

Surrealism as a Social Critique: Exploring Identity and Social Alienation through Selected Writings of Haruki Murakami and Shahidul Zahir

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Abstract

Shahidul Zahir and Haruki Murakami are the two most famous surrealist writers of our time whose works have bedazzled many readers. Although both authors come from different geo-social backgrounds having different aspects of narrating their stories, they took inspiration from Latin American literature (especially from Gabriel Garcia Márquez) and constructed their own versions of surreal literature to narrate stories of contemporary society. The authors not only share the same enthusiasm towards human emotion and surrealism, but have also written in the same genre for many years, and they also resonate with similar issues like identity crisis and isolation from society. As they delve deeper into their writings to establish the connection between identity crisis and social isolation and try to compare this to existing social norms, their narratives get even more intriguing as it forms a sublime effect on readers and leave them in awe. As individualism is a prominently relevant concept to discuss in modern literature, Murakami and Zahir have focused on these concerns repeatedly in their works. They have excelled in showing emerging issues of social detachment and the formation of an identity crisis in society. As a result, their works certainly create an assertive buzz and reflect the quality of people's lifestyles because literature is an important medium to critically look at the society's condition and evolution. The simple yet effective narration style, uncomfortably intriguing approach to individuals' psyche, and blending of almost unreal surreal elements into a believable format have given the readers an opportunity to peek into pressing issues like identity crisis and isolation in society without losing literary subtlety. On the other hand, it has made surrealism a gateway to discovering such entities. This paper aims to zero in on identity crisis and alienation or isolation in society through the unfolding of surrealism in their selected writings.

Keywords: surrealism, identity crisis, individualism, social alienation

Introduction

“He was still too young to know that the heart's memory eliminates the bad and magnifies the good, and that thanks to this artifice we manage to endure the burden of the past.”

— Gabriel García Márquez, *Love in the Time of Cholera*¹

Haruki Murakami and Shahidul Zahir are the most exquisite and spell-binding writers to dominate their respective areas of writing. Both of them are very good at telling the ordinary story of ordinary people extraordinarily. While they wanted to tell their stories in a surreal manner and to promote casual, easy-going life and their turnarounds, Murakami worked on the extremity of individuality in detachment and finding solace, while Zahir showed the whole society or prominently pieced characters who mainly depicted the same stories as Murakami.

The selected texts from Haruki Murakami are ‘*The Year of Spaghetti*’, ‘*Shinagawa Monkey*’, ‘*Confession of a Shinagawa Monkey*’, ‘*First Person Singular*’, and ‘*Burn Burning*’, and selected texts from Shahidul Zahir are ‘*Sting(kata)*’, ‘*Why There is no Periwinkle Flower at Agargaon Colony (Agargaon Colonite Noyontara Fuul keno Nei)*’, and ‘*The Lumberjack and the Raven (Kathure o daarkaak)*’. From the selected texts taken from both authors and diving into their writing techniques and uses of surrealism, this paper aims to establish a link between the human psyche and its effect on daily lives when someone faces any form of abandonment from society, and forms of individual identity crises that keep on thriving in society to date. It is important to notice that, while most of the texts taken from the authors are indeed written in the late 20th century, the validity and tones are adjusted in those texts to refer to regular people’s lives, and their crises remain important and subtly relatable to the lives of ordinary people living in a society.

While Haruki Murakami is a Japanese writer famous for his stories written in both Japanese and English, Shahidul Zahir is a Bangladeshi author who mostly wrote his stories in the Bengali. But both of them share the same enthusiasm and passion to write and describe normal scenarios and people’s livelihoods in a unique technique taken from Latin American Literature known

¹ Emma Welton, “Gabriel García Márquez in Quotes,” The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, April 18, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/apr/18/gabriel-garcia-marquez-in-quotes>.

as Magical Surrealism. Now, magical surrealism or magic realism has been a part of our culture and literature from the early to the mid-20th century, which is also the booming period of this genre in the form of literature or art. Although magic realism is directly motivated by the surrealist movement of the early 20th Century, the poet and theorist of surrealism Andre Breton described surrealism as “pure psychic automatism” in his book *Surrealist Manifesto*, which was published in 1924. The main concept of Surrealism lies within the concept of delivering the imagery of the subconscious mind and its ongoing turmoil, and presenting it in the form of art. Surrealism got its proper exposure through Latin American Literature in the late 1940s. Famous authors like Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, and Juan Rulfo wrote about the life and legacy of Latin American people, which includes Mexico, Central America, South America, and parts of the Caribbean. The writers included usual stories and elements from their society and narrated the story based on the theme of hope, inspiration, loss, alienation from society, and its effect on the subconscious mind. Local Myths and folklore became their instrument for expressing subconscious entities through literature. So, the presence of magical elements in life was very subtly put and mostly shown as a normal incident. The difference between this magic realism and surrealism is that magic realism confirms the presence of supernatural elements as a normal incident, and surrealism mostly explains the situation as a dream-like situation or simply an illusion of the subconscious mind.

