

EYELESS IN GAZA.
REFLECTING THE SELF THROUGH
RECOLLECTION

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Abstract

The paper proposes a discussion upon the manner in which the self of an individual gains shape through the paths chosen by the individual's memory. The analysis of Anthony Beavis, the main character in Aldous Huxley's novel, *Eyeless in Gaza*, makes use of the intersection of the present and the past as it is outlined in the character's mind. Aldous Huxley invites his audience to take a 'journey' through Anthony's past, present and a sense of his future. The novel's progression passes from one year to another, apparently without any chronological order or logic. All the unfolding events have a logic in the character's mind and the readers are invited to enter Anthony's consciousness and make judgments both as outsiders of Anthony's experience and as viewers of an inside perspective in order to gain a better picture of Anthony's personality, but they are also invited to make judgments upon Anthony's choices in shaping his identity. This vision of Anthony's self also involves a rhetorical approach to narrative as it is dealt with by James Phelan in *Experiencing Fiction. Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (2007) and *Living to Tell about It. A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (2005), approach that highlights the intersection of three main elements: the cognitive, emotive and ethical dimensions of reading. Anthony Beavis's self gains shape as the narrative unfolds and as the ethical position taken by the readers changes according to their responses to the narrative.

Keywords: *self, ethical judgments, memory, past, intersection.*

The investigation of the protagonist's journey, in Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless in Gaza*, starts from one fundamental aspect regarding the process of defining the self, that is the manner in which the self tells the story of his quest and becomes aware of its manifold implications. In *Living to Tell about It. A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, James Phelan reminds us that “we make sense of our experiences through the stories we

tell about them, even as those stories influence our future experiences. What's more, most of us are almost as interested in other people's stories (or at least some other people's stories) as they are." (ix) In *Eyeless in Gaza* the implied author brings on the literary stage the experience of an individual who attempts to explore his selfness by (re)visiting the past and the present along with a glimpse at the future. The purpose of Anthony Beavis's voyages is that of (re)defining the self and the implications of his former and present endeavors and such an undertaking may eventually become "a question of building bridges" (Huxley, *The Human Situation* 2). Huxley invites his readers to take part in a particular mental journey whose outcome becomes a rejoinder of all the incomprehensible, complex or simple (but not simplistic) interrogations ensuing on the path of reconciling the protagonist's mental and corporeal standpoints.

The body-mind mechanism in Anthony Beavis's perspective endorses the metaphor of "the art of loving people" highlighting that knowledge is achieved by following the small pace path:

Any process of change is a lifetime's job. Every time you get to the top of a peak, you see another peak in front of you – a peak that you couldn't see from lower down. Take the mind-body mechanism, for example. You begin to learn how to use it better; you make an advance; from the position you've advanced to, you discover how you can use it better still. And so on, indefinitely. The ideal ends recede as you approach them; they're seen to be other and more remarkable than they seemed before the advance was begun. It's the same when one tries to change one's relations with other people. Every step forward reveals the necessity of making new steps forward – unanticipated steps, towards a destination one hadn't seen when one set out. Yes, it lasts a lifetime. (Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza* 493)

Through this excerpt from the last chapter of *Eyeless in Gaza*, dated February 23rd 1935, the implied author launches a profound challenge to his audience because it demands his readers to reconfigure Anthony Beavis's journey from the protagonist's remarks imbued with a sense of concluding apprehension regarding his own existence. Our ethical and aesthetic engagement with the narrative gains new meanings and results in a new shade of awareness regarding the protagonist's identity from the moment we are confronted with the lines previously mentioned.

