

The Evolution of the Writing Artist

From A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man to Midnight's Children and

In the Light of What We Know



Inspiring Excellence

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The Evolution of the Writing Artist

From *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man* to *Midnight's Children* and

In the Light of What We Know

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Abstract

The dissertation seeks to examine the artist as a sentient entity whose evolution might be traced through structural argumentations that set a work of literary work apart. It is also about the transition from the modern to the postmodern stylistics of writing. The changes mark a growing sense of disillusionment in tandem with a decentered state of being. Hence the central idea is to understand the structural acquiescence and departure in somewhat confessional and semi-autobiographical novels which encapsulate the awareness of selfhood. An attempt to decipher signification in *A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man* to *Midnight's Children* and *In the Light of What We Know* are important considerations for the dissertation. To this end, the dissertation makes use of the theoretical frameworks provided by René Descartes, Martin Heidegger, Edmund Husserl, Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes and Homi Bhabha. Finally, the dissertation seeks to reflect upon the substantiation of identity in relation to writing from the margins and evidences that might be found in the primary texts.

Keywords: Self, Signification, Identity, Transcendence, Fragmentation

Introduction

The purpose of a literary rendition has mostly been to project a heightened sense of selfhood. This awareness leads to an embodiment that narrativizes both mediation and negation which is pertinent yet extraneous to the context. Hence, representation arises as a zone which is problematized by both its expressions and suppressions. Literature as a medium, therefore, becomes an encapsulation of fissures, fractures and accumulations of ideals and ideas which formulates, partially, the standardization of an identity. In the light of this dissertation, this identity mostly pertains to the selfhood of the artist or writer of the text in question. Since the dawn of Modernism, as a literary phenomenon, the focus of such standardization has been to perceive the conflict between the interiority of the self of the artist in relation to the chaotic exteriority of the context. The former has usually been a reflection of the latter. The onset of Postmodernism brought about a hybridity of notions. In tandem with TV, Americanization and the simultaneity of socio-global phenomena, homogenization becomes synonymous to hegemony. Heterogeneity, contrarily, is transformed into a problematic yet a referral issue where it is kept on the margins to further validate homogeneity vis-à-vis hegemonization. The text undergoes, therefore, a structural evolution in order to accommodate such strategic blurring of fixed contexts and components where a departure from linearity becomes the norm.

Such evolution in writing as well as conception of events began with the Crimean war where the influence of media and war journalism led to the formulation of opinion. The idea of mass dissemination of real events problematized notions of truth and glory in relation to war and heroism. The late nineteenth century is also marked by the simultaneous advent of Marxism and Darwinism. Thus massive wars and their mass projections led to a debilitation of moralistic and progressive ideals of history in relation to the naturalized triviality and inequality of the human

condition. Early 20th century European literature is a representation of such debilitation where the theme of disillusionment resulting from a chaotic exterior became a literary norm. The Joycean tradition reflects such disillusionment where characters like Stephen and Mr. Bloom in *Ulysses* are in constant search of meaning through reiteration of syntactic structures where “its aim [is] to exorcise the enslaving structures language imposes upon experience” (Hollington 442). Thus there is a trivialization of modes of valorization which leads to a sense of escape from given structures.

Escapism, by the time it reaches the end of Second World War becomes a recurrent theme mostly reflected in minimalist and repressed expressions by esteemed writers such as Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner. While the former specializes in referring to external objects without a mention of intentions inherent within characters, the latter is mostly known for his stylistic renditions which evoke a meaning that needs to be inferred. In Hemingway, there is an obsession with the inevitability of death where characters such as Nick Adams in short stories, namely “Big Two-Hearted River” and “Now I Lay Me”, portray his personal experiences through depiction of minimalist and mundane imageries of an idealized self. While Faulkner is also concerned with death and an abstract nothingness that encompasses life, he sketches an alternate county called Yoknapatawpha where he stylistically projects the meaninglessness through the theme of lack. Novels such as *Absalom Absalom* and *As I Lay Dying* are exemplary of such symbolic expressions. Thus Post-World War writers engaged in the expression of meaninglessness to a nothingness which embodied a fragmented self. For the sake of the limitation of this dissertation, this intermediary and transitory stage will not be included. It will only observe the shift in the narrative voice from the decidedly high modernist to the assumed post modern era.

Furthermore there seems to have developed a consistent caesura in the narrative voice. Texts are haunted by interruptions of exterior thoughts which seem to agitate the flow of the narrative. Thus, from James Joyce to Salman Rushdie and Zia Haider Rahman, a trajectory might be traced of such a progress. From each to the other, there is a layering of hesitant signification which gradually reflects the unwillingness of the writer to utter too less in the process of expressing all. In Roland Barthes' *The Pleasure of the Text*, he contends how the text as a bearer of meaning expresses pleasure in a systemic duality by invoking both an affiliation and a contradiction to the context. Hence writers from the modern to the postmodern, the eras which can hardly be deciphered apart, depict a sense of duality in their structure. The narrative is both the signifier and the sign. In novels, such as, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Midnight's Children* and *In the Light of What We Know*, this duality is pronounced as an emergent notion which links writers across time in their heightened awareness of story-telling as a process. Not only the stylistic but also the content of the storyline evokes such awareness. It bears the conditions which reflect the necessity of intersectionality.

Thus when Barthes classifies two texts, one of pleasure and the other of bliss, he also delineates the author who is central to his writing. He states: "he simultaneously and contradictorily...enjoys the consistency of his selfhood...and seeks its loss" (14). In other words, a signifying text will imbibe both the classifications. While the former in the statement is reflected as pleasure and the readerly text or the state of comfortable consistency with the context, the latter embodies bliss and the writerly text where the euphoric rupture occurs as a breaking away from the normative. Hence in the novels mentioned above there is a consistent duality expressed as a dialogic between the voice and his context, a woman and a friend spanning from Joyce to Rushdie and Rahman respectively. There is a need to validate selfhood

by means of a self-reflexivity which is also exterior to the subject. As can be seen, the pattern of narrative evolution starts with an abstraction of the exteriority in modern novels such as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, as politics, language and religion. In *Midnight's Children* the narrator refers to a woman named Padma where the feminine is the embodiment of the external muse. Consequently, in *In the Light of What We Know*, the dialogue remains between Zafar and his anonymous friend. Thus from abstraction, feminization to anonymity, the exteriorization of the narrative voice as a mode of self-fashioning and self-reflexivity is also a matter of examination.

Therefore, in tandem with intersectionality and awareness of narration as a technique, the concept of selfhood becomes an equally ambiguous ground. There are moments of revelation within the aforementioned novels where the writer, author and speaker merge to express a unity that belies the unrest that exists in the exteriority of the context. While in the modernist aspect, a clear separation of each of these selves thereby subjectivities might be deciphered, with the onset of supposedly postmodernist novels by Rushdie and Rahman such subjectivities overlap in both their ability and inability to express. In order to reach such ambiguity an examination of the narrative voice seems imperative. Here, signification as a process becomes erratic. This can also be traced as a journey of the novelistic rendition from the readerly to the writerly where the act of reading and writing become inseparable. In accordance with both the conceptions provided by Foucault and Barthes, the presence of the writer in his writing becomes a controversial agenda reflecting the ambivalence of the voice. Therefore there is both a negation and re-creation of the self. The semi-autobiographical nature of each of these novels suggests a need to leave traces of selfhood on an assumed yet structured voice.

Moreover the space occupied by the author, as suggested by Foucault, is mostly within the notion of “transcendental anonymity” (104). The writer or artist, in other words, is constantly effaced by “the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning” which varies in accordance with the era in which the work is read (Foucault 108). Thus the writing subject and the subject of writing seem to be both on par and disparate. Fictions that seem semi-autobiographical in nature, therefore, might acquire varying hues as manifestation of temporal repercussions. What then becomes the function of the author is to allow “a limitation of the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations...[and a] thrift in the proliferation of meaning” (Foucault 118). In other words, he or she delineates the scope of the work in associations to meaning by attaching a certain context to it and transcending thereby his or her own context. In extension to this contention, the idea of the death of the author as presented by Barthes might also be linked. As Foucault talks about the excessive thereby unnecessary production of meaning, Barthes merges the notion with the writerly nature of the work. For him, such proliferation reflects “the unity of the text [which is] not in its origin [but] in its destination” (6). He advocates multiplicity through signification as extraction by exposure to a milieu of readership and their varying subjectivities. Hence there is, once again, a duality contained by the narrative voice which exists as both a dialogic within the text and outside of it.

