Trauma and Identity in Tom McCarthy's *Remainder*: A Cognitive Approach

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This paper approaches the question of identity in a posttraumatic condition through the lens of schema theory, with reference to Tom McCarthy's novel *Remainder* (2001). It examines how schema construction provides enough clues for understanding the protagonist's attempt to form his lost identity. The close analysis of the novel is done through Stockwell's (2002) definition of schema theory. Schema theory offers psychological and scientific proofs for the protagonist's behavior, revealing how his mental obsession and motivations for reenactments are directed by cultural forces. This obsessive behavior constantly changes from one state to another. The theory will make these constant changes in behavior trackable by examining the character's changing principles of his schemata, which, according to Stockwell (2002), first develops, then changes, and finally gets refreshed in a posttraumatic situation. Finally, the paper interprets the protagonist's crisis of identity as the modern man's passage from modernism toward postmodernism and the traumatic reaction to this transition. The paper also pinpoints the pros and cons of the schema approach.

Introduction

Trauma has a drastic influence on an individual's identity so that the victim experiences a crisis of identity in the posttraumatic state. Literary works, especially novels, provide enough space to address this crisis. Therefore, the present study focuses on McCarthy's novel, *Remainder* (2001), which specifically attends to the crisis of identity its protagonist faces after his traumatic accident.

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Caruth (1996) defines trauma as an overwhelming experience of a destructive event which often appears in uncontrolled repetitive hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. The destructive force of trauma is due to the fact that it criticizes a "world that is gone now" (Pine 2011, 166). Traumatic experience has been studied mainly through psychological and cognitive approaches. It is a concept which relates to mental experience and reflects an external event with particular implications on the individual's mental reality. This destructive side of trauma does not cross the boundaries of the protective shield, but it eliminates the expanse of satisfaction and comfort, so that it leads to a pathological neurosis during its later dominance. The neurotic state challenges the notion of identity the trauma victim has constructed and relied upon. The crisis of identity the trauma victim faces results in a set of disturbed and unjustifiable behaviors.

The present paper takes the notion of identity in its social aspect, which is most applicable to the crisis the protagonist of McCarthy's novel undergoes. Identity, in this light, is a site of tensions between sociocultural living and subjectivity. As Wetherell (2009, viii) contends, an individual's social being is always a matter of how social and cultural materials are organized as psychology and are taken on as personal subjects. According to her, social identity is recognized as a realization of one's location within an order of relation from which a series of proper and possible actions proceeds; it authorizes, anticipates, and guides social actions (Wetherell 2009, 1). She further suggests that this kind of formulation of identity could be relatively fixed and pushed into new forms, or more radically as entirely relational, a "fold" in lines of force (Wetherell 2009, 2).

Through a posttraumatic experience, previous schemas held in one's mind could be integrated into new ones, which would result in the creation of meaning about their traumatic-time experience. In psychology, a schema could be referred to as a mental framework serving as a basis for interpreting situations, how one experiences the world, and how connections are created between a series of events. Psychological interest in this field may be a recent phenomenon, but fiction has long been dealing with the situation for some time, going beyond the realm of science regarding the possibilities of alternative posttraumatic outcomes.

This paper tries to examine the dominant cognitive strategy of trauma theory; it introduces an alternative approach for analysis in literature by using Stockwell's (2002) schema theory. It analyzes the post-trauma state of the protagonist's identity in *Remainder* (2005) and discusses the influence of modern-to-postmodern condition in the reformulation of the self.

Remainder and the Traumatic Condition

Remainder, written by British author Tom McCarthy and published in 2005, was acclaimed by the critics as controversial, and McCarthy received the 2007 Believer Book Award for the book.

The story starts with a first-person nameless character who loses his memory in an unknown accident, and the result is his sufferance from intrusive hallucinations and

dissociative consciousness. He receives an €8.5 million settlement as compensation for the accident from the insurance company. Then, one night, in a fanciful illusion at his friend's party, he decides to use the money to reenact things remembered or imagined, through which he attempts to create new schemas and meanings.