Therefore our analysis of Anthony's self starts from the ending of the narrative as it compels us to view the entire storyline from a broader and more meaningful perspective. James Phelan pointed out that the flesh-and-blood readers make out the story of the fictional world as the reading process unfolds but also when the reading process is finished and they are required to configure the storyline from the position acquired after leaving

the fictional world. Thus, we propose an analysis of Anthony's journey moving backwards from two points of view. On the one hand, we start our inquiry from the final chapter of the novel placed in the year 1935, the last year from Anthony's life the narrative gives us access to, meaning that we are moving backward in the course of the narration. On the other hand, we are moving backward in time¹ because the shaping of the protagonist's self takes place through several (re)visits of his past according to the chronology imposed by the significance gained by each event from a particular year in the character's memory. Anthony's voyage is shaped by the intersections of memories belonging to his remote past and to his near past, the narrator's account taking us to these disparate moments in time inviting us to (re)configure the links established across time/space in the character's mind.

The "art of loving people" crosses the entire narrative as a red thread but the readers are not completely aware of its presence and its significance until the last chapter of the novel because the problem is not made explicit until then. Across the narrative the protagonist is facing different situations from his past, deeply connected to this idea of "loving people," an aspect kept hidden both from his eyes as well as from the audience's sight during the reading process. Although some of the dilemmas experienced by the protagonist infer that his failures in achieving fulfillment are due to his inability to love his peers without selfishness or any ulterior interest, this is left to be guessed but it is not fully expressed until the last chapter. Moreover, Milton Birnbaum's placement of the protagonist in the group of the "cerebrotonic characters" (46) is meant to emphasize "the sense of frustration" (Birnbaum 47) he experiences throughout his journey and how this character feature influences his decisions and perceptions of the events distancing him to a higher or lesser degree from his peers.

The implied author wants his audience to step on the path of self-knowledge along with the protagonist and to experience his journey as it unfolds in the character's memory. This reading experience sets the audiences on a road that follows the movement of instabilities and tensions engaging them in several kinds of responses: "judging characters, developing hopes, desires, and expectations for them, and constructing tentative hypotheses about the overall shape and direction of the narrative." (Phelan, *Living to Tell about It* 20) This manner of revealing the self from the inside out underlines the necessity of the readers to achieve an inward

¹ Our reference to time here does not imply the physical time of the reading process but it involves the manner in which the protagonist perceives time and his returns to various years from his past, returns following the logic of his memory.

perspective of the road taken by Anthony in order to be able to pass the proper judgments on the road and on its outcome. Huxley's construction of the novel in this manner may be the expression of a fragmented identity experienced by the individuals inhabiting the 1930s society. This fragmentation could be an effect of the mental / physical wound suffered by those who had to cope with the effects of the First World War. Some of these individuals were unable to grant meaning to their existence or to rediscover themselves as human beings with qualities and defects. They let themselves defeated by their mental / physical inertness. This does not apply to Anthony's case because his quest provides him with valuable answers for his inward and outward search. Although it was underlined that "Huxley, through the character of Anthony Beavis, views the world around him and is disillusioned" (Sion 94), we would like to argue that, in this novel, the sense of disillusionment is overcome through the experience gained by the protagonist, and with his experience the readers (re)discover a part of the salience of taking a road instead of waiting for things to get solved by themselves.

Approaching this assembly of disparate pieces of knowledge unfolding in the character's mind could be similar to the process of looking in a mirror with the purpose of acknowledging what was formerly invisible to the naked eye. Huxley offered his contemporaries a reflection of their times with the intention of making them approach the issue of the self with more understanding, care and a greater attention. Why would such a journey tackling the body-mind mechanism still show any interest for the readers of the twenty-first century? There are various responses to such a question according to the spheres of interest (sociology, literature, literary criticism, philosophy etc.) of the participants in the debate. However, we choose to mention here just some of the reasons we consider to have direct relevance for our analysis of the protagonist's road. Firstly, despite the passing of several decades the individuals have continued to experience the sense of fragmentation. What differs from one decade to another is the degree of intensity of that experience according to the historical, social, ethical, existential events accompanying those periods of time. Secondly, the body-mind mechanism is an expression of the constant reflection of human beings across time in their attempt to reconcile the two components. The wounds suffered by the body / mind brought evidence of the salience of approaching the two separately, but also focusing on their interrelatedness. Finally, the readers from the twenty-first century have the opportunity to witness the particular manner of approaching the physical / mental wounds of an individual of the 1930s and to build imaginary bridges able to uncover valuable insights for their present and past condition in the society of the twenty-first century. The self gains shape in the confrontation

with the other and in this novel Huxley invites his readers to reflect upon Anthony's encounters with his inner self and with the others, at one level, and at a different level, the readers' own interactions with Anthony's self as it is shaped on the road pursued by his memory.