While in Joyce it is bound within a time of unrest which cannot be viewed in light of its past or future, in Rushdie and Rahman time gains an individuation where it is creatively portrayed to suit an ever-emergent subjectivity. Thus in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce sketches the life of an artist from his babbling stage who is incarcerated in societal, political and ideological barriers. The need to escape, in such a context, occurs through a complete deconstruction of overarching notions such as beauty, art and creation to the basic unit

of “the whatness of a thing” (Joyce 249). Moreover it portrays the positionality of the artist in these two lines:

“The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence...finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself, so to speak...The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent...” (251)

This description is reminiscent of the aforementioned term, transcendental anonymity, coined by Foucault where the link to the work of art can always be reduced to the signification provided by the artist. The space of meaning, as Joyce suggests, is always limited to the imagination of the artist. Hence the modernist preoccupation seems to be a gratification of structure that projects a moving away from grandeur of expression where a reduction to simplicity embodies profundity.

In Rushdie, contrarily, the self of the author seems much aware of the past, present and to a certain extent the future. There is a need to posit oneself everywhere within the narrative. Hence Saleem Sinai, unlike Stephen, does not begin the story from his birth. The narration progresses in an erratic back and forth between ancestors and the individual who is the effect of overlapping and intractable causes because for the narrator or the artist: “Most of what matters in our lives takes place in our absence” (Rushdie 17). Thus from the modernist preoccupation with nothingness which has to be reiterated into something, the postmodernist lens borrows the need to represent absences by personalized individuation of grand narratives of history and genealogy. Contrarily, it is not a matter of anxiety for the postmodern artist unlike the modern one. It lends a sense of ambiguity in the space of signification where the novel becomes both a sign and signifier. Magic realism becomes the apt literary tool where imagination is not meant to be

bound by the mandates of reality. There is also an admixture of memory as a process of consistently shifting narration. As Rushdie states: “Memory’s truth, because memory has its own special kind” (292). Thus reality and the conception of the artist, if they are to merge, must be tinted with planes of ambivalence with no concrete resolution.

Signification, therefore, becomes open-ended where meaning might shift with varying lenses of examination. In contemporary times, such lenses are innumerable where subjectivities are spaced narrowly. While *Midnight’s Children* mostly views the life of Saleem Sinai as a retrospect repercussion to the post-colonial Gandhi regime, in *In the Light of What We Know* Zafar is haunted by a post-colonial, post-1971 and post-9/11 condition. The simultaneity of such events is reduced to one narrative voice who has his own immediate eventualities to recount. It is almost entirely the story of an exile- “a human fleeing ghosts while chasing shadows” (Rahman 16). Thus the story he narrates is found within absences and departures from the formalized central narrative. For him, therefore, “meaning might lie only in being noticed, in being allowed to be remembered” (Rahman 264). There is also, as such, a sense of permissibility in the notion of signification and proliferation of meaning. In extension a story which re-creates the positionality of an exile becomes unstable where the narrator states:

“Stories are dangerous...I mean that the form itself is dangerous...a metaphor is...the super distillation of imagination [and] a story is...an extended metaphor [where the] image is so good...it’s broken free of its unspoken ironies” (Rahman 299)

Here then is the reconciliation of the artist with the ability to allow imagination its limitlessness where the transformation from the readerly to the writerly comes to the fore.

The dissertation seeks to examine the trajectory that the notion of selfhood has taken from Joyce to Rushdie and Rahman as a reflection of the readerly to the writerly. The pervasive sense of duality will be based on the notion of the Cartesian duality and how that has evolved from Martin Heidegger to Edmund Husserl as portrayed in the primary texts. This will be placed simultaneously with the process of meaning-formation where the psychological repercussions of the mediation of language might be traced with the aid of Lacanian emphasis on lingual signification. Furthermore, the unity of the text, as suggested by Barthes, seems to exist in the multifarious ways in which it might be read and derived. Moreover the arguments will deal with the duality formulated through the dialogic between the voice and an audience within the novel and the process of signification and the evolution of reference to meaning pertaining to contexts. It will closely observe the structures of the novels which are an evocation of the content. This will be mostly done with lens provided by Jacques Derrida in his piece on structures and play as well as the notion of rhizome as discussed by Deleuze & Guattari. Finally the arguments might culminate to refer to the aspect of identity formation thereby the evolution of the artist from the modern to the postmodern. Thus there will be examination of the writing subject which formulates the identity of the artist. Such an identity might mostly embody a semiosis in flux that is always on the verge of disintegration and reiteration in relation to intersectionality of myriad subjectivities.

Chapter 1: The Awareness of Selfhood and the Artist

“It is said that “being” is the most universal and the emptiest concepts. As such it resists every attempt at definition” (Heidegger 1)

As Heidegger suggests the awareness of being is a constantly emergent process.

Narration as a development of such awareness outlines an internal journey which is mediated through exterior forms and writing as a process. It traces an origin to the elusive ‘I’ which construes the subjectivity of the narrator within and beyond the scope of his or her work. The Cartesian duality gains variant shapes in multiple orientations but can be reduced to certain concreteness as well. It might be inferred that the internal and external positionalities of the voice can be molded to suit such bifurcation. Contrarily, Heidegger presents the substantiality and *ego cogito* as a sense of being that might be simultaneously aligned with an ambiguity of many as an extension of an elusive oneness. When tracing the trajectory taken by an artist, the awareness of the selfhood in relation to the exteriority of the awareness of his work leads to such an extended ambiguity. Thus, more than a critique of the Cartesian mandates, Heidegger contends a new development in its conception which is further accrued by Edmund Husserl on his lectures regarding the duality. This part of the dissertation will deal with the duality and its extension in relation to novels by Joyce, Rushdie and Rahman. Each presents a case of examination between the selfhood of the narrator and his extended alter ego. This can be seen between Stephen and the abstraction of his context/text; Saleem Sinai and Padma; finally Zafar and his anonymous friend in extension to the chapter on Alessandro Moisi Iacoboni.

An observation on Descartes and his *Meditations on First Philosophy* will elucidate how the foundation for Cartesian duality creates such a dichotomy. He starts by doubting the basis of

sensory perceptions where the world in its immediacy is a mediation of *a priori* precepts. This mediation, thus, leads to an ambiguity within the conception of self as a pure and unmediated space of reference. Therefore, till the givenness of an object and the subjective viewpoint is problematized, the self remains: “a captive who in sleep enjoys an imaginary liberty” (Descartes 8). Contrarily, the notion of thought-perception becomes paramount as it leads to the premise: “I am, I exist, is necessarily true each time that I pronounce it, or that I mentally conceive it” where the idea of the *ego cogito* takes shape (Descartes 9). This is further problematized when the notion of imagination is introduced where evident nature of corporeality remains in contradistinction with the elucidation that the mind produces through imagination which is also a mode of falsity.

In reference to the text, *A Portrait the of Artist as a Young Man*, the depiction of such duality is represented in a chronological manner where the artist imagines himself. The first scene suggests an awareness of the immediate surroundings and how the mind of an artist perceives it. It quaintly describes the ways in which the mind associates itself to relations through sound, smell and sight. The rhyme and placement in timeframe through the statement “once upon a time”, suggests an infantile awareness of selfhood where each sensory and relational introduction is almost celebratory (Joyce 1). This awareness is problematized in almost a Cartesian manner when the subject becomes conscious of his corporeality. While the initial descriptions evoke limitless possibilities in a creative manner, the second scene situated in the playground induces uncertainty and terror of the outside in association to the body where the subject “felt his body small and weak amid the throng of players” (Joyce 5). Thus the inception of the artist occurs through a bifurcation between the possibilities of the mind in contrast to the uncertainty of a finite corporeality. The narration has an inherent tendency to build on “the two

poles of...the inmost realm of soul, on the one hand, and the world or experience on the other” (O’ Leary 62). The narration consistently draws on this duality between Stephen in his mind and through his experiences. This consistent interrelation hearkens the climactic phase of artist who finally breaks the shackles of dependency on either and embraces creative liberty.

