiritual and the scientific, the empirical and the divine, must coexist.

The concept of value pluralism accounts for the idea that no single value system can or should be entirely rejected. Human values, being both *objective* and *plural,* will inevitably *conflict* on personal and political levels. However, choosing one over another does not necessarily entail any hierarchy of importance, as values are *incommensurable.*[2] Both McEwan and Berlin blame lack of imagination for one's inability to identify with other people and, for that matter, with the diverse ends of human life.[3] For McEwan, moral imagination is what enables people to understand what it feels like to be someone else, a victim (Nešić, 2022, p. 337), and for Berlin, imagination is what allows for genuine toleration (Zakaras, 2013, p. 86). Unlike the monist or the relativist, the value pluralist would find themselves "disposed to respond to otherness with empathy and curiosity" (p. 89). Human beings develop their distinctive faculties when they confront and make difficult choices between incommensurable values.

Black Dogs explores the interplay between historical and contemporary issues, particularly moral and ideological continuities between the past and present. By referencing historical elements such as Gestapo dogs and neo-Nazis at the Berlin Wall, the novel underscores that the shadows of historical atrocities and oppressive regimes persist in contemporary society, reappearing in new forms and revealing a troubling continuity of violence and intolerance through history. Therefore, the viciousness June encounters is certain to erupt again, and the traumas caused by moral transgressions and experienced by ancestors will be suffered by their descendants, even at the most basic level, such as when Jeremy and his future wife visit Majdanek and witness the historical immensity of evil all around.

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[2] One of the many examples of incommensurable yet objective values coming into conflict that Isaiah Berlin gives refers to the opposition between pagan and Christian morality, which both adhere to their respective objective values, with him excluding the possibility of any superiority and, consequently, of any privileged choice (Berlin, 1972/2013, p. 56).

[3] The most pernicious consequences of monism are discerned in political utopianism, as it presupposes that no cost is too high in order to achieve the desired ideal. This belief, which lies at the core of fascism and totalitarian communism, "is responsible for the slaughter of individuals on the altars of the great historical ideals" (Berlin, 1969/2002, p. 167). As Alex Zakaras concludes, Berlin was "appalled by the moral and political consequences of repression justified through appeal to the 'true ends of life'" (2013, p. 84).

Saturday: Science vs Art

Conspicuous by his committed atheism, McEwan has been creating fiction which does not only adhere to the new secular creed, the New Atheism, but it also attempts to vindicate it and proselytise on its behalf (Bradley & Tate, 2010, p. 16).[4] McEwan believes that it is the task of art, in particular literature—more particularly, the novel—to explore human nature and protect humanity.[5] In *Saturday*, he once again juxtaposes the male voice of reason and science with the female voice of intuition and art to show that for a sane and just society, Berlin's value pluralism is indispensable.

Published in 2005, *Saturday* is set in London, on Saturday, 15 February 2003, at the time of the demonstrations against the US' invasion of Iraq, when there was a constant threat of terrorism. The novel depicts a single day in the life of Henry Perowne, a neurosurgeon, who is a perfect prototype for the middle class he belongs to. It opens with Henry witnessing a burning plane travelling across the skyline, which contributes to the post-9/11 setting. His thoughts and views are revealed through, mostly, third-person narration, building up the ideological context around a seemingly ordinary conflict between Henry and Baxter, a working-class character suffering from Huntington's disease. The socio-political background of the novel is evident as the main protagonist's thoughts and comments reflect the influence of the New Labour Ideology, which emphasises individual responsibility, self-sufficiency, and opportunity rather than equality, all upheld by hard work and the daily fulfilment of responsibilities by every member of society. Henry believes that success and wealth result from luck and hard work, excluding social injustice from the equation. While busy with his job, he performs his social roles and lives out his own social reality, which he deserves. Being the very embodiment of the dominant ideological values, such as opportunism and meritocracy, the main protagonist supports the idea of the general progress of society, which leads him to identify failures of individuals not as a consequence of

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[4] Although widely disputed, this movement, pioneered by R. Dawkins, S. Harris, C. Hitchens, and D. Dennett as a response to the al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, shortly gained immense popularity. Opposing irrationalism, superstition, religion, and modern religious tolerance, the New Atheism raised a voice against delusion and ideological indoctrination of children, which was part of the political context and cultural climate at the time (Nešić, 2022, p. 337).