Anthony Beavis acknowledges that the more one gets to know his body the more he needs to move forward on that path. Drawing a parallel between knowing one's body and changing one's relations to the others, Anthony points out the necessity of a permanent movement forward on the scale of human relations with the purpose of discovering what lies beneath their visible components. Such an undertaking cannot be shorter than a lifetime, in his view, because one keeps on setting up new relations or keeps on changing the register of its former ones. This unavoidable change in the relations established between the self and the others is the one that eventually defines the self in a singular manner and directs its advancement towards one direction instead of many other possible ones. Anthony's view of the way in which he could establish his place among the others is chiefly expressed by Charles Taylor in his work, *Sources of the Self. The Making of the Modern Identity*:

To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand. (27)

Anthony's struggle evolves precisely around his attempts to take a stand. Anthony's journey among his memories leads him to the conclusion that the restriction imposed by the individual upon his love for the others has been the reason for a chain of failures and sufferings: "All men are capable of love for all other men. But we've artificially restricted our love. By means of conventions of hatred and violence. Restricted it within families and clans, within classes and nations." (Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza* 493) Anthony becomes aware that he has practiced this restriction in relation to his family, his friends, the people he loved or he cared about. This awareness becomes achievable only after (re)visiting the events, sensations, feelings from his remote and near past. Charles Taylor's assertion that "[i]n order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going" (47) synthesizes Anthony's self-exploration.

The ending of the narrative may just as well represent its beginning because Anthony starts his reflection from the present moment and advances deeper into the past according to the associations made in his

mind and the choices of events stirred by his memory. In this manner the last chapter and the first one are closely linked creating the image of a complete circle. Only when we reach the final chapter of the novel are we aware of the actual beginning of Anthony's voyage. Until that moment we are confronted with pieces of knowledge, of feeling and of ethical inquiry because we cannot identify with clarity the starting point of the entire experience. Huxley builds up Anthony's self by pursuing a circular path made visible at the end of our reading experience. This structure of the narrative confers valuable insight into the narrative while also broadening the readers' perspective upon the protagonist's definition of the self.

The first chapter of the novel takes Anthony to his near past, in the year 1933, August 30th. The unfolding of the happenings of this single day being deployed in four chapters inserted among chapters dwelling upon memories from other years may hint at two basic aspects regarding Anthony's personality. Firstly, this must have some fundamental significance for Anthony's mental state as it is the first place we are taken to by the narrator. Secondly, the slowness with which the events taking place during this day are presented (four chapters are dedicated to this one day) draws attention to the fact that the value granted to these events in the character's mind is so powerful that it requires time and patience to be revealed completely. We become aware that the implied author is preparing his audience to have a suitable response to a fundamental aspect regarding Anthony's self. That preparation may actually be the preparation Anthony's mind needs in order to be able to cope with the more profound problem, which remains concealed during the first chapter. The readers become witnesses to the difficult and complex process of remembering without even being aware that they are stepping on the unstable grounds of memory. The narrator guides them through a series of events which may be perceived as pieces of memory.