Such liberty is attained through the ideation of an object of examination. In this scenario, images and objects of inquiry gain two sorts of validation: one that emerges out of the self and the other as outside of the self where it may gain a multiplicity of meaning. When linked with narration, this view of object-perception seems in tandem with the homogenous unity that the author lends to his work which when exposed to an array of audience gains a multiplicity of meaning-bearing hues. In extension, the duality invokes a strict contrast between the corporeality of objects and the insulated reasoning of the mind. This leads to a blurring of truth and reality where the surrounding immediacy is made probable and dubious in relation to a completely isolated and abstract mind. In such a scenario, Heidegger presents his critique of the concept and relays the limitations that it posits while presenting an exemplary dichotomy in deconstructing the idea of being. His conjectures might reflect a transition from ontology to phenomenology where the world of abstract ideas caters to the world of phenomena. There is, as such, a shift that marks a moving away from abstraction to structurality of reasoning.

Heidegger reflects that objects as signs with a capacity to refer to an idea and image create not only a relational ideation but also a concreteness of utility leading to a totality of understanding. As Heidegger states: “Signs indicate what is actually ‘going on’...wherein ‘we live’...[and] what the relevance is” (74). This view provides signs their essential independence unlike Descartes and his cogitations where signs or objects were always a referral formulated as an exterior corporeality posing a constant query to the purity of reasoning in the subject. For

Heidegger, he posits a problematic of referring to the substantial as primordially inaccessible to the mind if it is to exist in the pure realm of ideation. Thus Heidegger creates a new bifurcation of the world in-itself, in tandem to the Kantian formulation¹, which dismisses the ambiguity that arose from the Cartesian dualism. This, while, making way for further problematization allows phenomenology an ontic precipice to gain precedence. The breakthrough found in him, therefore, is inherent in the statement: “a corporeal being can maintain its total extension and yet change the distribution of its extension...[and] present itself as one and the same thing in manifold shapes” (85). Thus the world of phenomena thereby signification becomes both a reduction and proliferation of the text in its variant comprehensibility.

The duality sketched by Heidegger might be traced in *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie. The voice, here, transforms from structurally catering to novelistic rendition to adopting an oral narrative mode where imagination and memory are transfused. The narrator in this scenario is a performer who outlines his lived trajectory in confluence with his ignorant audience Padma. She is described as: “Thick of waist, somewhat hairy of forearm, she flounces [and] gesticulates” (Rushdie 24). It portrays an undeniable and hyperbolic substantiality which Saleem seems to lack. Here again, the duality between ignorant corporeality and an aware mind-oriented selfhood gains precedence. The deceptive effect of the body on the reasoning capacity of the mind is shown as gullibility of the mind in relation to the substantiality of the body where the voice contemplates: “Padma is leaking into me” (Rushdie 45). Thus there is an intractable adulteration of the object within the subject where the tracing of an ontological premise becomes cyclical. It makes the object or narrative content a pre-given condition as memory and foregrounds its conception by inducing the metanarrative tone.

The narrator is immensely aware of his beginning where his “once upon a time”, unlike Joyce and his inception of Dedalus, is broken and brought after an ellipsis at the end of the first sentence (Rushdie 3). This shows a caesura, an uncertainty and also an exaggerated awareness in the perception of the narrator about his genesis. Thus the moment of inception becomes a space of undecided emergence and a point of constant reference for the narrator. In *Midnight's Children*, origin exists in relation to a sense of historicity where the protagonist feels “mysteriously handcuffed to history” (3). This reflects a post-colonial repercussion where the subject is indecisive of both an individual and national imagination. Hence, the selfhood of the artist becomes linked to that of his surroundings. The mind caters to Heidegger and his contention of the world-in-itself as its reference of origin and narrative procession. The reality of the author gains precedence over an abstract and isolated Cartesian realm of the mind. In other words, “to seek origins...is also to seek the author of our being, and the source of our own authority” (Karamcheti 81). Here selfhood becomes a reflection of an authentic historicity lost in the ahistorical skirmish of colonialism.

Thus indecision regarding commencement of the self in the world of ideation depicts a connection between the transient state of contemporary times with the narration of the author. In a globalized platform the subjectivity of the written voice has imbibed an elusive hybridity, in the light of intersectionalities. Starting of the narration, therefore, portrays the origin of the voice within the artist through his or her narrative art. The novel, *In the Light of What We Know* begins with “Arrivals or Wrong Beginnings”. This title for the first chapter suggests both a need to ensue and a fear of being proven wrong thereby. A duality is presented within the narration which cannot be simplified to a mere mind-body conundrum. It presents fissures within the selfhood. Thus the voice of Zafar is simultaneously followed by that of his anonymous friend

where the narration, which is also partially an oration reminiscent of the dialogic between Saleem and Padma, remains open-ended in its reference to meaning. As the narrator expresses the novel is to be an accumulation of “moments [which] did not impress themselves individually” (Rahman 2). Stylistically, as such, a novelistic rendition becomes fraught with its own contradictions of formation.

Hence a novel as an object might be described as a microcosmic depiction of the artist and the phenomena resulting from an ideation. It embodies both the reduction and proliferation of meaning which might refer to both the internal and external situatedness of the artist. It also leads to a transcendence of the voice through an exterior medium. The phenomenological aspect, therefore, gets interrelated with the capacity to transcend the real subjectivity of the artist. Edmund Husserl provides a scope for such a transcendence that relates to the conception of being but does not necessarily isolate it. Thus the artist, if referred to in such conditions, does not become an insular source of ideation and propagation. He embodies the space for harmonious ambiguity of meaning. If his contention for the thinking philosopher is transferred to the creation of meaning through novelistic rendition by an author or artist, the awareness of selfhood within the artist might seem feasible.

Husserl deals with the transcendental ego in correlation to the viewpoint of the *ego cogito*. In his estimation the thinking entity would not rest with the awareness of the self and the duality and, in extension, the ambiguity that the world poses in relation to it. The subject, in this case the artist, will not remain sedentary within the bounds of awareness creating instead an emergent space where “one is continually recollecting oneself” (11). Presupposed formation that was sorted as deception of the worldly loses its sense of practicality in the phenomenological realm. The transformation from the given to pre-given object shifts to broaden the scope and

potentiality of signification within the subject. Contrary to concretely segregating the self into a dual zone, the dichotomy presents an emergent space blurring thereby enhancing valuation of meaning formation. In writing as an art, this blurring determines that an artist is not a stagnant producer and mediator. The spatio-temporal journey of the work exposes it to both incidental and intentional readings. As an object it encapsulates a predicate in its own and the aftermath of repercussions of meanings entailed to it. The duality, therefore, becomes imperative where “the transcendental ego posits in itself not by choice but by necessity, a transcendental alter-ego” which assists the state of synthetic flux (Husserl 32). The dichotomy as an interiority, as such, is both an “actuality [and an] imagined possibility”(Husserl 20).

This dichotomy between the artist and the world, therefore, creates a space of doubt within the consciousness of an aware selfhood represented by Stephen Dedalus as an emergent artist. The narration, as such, becomes a quest for absolution which might also, in extension, reflect standardization within the comprehensibility of the artist. His cogitations on God who “[could] think about everything and everywhere...[and] understood what all the people who prayed said in their different languages” embodies the absolute ideation of the creator in the Kantian sense of noumena where the artist becomes the finite reflection of God within the realm of phenomena (Joyce 14).

His need for transcendence through the medium of words thereby images is further enhanced in the scene where the anticipation of death is substituted with the beauty of words. As the narration states: “...the words so beautiful and sad, like music” (Joyce 24). By the time he reaches adulthood, these structures are marred by exterior institutions and ideologies of religion and politics where his consciousness “hear[s] a confused music within him” (Joyce 194-5).

Absolution occurs through an image of a woman on the beach which leads to a state of transcendence as he declares:

“Her image has passed into his soul for ever...his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life!” (Joyce 200)

Thus it is in this ecstasy of creation that the artist receives liberation from doubt and duality. He views and formulates the world imaginatively, as Heidegger contended independent of prior predicates. Here, then, the object as novel and narration has broken free of any presupposed notions into a space of pure interiorized expression of the writer through his writing.