The protagonist's abnormal personality makes him do odd things, including strange requests and reenactments to revive his past experiences. He is forced by the need to reside in the world "authentically," not as a "second hand" citizen that the traumatic condition has denominated for him. Kiguradze (2017, 2) draws on the theories of Freud and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to argue about the idea of authenticity and the motivations behind the protagonist's actions. He offers that the idea of authenticity and authentic experience is presented as a problem or impossibility, and the major character's attempt at reaching this level of existence would be an absurd quest.

As the reenactment of dull events cannot quench his thirst for authenticity, he begins to reenact more violent incidents. These seemingly meaningless jobs make the reader wonder what these are all about. As there is no established truth that could be grasped in the story, it is necessary to have a deeper study of different aspects of the protagonist's mental statement. The use of schema theory makes it possible to understand the complexity of the character's personality, and his strange movements and misbehavior.

Bartlett (1995, 201) connects the idea of schema theory to past experiences. He refers to the structure of schema as "an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response."

Stockwell (2002) has consolidated the cognitive process of memory-making and the creation of an identity through cognitive approaches in literature. Stockwell (2002) reevaluates cognitive theories and presents schema theory with a more detailed description that includes the process of schema evolution and schema management.

Considering the criticisms on *Remainder*, none of the previous researchers has approached the disturbed relationship between modernism and postmodernism through the lens of schema theory. The significance of the present paper lies in its attempt to show how the application of schema theory would help in understanding the cognitive changes which occur in the protagonist's state of mind. It aims at analyzing the cognitive representation of the protagonist's dissociative consciousness and his traumatized situation in order to arrive at a deeper insight into the character's different schematic process of mind. It applies Stockwell's (2002) schema theory to the novel to investigate the steps through which the protagonist's schemata first develop, then change, and finally get refreshed in a particular situation. In the end, the paper situates the novel in its sociocultural context, which is the threshold of modernism and postmodernism. It provides a cognitive interpretation of the disturbed relationship between modernism and postmodernism as manifested in the character's traumatized search for identity and authenticity, which is a discontinuity within a continuum. It approaches modernism as a "problematic legacy" from a cognitive perspective.

Background of the Study

In literature, the multiplicity of mind and dissociative consciousness reflects itself in the form of split self in narrative. According to Emmot (2002, 153-181), in fictional narratives, the major character's moment by moment fracture of self is followed by a significant incident in life representing a "split self." She adds that sometimes there is a vigilance on specific social roles to furnish some sense of self-identity even in the face of significant loss.

Narratives that include the notion of multiple selves in social contexts could reflect the sense of fragmentation of identity in postmodern societies. This usually occurs in times of personal crisis, such as traumatic experiences, in which the split self plays a key role (Emmot 2002, 153-181). Such narratives, which generally deal with a first-person narrator (probably suffering from the loss of identity), invoke a current self reporting on a past self, and a break in its chronology such as flashbacks highlights the notion that knowledge about past experiences is stored in one's own memory. The knowledge about the past is stored in the form of schemata which provide the means of juxtaposing different versions of an individual at different points in time. Human mind draws upon this schematic memory to understand and grapple with new experiences or data.

For Bartlett (1995, 201), "schema" refers to an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response. That is, whenever there is any order or regularity of behavior, a particular response is possible only because it is related to other similar responses which have been serially organized, yet which operate, not simply as individual members coming one after another, but as a unitary mass.

Based on Bartlett (1995, 203), determination by schemata is the most fundamental of all the ways in which we can be influenced by reactions and experiences which occurred sometime in the past. The schema, in more conventional psychological language, is defined as an organism or an individual's way of keeping up an attitude toward the environment which it finds or feels to be adequate and satisfactory.

According to Bartlett (1995, 201-206), one may fancy that s/he is repeating a series of movements learned a long time before from a textbook or from a teacher. But in fact, s/he builds up the stroke afresh on the basis of the immediately preceding balance of postures and the momentary needs of the game. Every time s/he makes it, it has its own characteristics. Thus, there may be only one way in which an organism could learn how to do this. At any rate, it is the way that has been discovered, and it is continually used. An organism has somehow to acquire the capacity to turn round upon its own "schemata" and construct them afresh.