In these four chapters reporting the events from the 30th of August 1933 Anthony is confronted with memories of his mother, of Mary Amberley—his mistress for a period of time, of the time when he was at war, of Brian's death (one of his best friends) and he has to face Helen's outlook and lifestyle (his mistress at the time of narration) along with his own views on relationships, freedom, slavery, etc. The beginning of the first chapter displays the influence exerted upon Anthony's mind by snapshots of his mother and of Mary Amberley. Through these pictures Anthony returns to the sensations and emotions he had when he was in the physical presence of these two women. What he emphasizes while looking at the snapshots is the existence within his present perceptions of an enormous difference regarding these women as they appear in the

photographs and as they really were¹. In his memories both women have a special charm whereas the snapshots reveal them in a realistic, lifeless manner. His memories are imbued with emotion, fascination, delight while the pictures in front of him have no power of expressing what his mind is able to recall.

We notice here that the entire charm lies within Anthony's memory without which the people and the events would remain faint and relatively unknown. Anthony's consciousness is the one that gives life to the people from his past and that conveys meaning to the events. In the absence of such an undertaking the self would be unable to (re)define himself and grant significance to his inner and outer voyage. The outbreak of Anthony's memory sets the readers on the path of (re)defining and (re)shaping his self through recollection. It is the starting point for Anthony's quest of the self pursued through the visits paid to the happenings that marked his existence, his way of feeling, thinking and understanding the world.

As a matter of fact each chapter takes the shape of a snapshot that unfolds with increased rapidity or with undecipherable slowness in front of the readers. The impression is that the audience finds itself in front of a video camera that recorded certain moments from Anthony's life and now they are comfortably seated and waiting to watch those sequences. Each chapter becomes an episode of a wider story we are allowed to enter only one step at a time. The problem is that these episodes do not have a clear chronology and the readers/viewers are required to build the logic of the order of sequences as they advance in the narrative. This construction of the narrative's logic is quite a troublesome one because we, as readers, only have pieces of information and the new elements appearing on stage may very well, at times, confuse us even more than help us identify the reasoning behind the chosen arrangement of events. Consequently, the readers experience a sense of losing track of events, feelings or thoughts composing the fictional world. However, this great amount of information is structured through the associations launched from one chapter to another and through the small, but essential details offered in relation to the events, dialogues or debates to which the characters take part.

On the path of uncovering the configuration of his own self, Anthony recognizes that the image (reflecting his self) from his memory is considerably distinct from the features visible in a snapshot. In his view,

¹ The way these two women really were is debatable as we do not have access to their way of being but through Anthony's recollections. He is the one telling us that they were different than they appear in the snapshot. We are witnessing Anthony's own subjective perception. In fact, the image shaped here may only be what Anthony was able to apprehend and we need to be aware of this aspect because it influences our perception of Anthony's self.

the representations of people as they appear in his memory are more accurate than a mere photograph because his mental representations are invested with feelings and sensations whereas a photograph is unable to transmit any emotion to someone who has not been a part in the moment captured by the camera. As a result of this apprehension Anthony realizes that “progress can only be recorded, never experienced” (Huxley, *Experiencing Fiction 2*) and this implies that the voyages taken in the order dictated by his memory point out the dual perspective he is able to attain regarding the events.

On the one hand, Anthony may go through those situations and those dilemmas again, but this time from the position of the outsider who cannot interfere in any way in their development. On the other hand, Anthony may become his own spectator in the sense that he witnesses those situations in the broader context of his actual existence, but the outcome of this investigation is made visible to the audience only at the end of the narrative. In fact, Anthony is participant and spectator at the same time, but instead of letting Anthony make the necessary connections and associations among the happenings, Huxley requires his audience to configure Anthony’s self through these visits to his past and to establish whether the outcome configured by the narrative corresponds to the outcome formulated by the audience during the reading process. The reader is endowed with a very important role, that of configuring Anthony’s self without having access to Anthony’s present perspectives upon his past. The validation of that configuration is to be disclosed in the ending of the narrative when the readers are finally meeting Anthony at the end of his journey and are able to grasp his conclusions and to compare their own configuration of the protagonist’s self with that conveyed by the narrative.