In *Midnight's Children*, the protagonist finds himself with the ability to formulate his own parentage- “giving birth to parents...a form of reverse fertility beyond the control of contraception” (Rushdie 337). This might be suggestive of a dismissal of a concrete generation of selfhood. His talent as a narrator is also inherent in his telepathic congress with the nation where “thought-forms...far transcended words” (Rushdie 233). Thus a transcendental ego is depicted through a rejection of origin of the selfhood which embraces thought-forms substituting words. The narrator further destabilizes the duality by saying: “a human being, inside himself, is anything but a whole, anything but homogenous” (Rushdie 328). For the narrator, therefore, to think is to situate oneself within a multiplicity of imagination unlike the Cartesian contention. He transcends through his narration and an allusion to the dialogic he poses to Padma, his corporeal uncertainty.

The element of transcendence within narration might be extrapolated to Zafar and the progression of his events. In the novel the narrator problematizes any absolute definitions where

returning to origins are concerned. Thus, in one of the conversations between the anonymous friend and his father, the father contends:

“...we see every adverse situation as a challenge to restore...the status quo ante...This seems short-sighted. How things were might well have led you to the way things have woefully become” (Rahman 297)

As such, seeking an ontological solution which leads to a dichotomy is falsified. The situation where cause and effect are both detrimental for the subject, the solution is inherent in a dismissal and a departure. The creation of the fictional character of Alessandro Iacoboni signals such a departure and dismissal of reality within a fictional world. It embodies a deep-seated need to escape. He is described by his humiliations which

“do not bear repetition...with no mother to soothe him...[he] consigned each episode to the vaults of memory...he grew to believe himself possessed of unusual...memory” (Rahman 331).

Thus his autobiography within the narration of Zafar is a sub-plot which reflects the general crux of the crisis within the story that of a nameless mother.

For Iacoboni, like Zafar, “a phrase...would be born again and again...*In the hour of his death Alessandro Moisi Iacoboni would cry out for his mother*” (Rahman 334). The narrator, therefore, directly connects himself to his fiction making the artist intractably connected to his work. Hence, the anonymity of the friend coupled with the fictionalized self express the transcendental ego attaining idealism as formulated by Husserl. This idealism, as contended by Husserl, is achieved through affirmative performances. In case of this novel, the subject by

means of his narration, a dialogic reference to an anonymous alter-ego and a fictionalized self indissolubly formulates an ideal for himself. Once again, this depicts a multiplicity through an extension of a unity presented by the voice as *ego cogito*. More than a duality, therefore, an author or artist purports to the world multi-dimensionality within the selfhood. For Joyce, this developed through sounds, words and then image. For Rushdie, it is a magic-realist view of a lost history thereby a post-colonial origin that can be imagined. Lastly, for Rahman, it is through consistent departure within the narration where meaning eludes any predicate in relation to the subject.

Chapter 2: The Process of Signification

The previous chapter shed some light on the imagination of the selfhood within an imagined periphery provided by means of a text. Henceforth the matter of proliferation and modification of meaning in these texts become paramount. As has been discussed with the aid of Heidegger and Husserl, a text lies in extension of the 'I' that envisions and narrates his or her reality. The narrator, by performing within the imagined scope, tends to transcend and reiterate subjectivity. Here, then, signification as a means of reflecting the suggestiveness of this transcendence through creation and imagination of subjective reality gains an objectivity that belies mere context. Jacques Lacan in his contention regarding the transition from the imagined to symbolic order thereby the real sketches the ways in which a subject creates his or her reality. He mostly refers to language as a bearer of such signification which lends to a concrete truth for the subject. In relation to the dissertation, this subject and the retelling of reality might be linked to the formulation and the signification that the artist or author entails with his work. From its inception to completion, the work for the artist is an isolated horizon which offers transcendence. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the artist discovers the image and word through which he tries to release the creative world in its infinite possibilities. For Saleem Sinai, in *Midnight's Children*, the possibility lies in creating an alternate reiteration of the individual history on par with a distorted nationalist imagination. Finally, Zafar finds partial salvation in narration in the novel *In the Light of What We Know* through significant silences concerning Emily Hampton-Wyvern thereby an emphatic expression to his lack of belonging. These arguments will be discussed in details in the ensuing chapter with the concept of signification provided by Roland Barthes in his section titled "Myth Today".

Signification as a mode of both inferred and referred formulation marks language as a bearer of symbolic manifestations. When applied to Lacanian cogitations, as is contended in “The Function and Field of Speech and language in Psychoanalysis”, this premise echoes the three basic stages framed from the imaginary to symbolic and finally to the real. The first stage is a primordial state of being where the mind is an unmediated zone and unused to any lingual thereby social and material awareness. This stage can almost be likened with the pre-oedipal phase where sense-perception is yet unaware of selfhood. According to Lacan, the human mind surmises thereby expresses oneself in fragments. Language as the basic means of initiating oneself in the symbolic order, therefore, becomes the crux of the Lacanian argumentation. The real stage remains, largely, an abstraction of the search for the ideal truth that might be inherent in any symbolic rendition of reality. Hence, the distinction between association of meaning to objects in relation to the gratification of the self who is primarily in fragments is clarified by means of representation through language. For Lacan, “there is no speech without a response, even if speech meets only with silence” where the novel to the readers remain a field of inference and reference to their own set of symbolic framework (206).

Simultaneously the author or artist “seeks[s] a reality beyond to fill the emptiness” which initiates a creative transcendence (Lacan 206). Therefore when an author construes the ideation of selfhood, he is also embodying the conception of a fictional and signifying world that is aloof yet coherent with the context from which it seeks liberation. It is not merely a breaking away, it is also a retelling. Stephen Dedalus tries to impose his reality through his perception of the outside. He, as such, remains a recluse who is intractably embroiled in his surroundings. His heightened awareness of selfhood, as discussed in the previous chapter, gets hastily attached to institutions that might provide meaning and absolution from self-doubts. The emergence of these

doubts lies in the condition where an intrinsic need to decipher the essential nature of oneself or being seems imperative. As Lacan suggests, the subject in expressing is in actuality “obscur[ing] the picture in the very process of painting it” (191). In other words, the nature of narration is both a superimposition and negation of the object that is being addressed. Stephen and his initial contemplation on the word, God and art exemplify this attempt to reach the basis of the cyclic problematic of both finding and losing oneself in the process of creation.

The novel, distinctly traces the ways in which the artist emerges from the institutional and contextual shackles that held him from an absolute creative transcendence. This occurs simultaneously with the conflicts that remain within his interior symbolic cogitations in relation and contradiction with the real external order. Creation for Stephen seems to be an interplay between nothing and everything where God is “where [universe] stopped before the nothing place began [who thought] about everything and everywhere” (Joyce 14). In a Lacanian manner, the contemplation of the artist “is merely a response to the failure of his, when faced with the perceived echo of his own nothingness” (206). Therefore the subject of examination in Lacan might be interchanged with the artist who ambles in the tracing of his own creation. This is, then, followed by the need to be “like the fellows in poetry and rhetoric” who could validate their own thoughts and partake from the awe of creating (Joyce 14). His awareness of the beauty inherent in the word in the statement: “He wanted to cry quietly but not for himself: for the words, so beautiful and sad”, also demonstrates the need to express in the moment of anticipated death (24). As Lacan suggests, this anticipation is not “a perversion of instinct, but rather a desperate affirmation of life” (263). In other words, the author through the knowledge of death finds the beauty of life inherent in the scope of creative litany. Word, for Stephen, becomes the embodiment of the sacred thereby symbolic.

While still entrenched in the modernist quest to find a meaningful destination that is reflected in the journey of the artist, Joyce embodies the need to transcend his immediate context. By the time the novel reaches Rushdie, the instability of the context remains but the artist becomes less conscious of his context. His certainty lies in his ability to fictionalize or narrativize what is considered truth. The artistic truth becomes, more than an escape, an absolution from a fragmented reality. The Lacanian symbolic order for Rushdie might have been attained through the sketching of Saleem Sinai. He highlights the falsity of archival historicity and the certainty that is linked to it. In the previous chapter, Padma for Saleem provided a corporeal certainty. As is observed in later chapters her absence meant “certainties are falling apart” where “illusion itself is reality” in which the author states “in my India, Gandhi will continue to die in the wrong time” (Rushdie 229-230). Thus Saleem in *Midnight's Children* embodies “the ambiguous gap...in which the subject manifests indulgence...[and] stakes the monument of his narcissism” (Lacan 206). In other words, the narrator in the novel is aware of his creative power over the course of the narration more than his helpless situatedness in the greater context.