Stockwell (2002) brings the notion of script or schema to the world of literature and claims that schema is situation-based. A situation comprises "script," "plan," and "goal." He explains that "scripts develop out of plans, which are generalized conceptual procedures such as 'socializing' or 'getting a drink.'" As a plan becomes fixed in one's experience, it

becomes a script. Plans and scripts arise out of higher-level goals, which are very general aims and objectives carried by individuals, such as satisfaction goals, achievement goals, preservation goals, and so on (Stockwell 2002, 78). Plans and goals are the conceptual tools one can use to negotiate new situations.

Stockwell (2002, 78) asserts that knowing which script to draw upon in a particular situation depends on headers which instantiate the script. In terms of written discourse, headers can be of four types:

1. Precondition headers: a precondition for the application of a script
2. Instrumental headers: actions as a means toward the realization of a script
3. Locale headers: the setting in which the script is applied
4. Internal conceptualization headers: an action or role from the script

It should be pointed out that scripts, plans, goals, and their contents are not fixed structures but are assembled in the course of discourse processing. Their configuration is dynamic and depends both on the stylistic input and the particular experiential base of the reader. The development of schema is processed through three major steps: accretion (the addition of new facts to the schema), tuning (the modification of facts or relations within the schema), and restructuring (the creation of new schemas) (Stockwell 2002, 79).

According to Stockwell (2002, 79-80), the types of schema management can be summarized as follows:

1. Knowledge restructuring: This is the creation of new schemas based on old templates.

2. Schema preservation: This happens where incoming facts fit existing schematic knowledge and have been encountered previously.

3. Schema reinforcement: This occurs where incoming facts are new but strengthen and confirm schematic knowledge.

4. Schema accretion: This is where new facts are added to an existing schema, enlarging its scope and explanatory range.

5. Schema disruption: This happens where conceptual deviance offers a potential challenge.

6. Schema refreshment: This occurs when a schema is revised and its membership elements and relations are recast, known as tuning, defamiliarization in literature.

Analysis

Throughout the novel, the character attempts to perform reenactments of his earlier lost memory and later imaginations to create an authentic schema of his own identity. He is representative of a person who experiences a traumatic event which affects his entire life and puts him in an ongoing adventure of seeking an authentic identity. This part shows how schematic tools such as knowledge restructuring, schema preservation, schema reinforcement, schema accretion, and schema disruption reveal the traumatic character's process of schematic management in the story.

As it turns out, in Bartlett's (1995, 237-296) term, the reactions to an immediate stimulus are treated as having their place in the reconstruction of the schemata, organized settings, and materials of earlier dates. This framework will provide "schemata" for the imaginative reconstruction, which is called memory.

Knowing what scripts to draw upon depends on the headers which are precondition headers, instrumental headers, locale headers, and internal conceptualization headers (Stockwell 2002, 78). These headers make a connection with the goals of a script to be drawn. According to Stockwell, they are either satisfaction goals or achievement ones. Headers for the character in the novel are presented as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Headers for Every Reenactment				
Precondition Headers	Déjà vu in his friend's house	Wanting his flat tyre to get fixed	Some kind of shooting incident on Coldharbour Lane	His dream after an intense reenactment of shooting scene along with feeling of tingling over his body
Instrumental Headers	Drawing the scenario, he saw in his déjà vu, his attempts to find a building similar to what he remembered, his settlement	Going to a tyre shop	Three reenactors, a bicycle and a car, the exact crime scene	Employing a retired bank robber and reenactors, preparing a simulated area
Locale Headers	The place where he finds his so-called London building	Tyre shop simulated environment	Coldharbour Lane	Inside the Heathrow warehouse
Internal Conceptualization Headers	Where for the first time, the building reenactment process is done completely	The repeated reenactment of the windscreen washer reservoirs event	The repeated reenactment of the shooting incident with his role as the black victim	The reenactments of the bank robbery by several reenactors (not completely conceptualized)

Table 2: Reenactments Carried Out by the Protagonist in *Remainder*			
Reenactment 1	Reenactment 2	Reenactment 3	Reenactment 4
London building	Tyre shop	Shooting scene	Bank robbery

During the process, the character repeats reenactments each time in different forms, showing his malcontent schemata about his own identity. As Table 1 shows, the fourth part of the character's integrating reenactments is not wholly satisfying to him, though

everything is performed according to the plan. There is a conversation between him and Samuel (the retired criminal), in which Samuel tells him that he himself used to do these reenactments as a practice before a real bank robbery (McCarthy 2005, 151).[1] These will make the character have a revelation in his tranquility, and therefore, he decides "to transfer the reenactment of the bank heist to the actual bank" (152). Being discontent with the previous reenactments, he tries to give a wider scope to his schemata, connecting the imaginative and real together.