[5] McEwan warns against powerful ideologies and crazed religious certainties, which can, like charismatic shamans, seduce human instinct and blot it out (McEwan, 2002). What he and his fiction insist on is that the novel, as "the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God" (Lukács, 1920, p. 38), asks for irreligious belief. In other words, what makes McEwan a New Atheist novelist is not a lack of faith in God, but rather his faith in secular transcendence, i.e., the possibility of achieving a sense of meaning or higher purpose outside of religious or spiritual frameworks. What McEwan believes in is Reason, scientific progress, innate morality, and capacity for love, in art and—above all—the novel.

government policies but as personal inability, inadequacy, and problem. The only thing that spoils his perfect life is anxiety and fear of terrorist attacks, described in the novel as a kind of modern disease, imposed by the mass media ready to deliver ever bigger and grosser news, especially after the 9/11: "It's a condition of the times, this compulsion to hear how it stands with the world, and be joined to the generality, to a community of anxiety" (McEwan, 2005, p. 176). Henry's professional life influences his private life; being a successful neurosurgeon, renowned for his speed and success rate, as well as the number of patients he operates and cures on an annual basis, thus helping them go back to their jobs and lives, he keeps on observing and diagnosing the people he encounters. He believes that, by curing people, he contributes to society and makes the world a better place. However, his approach is often that of an outsider compelled to label people. By "standing on professional dignity" (p. 9) and exerting imperial authority, Henry uses his knowledge to avoid a confrontation with Baxter by correctly diagnosing his condition. In fact, he uses his superior social position and an insincere promise of a non-existent cure to manipulate Baxter, ensuring his own survival and protecting his family, thereby continuing to contribute to society. However, Henry's constant need to diagnose others and the number of patients he treats suggest that something is wrong with society. His habit of observing people from a professional distance and not engaging with them unless his family is threatened reflects a political climate that prioritises personal well-being over the general welfare.

The morning's encounter escalates into an evening intrusion into Perowne's house. Against the backdrop of the largest anti-war protests, Perowne's family gather, including his father-in-law and daughter, both poets, his beloved wife, a media lawyer, and his son, a guitarist. Unlike her father, Perowne, who expresses no interest in culture and literature (the only novels he ever reads are those recommended by his daughter), Daisy protects her family, not by performing a brain surgery but by reciting a poem. At Baxter's request, she recites M. Arnold's famous poem *Dover Beach*, and, allowing Baxter to think that she wrote it, she averts violence, demonstrating art's power to subdue threat and evoke remorse.[6] Opposed to his scientific approach, this poetic epiphany evokes empathy in Perowne with people outside his family and his class, if only for a moment. However, there is no evidence to suggest that in the future he will appreciate his daughter's value system and not proceed to dismiss the significance of literature (Hillard, 2008, p. 181). While Perowne's values are grounded in the belief that scientific understanding and ethical professional conduct can address and resolve

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[6] Ironically, not only Baxter will be stunned by the possibility of Daisy having written such verses. Perowne, whose class, education, and social status imply a familiarity with the authorship of the poem, as well as his own daughter's style, themes, and diction, is no less deceived by the performance.

challenges, his daughter values artistic expression, emotional depth, and the power of language and art to affect human behaviour. The conflict and coexistence of plural values in their lives show how different values can intersect and impact each other in unforeseen ways. The novel demonstrates that Perowne's rational and empirical values may be crucial but are not always sufficient. The interplay between scientific rationalism and artistic expression highlights Berlin's argument in favour of moral and ethical decision-making in a pluralistic world.