The first chapter of the novel launches the main spheres of interaction outlined by Anthony’s memory on the journey he initiated. Firstly, Anthony has to face his family, more specifically his mother’s death and his father’s peculiar and unfathomable behaviour (in the son’s eyes). Secondly, he has to come to terms with his love affairs (past or present)—with Helen Ledwidge, Mary Amberley. Thirdly, he has to cope with the things he has done to Brian Foxe (his friend from school), to Mrs. Foxe (Brian’s mother), to Joan (Brian’s fiancée). Finally, Anthony has to find a way to reconcile the ideas expressed in his diary and his actual perspective on his life mainly influenced by Dr Miller whom he met on an adventure trip to Mexico with Mark Staithes. Anthony’s memory is not the only one dictating the order of recollections. As a matter of fact, the narrator of the story is the one who reports the events from several years and displays various details, surpassing in this way Anthony’s vision and offering his narratee (the audience addressed by the narrator) the

background of a particular situation taking place among characters. In addition, the implied author guides our reading experience by conferring the text this particular structure and by introducing passages from Anthony Beavis's diary along with the narrator's vision / voice and Anthony's recollections.

When dealing with any of the spheres of interaction mentioned above we have in mind the "rhetorical approach to narrative, because it seeks to account not just for the cognitive but also for the emotive and ethical dimensions of reading" (Phelan, *Living to Tell about It* 160) The rhetorical ethical criticism as James Phelan displays it "regards judgment as central to narrative itself. Our emotions and desires about both fictional and nonfictional characters are intimately tied to our judgments of them; and our ethical responses to narrative [...] are tied both to the ethical quality of characters' actions and to the interaction of our own ethical positions with the ethics of technique and the ethical positions of the implied author." (Phelan, *Living to Tell about It* 160)

The protagonist's self becomes an assembly constructed in the light of these ideas. Some of Anthony's interactions with the others gradually evolve into a reflection upon his inner self. Anthony's selfness gains shape through a double perspective: an inward one, reflecting his thoughts, ideas, feelings towards himself; an outward one, reflecting the others' view upon his character. When dealing with the configuration of the protagonist's self our judgments of the narrative interact with the character's judgments of his own actions, with the narrator's standpoints, with the ethics of the technique and the ethical positions suggested by the implied author. All these interactions enrich our engagement with the narrative and highlight several ethical positions fundamental for the suitable approach of Anthony Beavis's character.

Because the authorial audience (the audience for which the text was designed by the implied author) "perceives the characters as other in two ways, as external to themselves and as distinct from their implied authors, and the authorial audience passes intellectual and ethical judgments on them, their situations, and their choices" (Phelan, *Living to Tell about It* 161-2) we consider appropriate to draw attention to the fact that during the reading process our judgments keep interacting with those dwelling within the narrative text and the result becomes visible in the type of outcome attained by the narrative and by the audience. The existence of a meeting point between these sides reveals the readers' ability to enter the authorial audience and to reach the level of apprehension prefigured by the narrative. In our analysis of Anthony's self we start from the outcome in order to show how the narrative entails our judgments and leads us towards this viewpoint. If we pay attention to the details and to the allusions dropped

across the progression of the narrative the outcome contributes to the completion of our readerly experience.

One of the fundamental influences exerted upon the formation of Anthony's self is represented by the suffering caused by his mother's death, Anthony being just a boy then. This event marked him profoundly and left traces within his personality for years to come. Despite not having a multitude of memories related to his mother the participation to her funeral made a strong impression on the little boy. Death was something unfamiliar to him and because of that, even more striking, especially when it was linked to his own mother. His father's incompetence when dealing with his own feelings and with Anthony's perception of the event increases the gap between father and son contribute to an irreversible distancing at the psychological level that leads Anthony on a path of solitude regarding the meaning attached to this episode. By remembering the circumstances of her death Anthony attempts a reconciliation with the pain within his mind and soul. His suffering has persisted over time and it has become noticeable in his relations to women.