Unlike Joyce, the meta-narrative scope in Rushdie allows the artist or the narrator, here Saleem, to ponder on how he had the ability of “making them happen” which initiated him in the “illusion of the artist, and thought of the multitudinous realities of the land as the raw unshaped material of [his] gift” (Rushdie 241). This shows how the narrator feels ensconced with immense agency in his created realm of fiction. The symbolic order, as construed by Lacan, is established through a creative subjectivity by means of language. Saleem emerges as the creator of his own historicity where “subjectivity...is bracketed as an illusion, and speech is excluded from a search of lived experience” (Lacan 251). On par with Stephen in the Joycean rendition, the artist in

Rushdie parallelly extrapolates a hiatus and convergence between his imagination and his contextual subjectivity. While Stephen distinguishes between the reality in relation to the imagined in the statement: “He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld” (Joyce 72), Saleem finds that he is posited “at the centre of the universe” with the ability to give “meaning to it all” (Rushdie 173). This presents a shift in the mindset of the artist from someone whose creativity needs authenticity from the outside to an entity who exists not in abject isolation but in formulating his own sphere of creative authority. Thus there is transition from search of unity to an exuberant multiplicity.

Henceforth, the suggestive nature of the language might be examined which brings into fore the agency of the voice in work in regards to the meaning it proliferates through expression. For Lacan, language is the space where the symbolic order, which construes subjectivity, comes into play. As he says: “...we live in its creation but it is our mental action that constantly renew[s] it” (225). The symbolic rendition in any narration is, therefore, for the artist a means of re-instating yet breaking away from his or her subjectivity within the social order “by bringing about a signifying effect” (Lacan 245). The structuralist framework which Barthes purports in his “Myth Today” elucidates on this matter. The progression for Stephen from the word to the image to a creative transcendence is thereby mirrored in Saleem and his invocation to multitudinous thought-forms as thousands of voices of the *Midnight's children* echo his creative ambiguity.

The framework Barthes provides examines the ways in which speech or narration might invoke a message with infinite suggestive possibilities. He states: “Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society” (107). His contention seems to be in tandem with the notion of the symbolic order presented by Lacan. In an artistic or novelistic rendition, language seizes to be a mere functioning agent which provides

a mere mode of communication. As Lacan suggests the symbolic order can only operate when “speech commits its author by investing its addressee with a new reality” (246). In other words, the “function of speech is not to inform but to evoke” (Lacan 247). In *Midnight's Children* this becomes evident when the narrator states: “the error of writing...a word which should not have been spoken” (Rushdie 165). This projects the writer pointing out the futility of weaving thoughts into words. The action both empties and emphasizes the meaning the narrator tries to construe.

His genealogy must embody a suggestive nature because “Aziz introduces the corporate, somatic basis of Indian identity...the fusion of an individual body with the subcontinent and a personal biography with its political history”(Kane & Rushdie 95). The span of two generations that reaches one individual with overarching repercussions is the crux of the narration in tandem with a need to justify an erratic postcolonial historicity. This is further amplified when he refers to the barriers inherent in a multilingual country as he sketches communal protests between Marathi and Gujarati rioters. Saleem as a child is depicted to endow the protesting masses with a “chant [which] rushed forward [in a] long procession becoming...a song of war” (Rushdie 265). As has been mentioned above, the mode of signification from Joyce to Rushdie seems have shifted from a unilinearity of progression to an open-ended multiplicity of inference.

Contrarily, the word or speech for Stephen, in the concluding phases of the novel, embodies a negation of subjectivity as well. Although it signifies the irruption of an artist from the normative to a creative space the statement: “I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art...using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use- silence, exile and cunning”, it also projects an intrinsic absence within the speech that the narrator as an artist must imbibe in his utterances (Joyce 290). While Rushdie embodies an exaggerated presence which

acknowledges a substantial absence, in *In the Light of What We Know* the said absence of speech and representation becomes a tangible form of narration which posits Zafar within his own sphere of narration. It shows the limit of reiteration in accommodating a subject who cannot be placed within the symbolic.

The dialogic presented between Zafar and his anonymous Pakistani friend is invested with polarized sub-continental politicization on its own. When endowed with thought-provoking content, the conversation which spans over finance, politics, mathematics, aesthetics and humanities, the interaction becomes pregnant with meaning. Coupled with rootlessness, the speech of Zafar is reminiscent of the Joycean cunning an exile has to use to encapsulate both the presence and absence of representation. As Zafar states, when explaining the futility of numbers in relation finance in extension to the futility of words as contended by Saleem, “numbers are saying: In order to see me at all, in order to meet some visage of me, you have to make a choice” (Rahman 73). He construes a representational hide and seek which might be extrapolated to his theory of life which for everyone must “stand for something else [as] we don’t want it to stand for nothing” (Rahman 73). Thus in every utterance there is a need to negate or fill an absence that is essentially empty. His stand on the occurrences of 1971, in relation to his birth and family, were mostly met with “an invisible barrier” which if questioned might lead to an “alter[ing] of the order of his account” suppressing “events in Kabul” that were the conclusive culmination to his relationship with Emily Hampton-Wyvern (Rahman 54). This lies in extension to his notion of belonging to a certain place.

The narration that summarily describes his childhood visit to Bangladesh is fraught with a conflictual consciousness which leads to a fissure within his sense of self. The Lacanian imaginary seems to find no resolution with the symbolic that Zafar tries to envision for himself.

His meeting with the unnamed woman evokes an “imminent relief” in him but also gives rise to a “disembodying sensation” (Rahman 87). The nostalgia that envelopes his being in her presence cannot be voiced or reconciled. Rather “a mitosis of the man and his memory” occurs, making way for happiness and tears to reside contradictorily yet necessarily (Rahman 88). The need to belong to the familiarity of a situation is met with the confusion of not being able to situate oneself within that familiarity. Zafar, therefore, faces a disjuncture which, as Lacan suggests, is a problematic where there are no “names for kinship relation” which “institute[s] the order of preferences and taboos that knot...the thread of lineage through the generation” (Lacan 229-230). In other words, Zafar finds himself innately fragmented. The notion of lineage and kinship provide a blurring of nostalgic images that can only be appeased in conceptual abstraction of epistemological mandates as is inferred from the conversation with his friend.

Moreover, Zafar and his place as an artist is fraught with doubts that might seem an evolution from the self-doubts that haunted Stephen. It is characterized by a restlessness that has to do with not seeming to belong anywhere. The artist, therefore, becomes someone who is constantly an exile to his own surroundings who searches “not so much for a form of words but for clarity of thought” (Rahman 5). As such, the protagonist in the novel, Zafar, is “fleeing ghosts while chasing shadows” (Rahman 16). His need to opine and perceive every nuance that comes into contact with his understanding demonstrates a necessity to reiterate and formulate his own subjectivity. This is, once again, suggestive of the artist who emerges out of self-abjection which cannot be extended to abnegation. The narration becomes a confessional of acts that cannot be represented but must be voiced to justify an understanding of others who are made invisible to gratify a self that is essentially fragmented by a past which dictates the present with no hope for a redeeming future.

Hence the description of the rape of Emily which is hardly given representation evokes a horror that escapes words. By the act of negation, Zafar truly invests the event with a readerly connotation. He becomes the mythologist who, as Barthes suggests, “harmonizes [the word] with the world, not at it is, but as it wants to create itself ...[which] justifies [him] but does not fulfill him” (Barthes 157). His world remains fraught with “tomorrow’s positivity [which] is hidden entirely by today’s negativity” (Barthes 158). As Zafar states his sense of control in tandem with “violence-becoming” where he seems to emerge as a concrete subject is also burdened with the not knowing of “how to speak the unspeakable” (Rahman 547-548). With the sense of becoming, the fugitive, here Zafar, seems forever situated in his own guilt. Rahman, in this part of the novel, succinctly makes Zafar synonymous to the confession of the Mariner sketched by Coleridge.