Given that Latin American literature was already quite established in adapting surrealism, and that too in their unique way, which also firmly established the genre of magic realism in a later era among readers. So, authors often find inspiration from it and promote those ideas with their unique writing has helped to enrich their cultural identity and progression in this genre. Also, capturing people’s livelihood and their thought processes of those respective geographical residents in light of folklore and myths from the area made the interpretation of their psyche more approachable to readers and scholars.

Moreover, it is important to notice that people and their lives might differ according to their geographical residency, but surrealism broke that difference with mere indifference to hope and dream, as people live to dream to have finding solace and contentment in their lives. The journey of finding themselves and belonging somewhere has been pouring into the literature in many formats, as surrealism remains one of the most prominent ones to date.

Haruki Murakami and Shahidul Zahir, both writers, were severely inspired by the works of Latin American writers, as we can see the presence and pattern of magical elements in many of their writings, where a monkey

talks about stealing memories from women (Confession of a Shinagawa Monkey) or a magician capable of vanishing people and an entire place! (Dumurkheko Manush) But most of their writings contain a surreal perspective that expresses people's subconscious thinking laced with trauma, guilt, or the burden of unwanted memories.

And, because of the trauma, guilt, and unwanted encounters in life, people often dissociate their reality with their life and try to justify their current position as a bad dream or nightmare in real life. (Erikson's theory, Salvador Dali, and Sigmund Freud's interpretation of the subconscious mind.)

Selected texts from Murakami and Zahir will help us to achieve further exploration of surrealism and the human psyche, and their alienation from society.

This paper will explore the topics of the effect of time loops and natural elements in play, as well as identity crisis and social belongingness in people living in contemporary times. To analyze the texts, two prominent theoretical frameworks have been employed. The first one is the theory of identity crisis, which was given by the famous psychologist Erik Erikson. Erikson's theory explores how a person learns to cope with their identity from their childhood to adulthood and how a crisis is formed if anything occurs. Psychologist James Garcia also worked on Erikson's theory and further developed it to define the crisis in a better way.

Another major framework that has been used is the time-loop paradox theory, which is a very popular and established ground in many surreal literary works to date. Although there are no clearly selected formats for the authors to develop their stories, most surrealistic authors have some narratives developed using time-looping theory or paradox. Selected texts from Murakami and Zahir will shed light on this theory as to how people react when they encounter such situations. A time loop is a concept that serves as a literary device to show the trauma and suffering of people. Moreover, this paper follows author Gabriel Garcia Márquez's literary views and puts stress on surrealism to properly define the thesis topic as surreal literature's influence on people's lives and how it enacts their motivations. Social alienation and identity crisis often form from the trauma and bigotry people face while living in a society. This situation can arise from social conflicts, war impact, psychological deterioration, rejection from people, etc. All these suppressed trauma and burdened memories take a surreal literary form over time as writers describe those incidents, maintaining the notion of related feelings intact. Thus, the belief has been uplifted since the birth of stories and fables dealing

with imagination that help create magical situations. Surrealism is just another gateway to properly connect real life to magic and see the differences to depict human nature. This paper critically examines that point and scales down the narratives to realistic situations as much as possible. The critical analysis is divided into two parts. The first part thoroughly analyzes the identity crisis in people and how they react in given situations. The second part analyzes their situations with time looping, enacting with their lives, and how surrealism comes into play to form a literary work. Both parts are analyzed based on the selected literary texts of Haruki Murakami and Shahidul Zahir.

The selected texts from Haruki Murakami are *'The Year of Spaghetti'*, *'Shinagawa Monkey'*, *'Confession of a Shinagawa Monkey'*, *'First Person Singular'*, and *'Burn Burning'*, and selected texts from Shahidul Zahir are *'Sting(kata)'*, *'Why There is no Periwinkle Flower at Agargaon Colony (Agargaon ColoniteNoyontaraFuul keno Nei)'*, and *'The Lumberjack and the Raven (Kathure o daarkaak)'*.