His inaugural affair was with Mary Amberley, a woman nine years older, who attracted him physically despite his mental awareness of their inadequacy as a couple. He was unable to make a rational decision preferring to let the instincts guide him. His attraction to an elder woman could have been the expression of his search for the protection he lacked in his youth. The responsibility for the failure of this relationship lies on both partners. Anthony's inexperience in love affairs played a major role in their separation because Mary got tired of his scenes and he began feeling more and more uncomfortable with Mary's behaviour.

In the relationship with Helen Ledwidge, Mary's daughter, considerable changes occur. In the first place, Helen is more suitable for him regarding the age difference. Secondly, Helen's personality succeeds in making Anthony reach another level in the sphere of human communication due to her openness and strong feelings for him. However, another type of inadequacy exists here too. Helen is married to Hugh Ledwidge, a former colleague of Anthony's whose shyness isolated him from the others and transformed him in a figure of fun during school studies.

If in his relation with Mary the problem was the age difference and the dissimilar way of thinking, with Helen he is entering the realm of adultery as Helen is married. However, Anthony does not seem to be affected by Helen's commitment. On the contrary, he enjoys his freedom from the responsibility involving a formal engagement. Nevertheless, this affair changes into something of great importance for Anthony, without him being aware. When he eventually achieves the necessary apprehension regarding his feelings for Helen and has the courage to express them it is

too late, as Helen is determined to put an end to their relation after seeing she was the only one who invested time and feelings in this affair. Perhaps it is not a fortuitous aspect that Anthony's earliest recollection takes him to the day when Helen broke up with him and that this day is the starting point of Anthony's inner journey. This underlines another compelling influence exerted upon his self after his mother's death and the affair with Mary.

The moment he loses Helen, he becomes aware of his love for her and of the intensity of his feelings towards her. Unfortunately, Helen is helpless in front of Anthony's letter, being too immersed in her own suffering. Such being the case she is not able to perceive the truthfulness and genuineness in Anthony's words and thoughts and moves away from him, both physically and mentally. The recollection of this episode highlights the mental wound suffered but it also stresses the change generated in his soul which guided him towards a different perspective on reality. Anthony's grief helped him approach human relations from other angles and enriched his self-awareness along with the knowledge gained with respect to human beings in general.

In order to fully comprehend the changes undergone by Anthony in these circumstances we need to examine his relation to Brian Foxe, one of his friends and colleagues from school. The journeys to the year 1914 are the most troublesome for the readers to grasp because they convey a side of Anthony that they could not have guessed. During this period, Anthony and Mary are lovers and he is deeply influenced by Mary's opinions. At Mary's suggestion Anthony accepts to make a bet by which he engages himself to kiss Joan, who was in a love relationship with Brian. He wins the bet but the price he has to pay is more than we as readers could have thought. Joan takes Anthony's faltering seriously and she writes to Brian telling him she wants to start a new relation with Anthony. This letter is devastating for Brian who decides to put an end to his life while Anthony was struggling whether to tell him the truth or not. The decision to come forward with the truth comes too late, as Brian disappears from home and his body is found at the bottom of a cliff surrounded by flies. Nevertheless, what shocks the audience is not only Brian's suicide but Anthony's concealment of the letters he found in Brian's room: one for Joan, the other for Anthony himself demanding an explanation, and a third one for Mrs. Foxe. The letters are burnt as a means of erasing the memories of the incident and no one suspects that Brian committed suicide, his death being classified as an unfortunate accident.