Thus, while the artist, narrator or mythologist finds himself intractably tied to his acts thereby narration, the journey from Joyce to Rushdie and Rahman seems to have taken a problematic turn. The artist from perceiving the essential “whatness of being” (Joyce 249) goes onto viewing oneself as furtive “gods you never had” (Rushdie 612) to someone lost in his own narration trying to reconcile “every memory [which] is just a work in progress” (Rahman 473). The necessity to question and deconstruct perceptions remains inherent within the artist. What changes over time in the generation and propagation of meaning, is the need for unity to multiplicity that makes way for fragmentation in an over-wrought yet denied subjectivity which cannot find solace in mere exuberance.

Chapter 3: Identity

“Let him be well acquainted with the whorl into which his era draws him in the ongoing enterprise of Babel, let him be aware of his function as an interpreter in the strife of languages” (Lacan 264).

This line from *Écrits* by Jacques Lacan is based on the subject who, seeking the truth from his subjective stance, tries to extract a language that mediates his specific reality from an intractable real. The journey of the artist from the modern to the postmodern has been fraught with a flux within the symbolic order. It marks the instability of standardizing a given identity in an ever-elusive and consistently emergent global platform. Identity, therefore, becomes a term pregnant with a milieu of subjectivities. The Joycean unilinearity where a transcendental ego, as proposed by Husserl, can set a creative subjectivity beyond the immediate phenomenological reality seems like a premise to disintegration and fragmentation of the writing subject in contemporary times. The focus of this paper has been on three writers whose writing has mostly reflected the repercussions of insubordination. An artist in such a scenario embodies an iconoclast whose creative conflicts represent both social and psychological turmoil. This chapter will be an examination of the structure of the novels leading to the conclusions to each in relation to the framework provided by Jacques Derrida in “Structure, Sign and Play” and by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari on their conception of Rhizome. The notion of structure will then be extrapolated with the ideation of identity in each of the texts in light of the view of hybridity in “Remembering Fanon” by Homi Bhabha.

The structure of a novel, necessarily, delineates the sequential mapping that an author has set for his or her narration. It also evokes the need to formulate a centrality of events which is grounded around a framework. From the modern to the postmodern, structure has been a

problematized notion that represents both a catering to and a negation of the normative. For an artist or writer, the structure upholds, as Derrida suggests, “a rupture and a redoubling” (1). The transition from one to the other era is marked by the shift from certainty to chance when construing a literary piece. It is a “determination of being as...the constant of a presence...transcendentality, consciousness...God, man, and so forth” (Derrida 2). This allusion to an abstract certain while undergoing an inner conflict is quite evident in the structure and concepts presented in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The five chapters highlight Stephen as an emergent artist who gradually liberates himself from the institutional fetters of religious, political, social and lingual barriers to find solace in the constancy of art and literature. Also, the progression from God to word to image, as discussed in previous chapters, show a constant need to cater to space of abstract yet absolute presence.

Moreover, its abstraction designates a void that gives rise to “the interplay of signification *ad infinitum*” (Derrida 2). The notion of immortality of the artist arises from such signification where meaning remains ever-elusive and the artist is always “a living thing...new and soaring...impalpable, imperishable” (Joyce 197). While the modernist artist situates his positionality in the ever-suggestive nature of the words woven in the novel, with the advent of postmodernity, in *Midnight's Children* the sequence is not progressive or linear. It becomes interplay between the diachronic and synchronic nature of life as it unfolds in a consistent back and forth between a micro- and macrocosmic position of the artist. Structure in such a plane becomes a matter of chance. Unlike Joyce, every original thought is a reiteration of a preceding original conception, therefore, unable to “be the absolute origin of his own discourse” (Derrida 6). The conception of the structure, for Derrida, remains within the realm of the mythopoetic. The artist or “engineer...would supposedly be the absolute origin of his own discourse” but since

he or she employs associative meanings from their immediate “text of a heritage” or episteme, such absolute and unmediated source becomes abstract (Derrida 6).

Thus the mythopoetic or the any constructed fiction is fraught with associative computations. For Saleem, the narration is a compilation and confluence among holistic yet particularistic images and objects. Its spatio-temporal progression is dependent on the perforated sheet, mercurochrome and spittoon. Each object refers to significant events in relation and retaliation to characters and their development. The first in the list marks a transference of fragmentation from Aadam Aziz where the “spell of the perforated sheet” led Amina Sinai to love “bit by bit” (Rushdie 87) and gave Saleem “the hole in the centre of himself...failure to believe or disbelieve” (Rushdie 382). Simultaneously, the mercurochrome juxtaposes the value of life and death during the Jallianwala bagh incident where the disinfectant makes him “owe death a life” (Rushdie 42). Thus while the centrality of the tragedy remains, the tint of the individual object, the mercurochrome, gives the narration an associative dimension.

Furthermore, the spittoon embodies a geo-political transcendence where the subject is privy to transitions through mobilizations across borders. The spittoon is introduced in “Hit-the-spittoon” where the general people are shown throw *paan* spits in the spittoon as a means of entertainment. This is quickly linked with the introduction of Major Zulfikar which “knocks over the spittoon [forming] clots like a...red hand in the dust...point[ing] accusingly at the retreating power of the Raj” (Rushdie 53). It also marks the political factions that grew around it, in the then India, as a repercussion to an emergent nationalist and postcolonial India through figures such as Mian Abdullan, Nadir Khan and Rani of Cooch Naheen. The spittoon is also instrumental in driving Saleem from Pakistan to Bangladesh during 1971. It is transmuted to a “whirligig piece of moon...to become-what-purifies-and-sets-[him]-free” (Rushdie 476). In other

words the transmutation of the object is equated the transformation of Saleem where he is made “empty and free” (Rushdie 477). Hence the transformations in objects mark the transitions in subjectivity where the freeplay of structure and progression is evoked.

Unlike a Joycean search for strict and novel structurality, the postmodern narration seeks liberation from totalization. As Derrida suggests, “coherence in contradiction expresses the force of a desire” where the being contrary in perception becomes a flowing normative. The bearer of any expression, as inherent in language, delineates “a field of infinite substitutions in the closure of a finite ensemble” (Derrida 9). Thus any narration seems to uphold an infinitude through its capacity to create a space of lack thereby undecided reference. This is aptly depicted in an explanation given by Zafar regarding cartography and poetic translations. In both cases, the representation makes way for a problem where “they cannot capture everything exactly and they have to give up some things in order to convey anything at all” (Rahman 25). As Zafar states:

“...every act of representation involves...the effect of an act of destruction that serves a need...we have to simplify and reduce and...give up the prospect of understanding it all, in order to clear the way to understanding something at all”
(25)

While elucidating on the myriad perceptions that might rise from the singular formation of a miniature globe or the translation of poems from one language to another, Zafar brings out the point of fallacy in the need for totalization.

This is reminiscent of the interplay between the personal and historical grand narration in *Midnight's Children*. It depicts a false aggrandizement of the self within a first person narrative in relation to the fallacy of human narration in general while dealing with facts where fiction is presented as integral to any expression. Thus when the book is viewed as formulating its own

identity, in and of its own progressive volition, the idea of the rhizome as construed by Deleuze and Guattari seems pertinent. Within a novel, “there are lines of articulation or segmentarity...lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization” (Deleuze & Guattari 3). In other words, as observed in the novel, the spatio-temporal movements of Saleem from India to Pakistan to Bangladesh and then back to India mark both a physical and ideological departure and shift. His need to provide a unity to occurrences around him is conjoined with his need to be someone within shifting territories. This is inherent in a “cradle-side” chant: “anything you want to be, you can...what-all you want” (Rushdie 173). The discussion in the previous paragraph elaborates on the need to encapsulate all associations in the finitude of one interpretation which leads to the abandonment or departure from some planes.