Literature Review

From the early ages of stories and fables, storytellers have always tried to provide impacts that create credibility and trust for their respective narratives. The authors used their imagination to elaborate on some current situations or foretold some old situations by reverberating suppressed feelings within many historical incidents. Nonetheless, their aim for the people was always the same, which was to provoke thinking and, to some extent, to evolve the capability of imagination of the audience. Thus, their narratives took different shapes from time to time as people like to tell their version of the story, but basic values and notions almost stayed the same in all their stories. In a sentence, it means that people always took solace in imagination and mixed it with their situational narratives. Thus, stories were born and histories were made. Now, surrealism plays its part from the mid-twentieth century, but some of its basic elements and realization have come from the very core of storytelling, and magical elements had their part in it too. Surrealism is basically a newly improved format of telling people's stories with a hint of little or close to real magical elements. One of the most influential pioneers of this literary format is the famous Latin American author Gabriel García Márquez, who described its relevance and effects on real life in many of his interviews. In one interview given to Paris Review, he depicted surrealism as an instrument to narrate a society and the people in it, - "It always amuses me that the biggest praise for my work comes from the imagination, while the truth

is that there's not a single line in all my work that does not have a basis in reality.”²

Author Gabriel García Márquez always believed that people are living their lives with magical elements surrounding them. They just cannot see it that way or believe it to be a natural phenomenon that happens coincidentally. But according to him, the truth is, -people always prefer to tell their story with the hint of something as surprising as surreal elements in it. So, almost every literary work of Márquez has some major surreal elements in it as he found it almost inevitable to write without.

Therefore, drawing inspiration from Márquez, newer authors began to expand their horizons to narrate people's stories using surreal elements to explain their ambition, heartache, or even tragedy. People living in a society have always tried to discover their options to cherish happiness in life and have good prosperity within. But there is none who did not face difficulties in his/her life that altered their pathways and shaped them to their ultimate form. Some might call it fate or destiny, and some might label it as things that were inevitable to get away from. The trauma and rejection or oppression they faced eventually shaped their memory and psyche to cope.

Nonetheless, as we see in history, incidents that shaped people's lives became the stories later and inspired or diverted people to choose wisely or act according to those. Famous psychologist Erik Erikson has tried to define these incidents by forming a *theory of persona* or how people choose their identity. Erikson's personality theory states that people in their lifetime go through many critical moments which shape their persona from their adulthood to adult life. Psychologist Justin T Sokol referred to Erikson in his paper named; “Identity Development Throughout the Lifetime: An Examination of Eriksonian Theory” (published in 2009) saying,

I shall present human growth from the point of view of the conflicts, inner and outer, which the vital personality weathers, re-emerging from each crisis with an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase of good judgment, and an

² Peter Stone, “The Art of Fiction No. 69,” *The Paris Review*, January 8, 2021, <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3196/the-art-of-fiction-no-69-gabriel-garcia-marquez>.

increase in the capacity ‘to do well’ according to his own standards and to the standards of those who are significant to him.³ (02)

To understand the meaning of it properly, he further mentions Erikson, who proposed the theory of people going through eight developmental stages that span throughout the whole life cycle. Now, the important thing is that, throughout this time, each stage offers them or presents them with an inherent task or conflict that they must successfully resolve to proceed with development. Erikson placed a greater emphasis on sociocultural factors because he believed that these factors are, in fact, related to the development of the process of identity formation.

Now, it is important to remember that literature is just another format of humans looking into themselves with the help of a nourished, praiseworthy narrative to understand their capabilities and act accordingly. The sudden burst of emotion, however, suggests the level of appreciation within oneself, as it varies from person to person.

As Gabriel Garcia Márquez once said in his interview, “What matters in life is not what happens to you but what you remember and how you remember it.”⁴

Both the authors have tried to stay honest with the pathways of the characters and consciously depicted them as normal people experiencing something quite unfathomable but eventful.

Murakami showed an extreme measure of identity crisis and loneliness in his works. In his work ‘*First Person Singular*’, the story follows the protagonist living with his wife but has a weird hobby of wearing gorgeous suits and going to a bar for drinking. He does this often to facilitate his fascination. And, even though he has a partner (his wife), he still feels lonely,

³Justin T. Sokol, “Identity Development throughout the Lifetime: An Examination of Eriksonian Theory,” accessed November 5, 2022, <https://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=gjcp>.