What many critics perceive as McEwan's great failure in times when an author's engagement is an utmost priority is the protagonist's limited views on the war in Iraq, which are in opposition to the hundreds of thousands of protesters in the streets. Even in a situation like this, Henry remains an outsider, observing the world around him but expressing almost no criticism of the current social situation. Instead of escalating and culminating, the anxieties he feels at the very beginning of the novel remain a vague expression of a general fear of terrorism, concerning, as it turns out, not the general welfare but rather his own position and existence. Petrović argues that, contrary to all artistic canons, by presenting a happy man, a member of the privileged and protected class, with this novel McEwan succumbs to ideological clichés, thus consciously becoming an accomplice to the New World Order (2017, pp. 128–129). According to her interpretation, along with Islamic extremism, McEwan identifies the poor and marginalised as another menace to Western democracy, which threatens to destroy it from the inside (p. 138). For Perowne, Baxter is one of them: he represents a threat not because he lives in a class-divided world, but because he has a genetic defect. Petrović concludes that Perowne and his children's decision not to join the protest, their having more important things to do—like playing squash or feeling contempt towards the protesters—actually point to the writer's intention for the reader to identify with Perowne's point of view (p. 137).

Those critics who enthusiastically praise the novel, for instance, Kovačević (2016, p. 19) interpret it as a critique of Neo-liberalism, rather than as a homage to it. Kovačević argues that McEwan's novels reflect social complexities and are subject to politically opposed interpretations—both utopian and ideological (p. 93). *Saturday* can be analysed as both an ideological deception and a critique of Western civilisation and liberal-capitalist democracy, with McEwan's portrayal of family exposing unhealthy and unfulfilled relationships. McEwan does not depict Baxter's aggression as inherent to humanity or specific groups. Instead, he suggests that such aggression results from political ideology and social oppression.

However, one thing is certain—the reader is left with the impression that contemporary Londoners live in fear of atrocity, as the narrative prominently references 9/11, perhaps even anticipates 7/7. This anxiety serves to mask postcolonial melancholia—a psychological condition (Gilroy, 2005, p. 90) reflecting Britain's inability to face the profound social, political, and cultural

changes following the end of Empire and the loss of imperial prestige.[7] What the novel indeed lacks is McEwan's explicit stance against Perowne's reluctance to engage in social and political activism. By failing to critique his detachment, McEwan misses an opportunity to prompt readers to question his lack of social responsibility during a time when such involvement is crucial. Nevertheless, *Saturday* contributes to contemporary liberalism by emphasising the necessity to combine science and art in order to comprehend human nature. It is not a coincidence that these two opposing pillars are, as in *Black Dogs*, embodied within one and the same family, usually by male and female members, respectively. In that way, McEwan reminds his readers that the bond between rationality and poetic sensibility is as strong as that which unites family members. The value of pluralism is highlighted by the need to integrate diverse perspectives, such as those of a knowledgeable scientist and a sensitive artist. Embracing and respecting different values is crucial for understanding the perspectives of others. In contrast, insisting on a universal hierarchy of values creates a gap between the self and the other, making it impossible to address both individual and global violence effectively.

Conclusion

Ian McEwan, a prominent public figure, explores current political, social, and moral dilemmas in his introspective and humane fiction. This paper aimed to examine *Black Dogs* and *Saturday* from the perspective of value pluralism, as defined by Isaiah Berlin, to uncover the novelist's stance on liberalism. As a liberal humanist and self-proclaimed atheist, McEwan believes that moral integrity does not stem from God and, therefore, all actions, whether cruel or kind, should be seen from the perspective of their human dimension (McEwan, 2002). He claims that those who commit atrocities lack moral imagination, the ability to identify with the people they are cruel to. Consequently, encountering conflicting situations, when diverse values provoke, alter, and shape human experience, is inevitable.