“One of the remarkable features of narrative is that it can take an action that we would conventionally regard as ethically sound or ethically deficient, and through the details of its treatment in the narrative, either activate that conventional judgment or reject it in favor of a different and

even opposite judgment.” (Phelan, *Living to Tell about It* 160) When we follow Anthony’s journey we pass judgment on his conduct, on his attitudes and way of thinking and upon his own judgments of the situations he came across. These judgments change as we advance in the narrative and their alteration comes mainly from the treatment of sequences and episodes and their development across the narrative. If Anthony’s failure in reaching a reconciliation with Helen, despite his sincere feelings for her, has made us sympathize with his situation and has made us refrain from passing too harsh judgment on his conduct while they had an affair, the discovery of his reactions to Brian’s deep sorrow casts new light upon his inner self. The readers’ judgments heavily emphasize the inadequacy of his conduct and pass on to a different layer of the protagonist’s inwardness, a layer that reveals his lack of courage in front of the dignifying and reasonable circumstances of Brian’s existence.

All three parts involved in the incident have their share of responsibility, but Anthony’s part is greater because he had the power to change the course of things but he made up his mind when it was too late for a significant adjustment. Brian’s death placed another vital mark upon Anthony’s self-development and foreshadowed his forthcoming change of character. The mention of Brian’s disappearance in the first chapter is again an expression of the impact it had upon Anthony’s inwardness. When this episode is revealed an interaction between two kinds of change takes place: “that experienced by the characters and that experienced by the audience in its developing responses to the characters’ changes.” (Phelan, *Living to Tell about It* 162) Anthony is aware of his tremendous mistake only after he relives that episode in his memory. If at the moment when the event took place, he could not take responsibility at the present, in 1935, he is completely aware of his burden. How can we be sure of his awareness? The argument lies with Anthony’s own words and thoughts quoted at the beginning of our article. The “art of loving people” makes him understand his responsibility for the others and the inter-dependence between the two agents on the path of (re)defining the self.

Anthony’s encounter with Dr Miller represents a decisive moment in the protagonist’s existence. Dr Miller is the one who helps him establish harmony between his mind and his body and guides him towards the manifestation of complete love and kindness for the others. Anthony’s studies in sociology mingle with Dr Miller’s views of human relations contributing to the exposure of a self that approaches the others with complete devotion, confidence and tenderness. Anthony Beavis has started his voyage of revealing his inner self from the recollection of his most profound and intense life experiences (the loss of his mother at a young age, the failures in his love affairs, the decay in the relations with his

friends etc.) and he has reached the destination by encompassing in a completely different dimension the meaning of the road taken. At the beginning he could only see his pain and his selfishness. As we move from one episode to another the protagonist starts gaining gradual awareness of his own self as well as of the others. This realization helps him adopt a more suitable approach of his former relations and of his attitudes and ideas regarding those happenings from his recent or more remote past.

The visits to different years have made us occupy distinct positions within the narrative which in turn influenced our judgments and our engagement with the narrative world, in general, and with the protagonist's inwardness, in particular. Resorting to recollection as a means for (re)defining the self has proved valuable and enriching for our readerly experience. Therefore, our literary exploration has developed in accordance with Phelan's contention that:

Attending to the various layers of our experience (especially the intellectual, the emotive, the ethical, and the aesthetic) and recognizing the sources of those experiences in authorial strategy and textual phenomena allow us to understand and value the power of fictional narrative. The reading practice and the associated critical approach ultimately want to give a plausible account of fictional narrative's ability to reinforce, extend, challenge, or sometimes change what we know, think, believe, and value – and to that extent, its ability to reinforce, challenge, or even change who we are. (Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction* xiii)

We have also been compelled to follow the chain of thoughts as they appeared in the protagonist's mind and to reconstruct the picture of Anthony's life experience by patiently arranging the pieces of information accessed with every step taken. Anthony's self has managed to attain harmony with itself through the comprehension granted by the experiencing all over again, this time at the consciousness level, of the main episodes that marked his existence. The associations and links established along this journey provide valuable substance for a better and wider understanding of the self defined in relation to the other. The self's atonement is reached when the individual makes peace with himself and mitigates the communication with his peers. Anthony's wounded mind finds its serenity through the self's discovery of the 'art of loving people'—a dimension capable of conveying comfort and tranquility to the injuries caused by the improper use of the individual's qualities and chances.

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