This aspect is, therefore, shown in the idealistic transitions from one territory to another. In the chapter titled “Methwold”, Rushdie invests Mumbai with mythical descriptions of Mumbadevi, inhabitants called Kolis and the statue of Sivaji. These bespoke of a city alive with its own narration that belied the mere imagination of a singular mindset. Hence most of the occurrences within its periphery represent vitality and possibilities. Contrarily, Pakistan represents for the artist a jaundiced situatedness. It embodies “the truth [that] is instructed [where] reality ceases to exist” (Rushdie 453). As Saleem states:

“the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence [is] in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was...amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies”
(Rushdie 453)

Thus the possibilities are burdened with falsities of institutional mandates.

This is reflexive of the barriers faced by the Joycean artist, Stephen Dedalus. His final departure from all institutions occurs when he denounces the religious order and states: “His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders” (Joyce 188). This epiphany encapsulates the identity of the artist whose elusive nature suggests a multiplicity which transcends orders and, for Saleem, geographical borders. The plane of imagination lends the author with the ability to create a system of “rhizome” where “semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding” (Deleuze & Guattari 6-7). The elusive identity of the author might be equated with the elusive nature of his semiosis which exists in multi-dimensional references.

The same holds true for the conceptualization of Zafar’s identity which is both formulated and withheld in his retelling. Parallely, the tinge of authenticity is provided through his friend and his comments on the retelling which is reflected in the statement: “...my friend has had a great influence on me, in the mind and therefore on the page, the measure of which may yet grow” (Rahman 43). Thus he encapsulates the notions of influence, retelling and measure in the flow of a narration. He is cocooned within a shell of angst and anxiety that bars him from placing himself within his immediate situation. As reflected in statement: “Zafar was an exile, a refugee, if not from war, then of war...He was driven...to find a home in the world of books” (Rahman 51). In other words the problematic of placing himself in a real situation is translated onto a fictional rendition. Therefore, the narrative is pervaded by a lack of situatedness and certainty. As the friend comments “...truth is not there always to be found and that we cannot know ahead of the search...[or] is of a kind that can be uncovered” (Rahman 545). Thus even within the narration there is a multiplicity of being in relation with the narrator. As such, Zafar depicts an interstitial character who narrates from the intersectional margins where he embodies

the problematic of representing varied occurrences which is demonstrated by the interruption of occasional agitation in his narrative.

Moreover, as Deleuze and Guattari contends, “[w]e will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier, we will not look for anything to understand in it” because a book is a signification in itself where the narration is a reflection of its own reality (4). As with the novel, *In the Light of What We Know*, the narrator goes on his ramblings interconnecting facets in a manner demanding cohesion of its own. It reflects a reconstitution of the self through the book as “an assemblage” and “a multiplicity” of the many lived realities that the character of Zafar embodies within the periphery of the narration (Deleuze & Guattari 4). In the chapter titled “The Point of Departure or The House of Mourning”, the friend examines the way Zafar digresses from his line of thought building towards to the incidents in Kabul to alight facts about his childhood. These digressions, for the friend, appears to symbolize “something irrelevant but interesting...as in the proof of a larger mathematical theorem, he had merely stepped aside to establish a lemma or minor proposition” (Rahman 77). In other words, the narration fosters a lack of linearity in accordance with convention in order to formulate a structure of its own. These departures, as the title of the chapter suggests, express an intractable meaning which only pertains to the logic of the narration.

Thus the question of identity, in such fluctuating conditions, becomes a space of evasive culmination. The narration is exemplary of such departures from structural conditions. While Zafar is trying to relate his story which is displaced geographically, he is not exactly pointing out well-defined reasons behind the need or the consequences of his narration. It starts with the many concepts that his mind seems to focus upon while going back and forth between incidents at Kabul, his life as a student, Emily Hampton-Wyvern and his childhood memories in Bangladesh.

All of these are to collate into an understanding of what Zafar seems to stand for as a being where these links might be tied together. It also reflects the many ways in which a sign refers to the convergence of many facets that are disparate separately. The ways Zafar recalls '71 and relates his childhood immediately following its conceptions reflect such a condition. For the idea of '71 he states: "I came to learn these facts only later, and only later would I grasp the significance of...the war of 1971" which is followed by "[s]omething came down to me, not a memory but an echo heard many years ago" (Rahman 87). Thus there is a placing of facts, memory and what they evoke in the unity of human mind.

Zafar is "someone who had been emergent all the while" (Rahman 235). In other words, his positionality has never been at rest for long to be decided upon with certainty and definition. His emergence, in turn, is his source of tragedy where the external factors and events are only superficial contingents where "his lack of home [is] the unmooring of his body, which leads to...the unmooring of his soul" (Rahman 271). Thus he is also always haunted by a sense of homelessness which poses the impossibility of ever relating to a surrounding which is too well-defined by categories. As Zafar finally contends, "Who's to decide what you are? You can decide...the dance of language and labels and names" are only performances that can always be retraced to coin a term for what the new fissure in a conflict of displacement might bring forth for an identity always in exile (Rahman 417). Thus in this tragedy, also, lies the germ for celebration of an identity that is unbound in its inconclusiveness.

Thus the journey of the artist from the modern to the postmodern seems to have shifted from a portrait to a becoming of the artist. The inclusion of a nascent nature suggests that the artist embodies a conciliatory comment to the hybridity that surrounds the notion of identity. There is no unity to be found rather an image might be transmogrified and made elusive through

associations. The history of insubordination that haunts all three texts represents the need to be elusive as imperative. With Joyce, it might be observed that Stephen comments on the language that has to be used with almost a jealous yet desired connotation. He states, while in a dialogic with the dean of his university: “The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine...My soul frets in the shadow of his language” (Joyce 220). This conflict in usage is aggravated when faced with the notion of imagination. This can be theoretically sketched in the contention made by Bhabha concerning identity in an insubordinate post-colonial framework.

The conflict, as inherent in Joyce, arises in a need to find selfhood that has been other-ed through colonial machinations. From the modern to the postmodern, the trajectory of the artist has adhered to a transition of the “extremity of...colonial alienation [and] an end of an “idea” of the individual” (Bhabha 23). Moreover, the conflict and the unmooring of the selfhood suggest a state of emergency which is “not the exception but the rule” thereby “also always a state of emergence” (Bhabha 24). Hence when Stephen ends with the statement: “I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” he is also merging the notions of disparate real experiences with his ideation of race (Joyce 297). The state of transcendence for the artist in the marginal position of the other becomes a state of emergence.

Furthermore, as Bhabha suggests, “the colonial condition...emerges, not as an assertion of will nor as an evocation of freedom, but as enigmatic questioning” (27). Hence, the inclusion of the metanarrative technique in Rushdie portrays this questioning of a positionality that is insistently uncertain. His antagonism with Shiva, his alter-ego, represent:

“the image of the pos-Enlightenment man tethered to, not confronted by, his dark reflection [who] repeats his actions at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of his being” (Bhabha 27).

As mentioned above, the temporal uncertainty within the narration of *Midnight's Children* reflects this disintegration which is foregrounded in the novel.

The concluding scenes for both *Midnight's Children* and *In the Light of What We Know* mark a transition from embracing disintegration to an utter and hopeless fragmentation. While the former embody more of the immediacy of a post-colonial subject in India, the latter harnesses the condition of being an aftermath to multiple tragic subjectivities. Hence, for both, the end remains elusive and open to variant significations. The retelling becomes “a painful remembering, a putting together of the past to make sense of the trauma of the present” (Bhabha 35). As Saleem compares his chapters to chutneys or mummified and preserved anecdotes “waiting to be unleashed upon the amnesiac nation”, he is also awaiting his own collapse amongst the milieu of the masses. Unlike prior narrations, the protagonist gains dissolution of selfhood instead of a resolution. He finds himself “sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and to be unable to live or die in peace” (Rushdie 647). Thus the search of self, for the postmodern artist, is neither in an end nor a beginning.

This is further problematized in Zafar who has no racial, social, political, lingual and epistemological root. The multiple disjunctive subjectivity leads to a condition where the “social is always an unresolved ensemble of antagonistic interlocutions” (Bhabha 36). Zafar ends with an evocation to “a twilight world, for in its manifold embrace are things that are true...yet which things [that] will never...be true” (Rahman 553). In other words, a conglomeration of facts and

figures woven in the body of a narration fails to substantiate a lack that is integral to the lingual finitude in the semiotic order where “answers can only beget questions” (Rahman 553) and the only salvation lies in “releasing time from the deep eddies of memory” (Rahman 555). Hence with the search for self through the process of signification, the artist construes an identity which is nascent thereby dubiously omnipresent.