As they strive to assert their self-determination, McEwan's characters—regardless of their background or beliefs—clash with society and culture, prompting an exploration of liberal identity under duress. In *Black Dogs*, June Tremaine

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[7] Gilroy compares this condition to the melancholy reactions of Germans after Hitler's death, as described by the German social psychologists Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, from whom he borrows the term *postcolonial melancholia*. Just as the denial of the destructiveness and wickedness of Germany's war aims, coupled with a sense of guilt, obstructed and deferred the country's comprehension of its history and acceptance of responsibility, so does Britain's failure to recognise the brutalities of colonial rule enacted in its name and to its benefit (Gilroy, 2005, pp. 98–99).

demonstrates moral integrity through her ideological transformation and pursuit of personal truth. She shows the willingness to uncover and confront the truth about her experiences and the political ideologies she once supported. Her rejection of her former political beliefs is driven by introspection and human experience, showing a commitment to moral growth based on personal introspection rather than on external creed, which illustrates McEwan's exploration of moral integrity as rooted in human values and actions. On the other hand, Bernard's moral integrity is quite complex. His ideological journey starts with his commitment to Communist ideals and his belief in a moral purpose guided by rational and scientific principles. His willingness to sacrifice human lives for what he sees as a greater good reflects his deep conviction in the righteousness of his cause. However, as he witnesses the collapse of the Communist system and faces the reality of its failures, Bernard starts struggling with his moral integrity. Despite recognising the flaw in his previous ideals, he refuses to fully confront the truth and attempts to rationalise and justify his past actions. Finally, in *Saturday*, Henry Perowne's moral integrity is exemplified through his professional and ethical commitment, personal reflection, and adherence to humanistic values. However, his underlying attitudes toward Baxter reveal a degree of condescension. He perceives Baxter as a lower-class figure who threatens his and his family's well-being, which reveals a tension between his professed humanistic values and his actions.

Given the social and political backdrop of the late 20th and the early 21st century, both *Black Dogs* and *Saturday* invite a political interpretation regarding the prevailing ideologies and the characters as representative of distinct social groups. Unlike June and Bernard, who actively engage with and critically assess contemporary political contexts, Henry Perowne is depicted as a successful professional from the affluent middle class but with a limited critical perspective. This detachment and discomfort, in contrast to June and Bernard's engagement, may indicate a shift in the middle class, unresponsive to social injustices. McEwan's portrayal of characters highlights the tension between different value systems, embodying Berlin's notion of value pluralism. In *Black Dogs* and *Saturday*, McEwan juxtaposes science with art, realism with intuition, pragmatism with romanticism, cautioning against the incompleteness and potential utopianism that may arise when either of the two ideologies is rejected. This approach underscores the importance of embracing a plurality of values to fully understand and address the complexities of human experience.

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Марија Б. НЕШИЋ

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Вредносни плурализам у романима *Црни йси* и *Субоūа* Ијана Макјуана

Резиме

Окупиран савременим темама, Ијан Макјуан, познати британски мислилац и писац, препознат је као друштвено и политички ангажовани аутор. Рад покушава да сагледа његове романе *Црни йси* и *Субоūа* кроз призму вредносног плурализма, концепта који се приписује Исаији Берлину. Рад истиче значајну улогу Макјуана у процесу суочавања са савременим изазовима, видљиву како у његовом реализму у књижевности тако и у његовим чланцима и интервјуима, који заједно потврђују његов атеистички, либерално-хуманистички став. Анализа сугерише да Макјуанова дела представљају рефлексију изазова и ограничења својствених либералним демократским друштвима XXI века. Централни теоријски оквир у раду представља вредносни плурализам, који претпоставља постојање више морално исправних, али неспојивих и некомпатибилних моралних принципа. Суживот ових принципа оставља конфликте наизглед нерешеним, како на личном тако и на друштвеном нивоу. Фокус на вредносном плурализму омогућава истраживање моралне комплексности и политичке свести у Макјуановим каснијим романима. Тако су ликови у романима *Црни йси* и *Субоūа* приказани као они који плове кроз плуралистичко окружење, откривајући нијансе усклађивања приватног живота са променљивим светом. У основи, рад покушава да укаже на значај Макјуанових дела, која кроз вредносни плурализам приказују комплексност савременог либерализма, и да, ослањајући се на идеје Исаије Берлина, расветли како се Макјуанови ликови носе са суживотом супротстављених моралних принципа, као и какве то импликације има за разумевање изазова либерално-демократских друштава у XXI веку.

Кључне речи: политика; идеологија; либерализам; либерални плурализам; вредносни плурализам.