The schematic process through which the character tries to create and complete his own identity is not static; rather, it is dynamic, moving along a path and ending up in a larger space. Throughout the story, the character desires new goals. According to his schematic process, this could be an attempt at fulfilling the goals of satisfaction and, therefore, achievement of perfection. As he has lost his identity due to the trauma, he has to either find it or create it. He attempts to fulfill a process of schematic reconstruction of his past memory which would involve a great part of his identity. It should be noted that in each reenactment, the process of schema management is realized in the protagonist's mental development, some of which are more significant than the others.

For example, in the first reenactment, the character creates a new schema of a London house with its working staff based on what he has seen in his déjà vu (knowledge restructuring). The London house reenactment is performed according to the existing patterns the character has designed and remembers. Some of them are performed perfectly in the character's view that fit the existing schematic knowledge he imagines about those events (schema preservation). Once the character is confident about everything to be performed accordingly and his schematic management in development, he leaves the previous reenactment and starts to create a new one:

> I placed my model on my living-room floor. I moved the figures around once more and issued instructions down the phone to Naz as I did this—only today I didn't go and look. Just knowing it was happening was enough. I had the concierge pick up the liver lady's rubbish bag, the motorbike enthusiast kneel in the lobby for two hours, the pianist sit on the closed lid of his piano facing his window for another two—and all the while, as they did this for real, I sat in the same spot on my living-room floor. The day after that I lay beside the model looking at it from the same angle as the sun did. (99)

In the building, for example, he changes the responsibility of the reenactors, and from different views, he enlarges the scope of his already existing schema and its range of possibilities (schema accretion). As he states,

> [The figure model] . . . showed the courtyard and the facing building and even the sports track. There were little figures in it: the motorbike enthusiast next to his bike, the pianist with his bald pate, the liver lady with her headscarf and her snaky strands of hair, the concierge with her stubby arms and white mask.

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[1]   Subsequent citations from this source include only the page numbers.

He'd even made a miniscule mop and Hoover for her cupboard. You could see all these because he'd made several of the walls and floors from see-through plastic. On the ones that weren't see through he'd filled in the details: light switches and doorknobs, the repeating pattern on the floor. The stretches of neutral space he'd made white. Sections of wall and roof came off too, so you could reach inside. . . . The figures of the characters were moveable. I'd picked up the liver lady one while talking and was making it bobble down the stairs and out into the courtyard. (98)

In order to add to his existing schemata of the building reenactment, he defines interchangeable roles for every reenactor. This action functions as a confirmation of the process of drawing on his schemata toward establishing a goal which could be a comprehensive identity. In the next reenactment which is designed to be performed in a tyre shop simulated environment, he designs the place similar to the real tyre shop (knowledge restructuring). He tries to preserve his schematic picture of the place as he decides to reproduce the place (schema preservation). He says,

"It's not a model I require," I told Naz. "It's a full-scale reproduction. I should like Roger to reproduce this tyre shop exactly, down to the last detail." (104)

Schema re-enforcement occurs as he tries the exact windscreen washer reservoirs event be performed constantly:

I shall require reenactors to run through a certain event . . . to run through this event constantly, round the clock. (104-105)

The third reenactment is performed in the same place where the shooting occurs. To restructure his schema of the reenactments locally and conceptually, the character orders to procure the area after the police are done with the place (knowledge restructuring):