Conclusion

“[W]e analysts deal with slaves who think they are masters, and who find in a language- whose mission is universal- support for their servitude in the bonds of its ambiguity.” (Lacan 242)

The purpose of any literary criticism is to proffer a summation which might be reduced to a certain lens analyze ideas and points of view from multiple perspectives. As the aforementioned statement suggests, the objective of any analysis which deals with literary language and writing is also to deal with its finitude thereby limiting the analysis to a certain scope of understanding. In the concluding pages of this dissertation, the focus is to bring about the substantive repercussions of the findings in the prior chapters in relation to the aspects that had to be circumvented to reach a cohesive summation. The three primary texts of focus evoke a semi-autobiographical commentary. Hence they seem exemplary in embodying the sentient nature of the author as an artist and his evolution from the modern to the postmodern. This evolution is not merely a descriptive leap which sums up a linear progression from one given point to another. He represents almost always an emergent being that is persistently in conflict with his self and beyond. The ensuing section will explore the intended silences of the dissertation regarding the evolution of the writing artist. It will also comment on the ways in which each chapter might extend to other avenues of discussion in relation to the artist.

Firstly, the dissertation has attempted to observe the shift from modern to postmodern literary works through authors who speak the language of the colonizer thereby the colonized. This dependency on a privileged language to construe stories of negation, deprivation and lack shows a need to substantiate a symbolic that is absolute in nature. The artist constructs himself as

the absent centrality in lieu of a colonial lack. Indeed the notion of the artist circulates around the figure of a man. Thus the semiotic evolution has been limited to texts that were written by men who are divided in their notion of selfhood. The first chapter, as such, closes in on the duality. Even the theoretical framework is male dominant inducing the certainty which might fill in the ever-emergent lack. Moreover, the dialogic that has been traced has mostly been a synthesis of the triad. None departs from transcendence in the end. The author finds chaos and an ending salvation in fragmentation. Hence aspects of conflicts beyond the abstraction of the mind are not present.

The novel for the author represents a space of escape thereby solace. He hides from his limitations but resolves them in narration. It is a process which is bound by words and freed through the myriad interpretative thus unpredictable meanings they might acquire. In all three texts, this is marked by the need of the protagonist to find oneself in hiding. Stephen tries to hide and forget of being unjustly beaten by the priest “because when you were small and young you could often escape that way” (Joyce 60). Saleem discovers himself anew in “a washing-chest” which is a “place...civilization has put outside itself” where he is “safe from all pressures [and] demands of parents and history” (Rushdie 215). Finally Zafar breaks down the notion of hiding to a disconnection when he is admitted to the psychiatric hospital where he is seemingly uprooted from his self. His narrative self, in this part of the story, “had decided to go on a vacation, leaving [him] without continuity of thought and feeling” (Rahman 445). He emphasizes on the need for immanence on par with transcendence which makes disconnection from the immediate narrative, an imperative. Therefore it is “possible that the self is not an object...but the verb characterizing the search for the object” (Rahman 447). In other words, the notion of

negation and privation resulting in an immanent state is equally paramount as the aspect of transcendence for the artist.

Hence a mind fraught with artistic contemplations has to perform as the transcendental ego which Husserl envisions but is also bound by an immanent withdrawal from the vision of the beyond. While the first chapter mostly deals with the need for the self-other binary which seeks transcendence, the second chapter focuses on semiosis in relation to this transcendence. The arguments have mostly been lingual with some inclinations toward the psychoanalytic. Although it is based on Lacan and his contentions, the Freudian thereby oedipal readings are not brought to the fore. The focus has been on the formulation of language and dissemination of varied meanings. It is a tracing of the mind of the artist in the lingual and esthetic zone bar any presupposed formulation in relation to the phallic symbolism. The symbolic order is given prevalence as an aftermath of its formulation where the play and perpetration of meaning is given priority. Although identity becomes an ensuing factor, the triangulation of the mother, father and child in regards to the Freudian pleasure principle has not been explored.

Moreover, it looks into the silences as an acknowledgement of the overbearing presence of the artist. A thorough examination of women who are repetitively silenced by reducing them to figments of inspiration and abnegation is kept unresolved. Stephen keeps a feminine muse to surpass his political barrier through Dante, religious barrier through the figure of Mary and lingual barrier through Eileen. None of these women are given a voice of their own. For Saleem women represent a conundrum. They have simultaneously made and unmade him. They pose a question of being “too-many” yet bearing “cosmic energy”, “maya” and “shakti” (Rushdie 567). In other words, they are the other who gratifies the self. For Zafar, the silence had to be discussed in the third chapter. This is mostly because the semiosis is entrenched in the emphatic

silence of Emily Hampton-Wyvern. Her representation is also a comment on the presence of Zafar which is also an absence which he views in conducts regarding Emily. With the inclusion of rape, he amplifies the absence to a point of violence that has no justification within or beyond the symbolic of the narrative.

In extension to this line of thought, a feminist counterpart of the dissertation seems quite possible. It presents a vast area of contemplation and exploration which might be developed as a dissertation of its own. The fact that the current paper concentrates on structure makes it essentially absolute in theoretical construction thereby it centers on the figure of a man, is also a topic that might be pursued. Thus, the trajectory of the evolution is primarily constructed with male narratives. The modern to postmodern leap is also determined from the solidity inherent in male mindset which is made fluid with the inclusion of feminine silences. Hence the third chapter contains argumentations regarding the aspect of identity. It does not look at the formulation of the psyche of the protagonist rather an examination of the structure of the language is conducted in order to expose the marginalized voice. The tradition of a modernist elevated and alienated individuation of the artist in Joyce gradually shifts to a fluid, horizontal and generalized narration in Rushdie. Disintegration, therefore, becomes integral which is carried onto an unmoored and fragmented narration in Rahman.

Therefore the fluidity of structurality evokes a flux in semantics which has its germs in the removed artist that is portrayed in Joyce. The trajectory drawn from the modern is not a moving away, as such. It is also a reaffirmation of the withdrawal which arises from an interstitial fragmented situatedness. The identity in the last chapter is shown as the burden of the artist who has to situate the self in multiplicity through a removed unity. Stephen, the Joycean artist, represents this unity in contemplative removal:

“...all the tumults and unrest...answered by his friend’s listening
silence...trickling into the very words themselves which set to band and disband
themselves in wayward rhythms” (207).

The silence uttered by means of the friend leads to the weaving of words in rhythms which express both a harmony and chaos. This conflict is carried onto Saleem, the creative subject in Rushdie, who is aware a “picture of [himself] was heavily distorted by [his] own self-consciousness” (304). Thus portrait of the postmodern artist is blurred with the burden of encapsulating multiple subjectivities. A structural refuge is not to be found. The narrative amplification of minuscule matters into grand eloquences marks this transition which is also a critique of modern need for absolution in unity.

In Rahman this is reflected in a complete disjuncture and fragmentation. Any link is generally made suspect throughout the story. There is no background, notion of family lineage or reason in the progression of the narration. The confessional tone is marred confusing departures where a “bridge belongs to nothing [where] the mind settles on the emptiness...a region of suspended animation” (Rahman 314). Thus the incandescence of knowing within the artist is actually an echo of emptiness in relative narration. It cannot be found in structure as Zafar is someone who has “slipped off the wheel” which roots a subject to a sense of belonging and gives reason to his actions (Rahman 394). Thus a postmodern work primordially reflects a disorder and decentered sense of being where the aim is to “conceive of the common ground [within] the difference of this irreducible difference” (Derrida 13). For Zafar, the unity is the multiplicity which results in fragmentation in a world which divided into myriad categories. The division of the selfhood becomes imperative and its expression is found in the lack of spatio-temporal unity. The Joycean artistic progression in five chapters makes way for the postmodern artist finding

voice in Rushdie as situated in both his past and future. Finally the self-fashioning of the artist who draws from his narration a missing subjectivity is voiced in the erratic sense of time in Rahman.

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