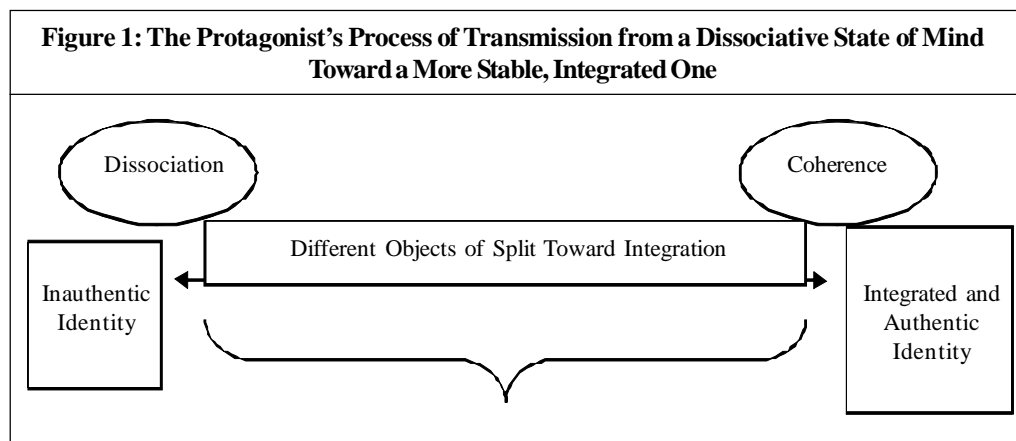"Hire it. Obtain permission to use it."

"What for?" Naz asked.

"A reenactment," I said. (110)

He becomes obsessed with the incomplete performances. He repeats the process several times to fulfill his satisfaction with the previous structure of his schema as he replaces himself with the victim. Consequently, he experiences a new recreation of his own schema, and also adds to his previously held schemata, which is the next step in the character's schematic development (schema accretion).

As stated above, this remarkable life-event brings about a kind of identity crisis to the protagonist. His identity is faced with significant major losses, putting his social role in danger. He cannot reach what he was once before. Therefore, he struggles to take part in multiple social roles in different contexts, to become an independent individual within the society. However, this is always accompanied by a gap, coercing him into doing much more harsh stuff to be completed. His sufferance from a break in the chronological state of his mind related to his past memories provides him the motive for the juxtaposition of

different schematic processes for the construction of a new and improved identity. As Emmot (2002, 153) would confirm, this kind of split between the previous "I" and what constitutes his identity in the time being is a key factor in the later continuation of the protagonist's doing odd jobs. She suggests that every individual lives inside one's own body, and the destructive effects of such traumatic events create a kind of gap between the body-mind organization (Emmot 2002, 163).

The crisis of identity is what emerges out of this inconsistency between the past "I" and the present one, which is now split. Together, this dualistic nature of mind and body procures a holistic projection toward an integration of the self. There is no fixed and stable structure of the self, like what one had once before, but only fragments of split sectors of experience stored in the protagonist's memory. This is what he conceives of his own identity, on which multiple experiences in relation to others are constructed his mental schemata. Here, the protagonist attempts to form a socially stable identity through the recreation of his past memories. However, there are two polar extremes: on the one hand, there is a kind of normal and socially accepted identity which corresponds to the norms of a subjective and stable sense of the self, and on the other hand, a traumatized identity dissociated into different splits. The protagonist's stance is on the latter extreme, while progressing toward the other extreme for an integrated and authentic sense of

Figure 1: The Protagonist's Process of Transmission from a Dissociative State of Mind Toward a More Stable, Integrated One

identity in the real world. This transmission could be the outcome of a defensive operation paving the way for the split self to step into consciousness.

Therefore, there is a possibility for the split identity to pass toward integration which successively could enhance self-coherence.

Accordingly, splitting can create the present moment isolated from the past and at the same time being nourished by transient impulses from it, which is already stored in the individual's mental schemata. This split, which originates from a sense of lacking feeling oneself, could be projected in different possible versions of one person, performing actions through the juxtaposition of past and present contexts. So far, this is what happened to the protagonist, the rest of whose story tells of a more radical process of schematization.

The fourth reenactment mostly deals with the last two of Stockwell's theory of schema management: schema disruption and schema refreshment

When the retired criminal tells him that before any robbery, he and his gang would preenact the process, the protagonist thinks that he is not yet satisfied completely with his reenactments. Here, there is a conceptual deviance, where he decides to change completely the rules of reenactments and perform a real enactment.

> "You mean you'd reenact the robberies in advance?" I asked, incredulous.

> "Well, yes, that's what I'm saying. Not reenact: preenact, I suppose. But yes, of course." I thought about that, hard. It started to make me feel dizzy. I walked over to Naz and told him that I wanted to go home. (151)

The disruption in the character's expectations thus provides the possibility for his schematic refreshment. The final part, as he himself concludes, would be the final phase of his first reenactment project, where the real robbery with real and new reenactors takes place. His disrupted schema and its elements are revised and defamiliarized for him. This refreshment of his schema makes him feel satisfied—though finite—through achieving a further step toward completing his identity. As it is observed, in the process of schematization, his schemata of the reenactments are disrupted in the fourth one, and by radical reformulation of the previous ones, he creates a different plan for developing his schematic identity:

> "I've had an idea," I said. I gulped, and tasted soap. I was so excited that I could hardly speak. "I should like," I continued, "to transfer the reenactment of the bank heist to the actual bank. (152)

Briefly, the character's personality in this analysis shows how his disruptive mind tries to act as normal and return to a stable condition. But, as it is evident, this struggle is an incomplete process which makes the character do more hazardous and violent reenactments to feel more real.

Discussion

The application of Stockwell's theory to the novel clearly shows how the cyclic nature of the character's schema is shaped. This cycle is not entirely stable, but it constantly changes from one state to another, which could be justified with reference to the attempt of the character to reformulate his identity. He is experiencing a posttraumatic state and is constantly in fluctuation to return to a stable one. Furthermore, as a complement to what is told about schema in Bartlett's (1995, 200) term, it should be pointed out that the schemata are living, constantly developing, and affected organisms by every bit of incoming sensational experience of a given kind.

Trauma can make a silent terror that splits or ruins identity, working as a basis for wider criteria of identity formation through its intergenerational transmission. Viewed from a broader perspective, the novel can be taken as the story of modern man reacting to his lost position in the world.

The fragmentary units of the character's identity are represented through his continuous planes of actions, which in a broader context could be representative of people of an era struggling for nothing. The character tries to create a schema in which there is enough space to reenact the past and freeze this moment of perfection in a spatial mental schema. He constantly attempts to give shape to his disrupted schematic views on the process of reenactments, and even radically alters his schemata by reenacting the real one. However, as McCarthy (Hart, Jaffe, and Eburne 2013, 671) talks about the theme of *Remainder*, there is always a sense of regression within a nonexistent state of development. The character is always kept in this transitional moment, managing his schemata, yet in vain. This transition may stand for the cognitive transition of an age when modernism is about to finish and postmodernism has not yet emerged.

According to Fredrick Jameson (1984), modern shift toward postmodernism is linked with an experiential crisis in time and space. It is therefore a crisis in which the spatial categories prevail those of time, and the modern man cannot modify himself in line with this flow of transformation (Woodward and Jones 2008). On the other hand, McCarthy's works, as he asserts, revolve around this notion that the modern era has always been doomed to fail (Critchley 2009).

Stepping out of the close analysis of the protagonist's schematic disintegration, the novel can be approached as the narrative of a transitional period between modernism and postmodernism. This point has already been made by other critics. Some critics believe that the novel is an attempt at postmodern fiction, while others, including McCarthy himself, claim that the work examines a modern perspective (Hart, Jaffe, and Eburne 2013, 671).

Roth (2010-2011, 270) refers to the work as a representation of the "wreckage" of modernist project. She claims that the author views modernism in some way as a failure, and thus his task is to deal with this problematic legacy. McCarthy's avant-garde structure of the novel merges the end and the beginning to push the novel forward into an impression that what at all remains is "wreckage" and total triumph of superficial form, "a wreckage not only of modernism, but of the contemporary moment" as well (Roth 2010-2011, 275).

Furthermore, Nieland (2012, 570) argues that McCarthy's work not only represents the empty revival of an avant-garde idiom but rather "a way of presiding over modernism's death by reenacting it traumatically by lingering in the remains of its most fecund catastrophes which are also those of the twentieth-century itself."

The novel's title, "Remainder," signifies the remains of the modernist era as located in a process of transition toward a new perspective which the character attempts to rebuild through his schemata refreshment. The word "residual" in the novel, as it possesses a close affinity with the title, confirms this claim. As the protagonist insists,

> His ultimate goal, of course, being to—how shall we put it? To attain—no, to *accede to*—a kind of authenticity through this strange pointless residual. (151)

The notion of an authentic identity is a major concern for the modern man, which in the novel is referred to as a pointless residual. This implies that what is left of modern

man's authentic place in the world is only a fragment, the recreation and/or reenactment of which is pointless, due to a traumatic transition toward postmodernism. Throughout the novel, the character is obsessed with the meaning of this word and tries to find its meaning in different dictionaries. He claims what the word he is looking for is not "residual," but "recidual," which is a noun rather than a verb:

> "The short councillor," I said. "He used it like a . . . you know, like a thing. A residual."
>
> "A noun," said Naz. "What short councillor?"
>
> "Yes, that's right: a noun. This strange, pointless residual. And he pronounced the s as an s, not as a z. Re-c-idual. Have it looked up with that spelling." (157)

Here in the novel, a noun is used to identify a particular thing like the modernist era; however, the word does not exist really, and the protagonist's attempt at finding its meaning is absurd. The age of modernism does no longer exist as well since it fades away into a newer period known as postmodernism. But postmodernism has not yet been born. In sum, the modern view of the concept of the self and identity included a stable and authentic one, detached from different cultural and social discourses. But this notion was wholly challenged during the postmodern discourse by concluding that the "self" and the notion of identity is just a mythical association of one's cultural experiences and different social contexts. There could be no true representation of the self. The period of transition from modern to postmodern was accompanied by this challenging concept. Postmodernism marks the relation between the modern man as a trauma victim to this crisis of identity, along with the continuing shift of the notions of time, place, and meaning. The author, in this novel, not only characterizes a traumatized victim suffering from mental dissociations and his attempts to recreate his authentic identity, but also offers a critical representation of modern-to-postmodern cultural trauma, leaving a traumatic grip on the minds of the victimized people of the same era.

As a postmodern artifice, the work traces universal themes that are depicted in human cognition and raises different issues about the notions of identity, trauma, fragmented self, and memory. The concept of repetition is a pervading theme in *Remainder*. In his interviews, McCarthy (2007) uses the term "failed transcendence," which could be considered as equivalence for inauthenticity to describe the collapse of the idealist project in literature, philosophy, and art. McCarthy forms a disturbing obsession of the major character who attempts to actualize the remembered and imaginative events, giving voice to the man's quest for authenticity according to the framework of post-trauma fiction.

McCarthy's character fails to fulfill the rebuilding process perfectly, and the novel ends in a graphic manner, through which the author portrays an infinite symbol. The symbol represents the transitional movement from modern period toward postmodernism; it also displays how modernism tries to revive itself by reenactment, and how it fails every time. Therefore, the novel exhibits a historical moment where the protagonist's identity crisis could be considered as the cultural crisis of his contemporary people within a cognitive

framework. This study takes the protagonist as the representative of people who are caught up in a transitional period, experiencing a new cultural period different from who they were before, working for them as a traumatic event, and are yet unable to adapt and keep pace with it.

Conclusion

This study focused on the notions of identity and cognition, and the way it is presented in the novel *Remainder* by McCarthy. It suggests that the nameless narrator, possessed by the effects of the traumatic event, tries to recreate his authentic past through the performance of reenactments. Based on the notions of schema theory, and its literary representation introduced by Stockwell (2002), the paper examined the cognitive significance of these reenactments. The protagonist's reenactments of the past lead to his constant schematic management of his mental capacity, and his fluctuation between stability and inconsistency. In a broader context, this fluctuation signifies a transitional movement from modernism toward postmodernism, and how modernism tries to revive itself by reenactments.

Stockwell's theory can easily clarify the notion of identity and fill the gaps left in the previous studies on the novel. It brings a newer perspective to the process of identity formation, but it has its own limitations. It fails to address the linguistic and narrative dimensions of the protagonist's crisis of cognition, and is limited to the novel's psychic dimensions and its ontological representation in a cultural context. *Remainder* offers a broader scope for examination through other narrative strategies in postmodern fiction, such as adaptation, intertexuality, Marxism, etc. For further studies in this regard, the mentality of the protagonist could be interpreted through the linguistic examination of schema theory and its reflection in the novel as well. ✠

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