⁴Emma Welton, “Gabriel García Márquez in Quotes,” *The Guardian* (Guardian News and Media, April 18, 2014), <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/apr/18/gabriel-garcia-marquez-in-quotes>

which he covers by wearing those fancy suits. Ultimately, one incident finally provokes his self-consciousness to emerge when he meets a lady in a bar who belittles him for some unknown shaming he had done before. It forces him to face the ultimate loneliness he was avoiding. The story ends by focusing on his consciousness finally becoming guilty.

“The wind was really cold outside. I felt like I would freeze right now. I pulled the suit’s collars up when suddenly a woman’s voice came from an invisible place, ‘you should be ashamed.’”⁵ (245)

Loneliness and identity crises have taken a major portion of Murakami’s writing style as he was greatly inspired by the lives of soldiers from the World War II and the Cold War. Another story written by him, ‘*Year of Spaghetti*’, shares the same grounds of loneliness and identity crisis. In this story, the protagonist dwells within himself and cooks spaghetti for a whole year. At first, it seems like a passion for him. But as the story goes further, it becomes clear that he was trying to avoid his loneliness in the form of cooking spaghetti as it is a food shared by many people and not one. The writer shows the loneliness subtly by saying, “I want you to understand my position, though. At the time, I didn’t want to get involved with anyone. That’s why I kept on cooking spaghetti, all by myself. In that huge pot, big enough to hold a German shepherd, Durum semolina, golden wheat wafting in Italian fields. Can you imagine how astonished the Italians would be if they knew that what they were exporting in 1971 was really *loneliness*?”⁶ (4)

One of the major works of Haruki Murakami to define identity crisis and loneliness is titled as ‘*Shinagawa Monkey*’ and its sequel ‘*Confession of a Shinagawa Monkey*’. In the first story, the protagonist loses her name to a Shinagawa Monkey. The sequel, which is the confession, describes the monkey’s ethical position behind the name theft. The monkey actually steals the name of the woman he loved in a platonic way. As a monkey cannot love some person physically, he chooses to love beautiful women in a platonic way and steal their names to remember them by. The story feels bizarre until this point, but it gets more fascinatingly miraculous or even magical when the

⁵Murakami Haruki, First Person Singular, [Harvill Secker, April,2021]

⁶Haruki Murakami, “‘The Year of Spaghetti,’” The New Yorker, November 14, 2005, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/09/06/magazine20051121the-year-of-spaghetti>.

readers discover that the woman who got her name stolen, could not remember her name in real life. Personifying a monkey and giving him a magical presence to embark on such journeys also deeply surfaces the issues of identity crisis in such a manner that leaves the reader astounded as well as sad.

Shahidul Zahir promotes the same vibe of loneliness and identity crisis in his story named *'Why There is no Periwinkle Flower at Agargaon Colony'* (*Agargaon Colonite Noyontara Fuul keno Nei*). In this story, the protagonist is a civil servant living in a government colony with his family. Now, even though he has offspring and his wife beside him, he still prefers to sit on his balcony and be alone to enjoy the serendipity all by himself after returning from work.

As the author describes the situation in his usual narration. He says, "... and then like every other day he sits on the couch by the balcony to enjoy the dying light of the day. He sits there till night, whereas his two sons and one daughter with his wife complete their school-works, watch TV and haul inside their tiny apartment. He stays in there embracing the dark of night. He observes the passing of daylight and how darkness becomes more achievable. He just observes the situation without any happiness or remorse; like a civil servant would feel so..."⁷

By formulating such loneliness, the protagonist dwells within his daily life as his only partners become the periwinkle flower pots on the balcony. After an incident of earthquake, his life ended tragically as he tried to save the flower pots from falling, but fell with them as well. Until this point, one can assess certain loneliness in the writings. But as the story progresses further, it explodes into more than just a story of loneliness. The soil from the spot where he died had grown periwinkle flowers which only grew there and there only for some mystical reason. This portion connects the reader with the story and shows the true meaning of loneliness by also showcasing the authors' literary prowess. No one wants to be alone and miserable and the periwinkle flower paid its homage to a dead soul by staying on that spot even after his death. Additionally, these works from both authors show the loneliness in human lives and their effect on society.

⁷ ZahirShahidul, *Shahidul ZahirGalpasamagra: Granthita, Agranthita, AprakāśitaSamastaGalpa, SadyaSaṃgrhīta* (2018) *CāraṇiGalpasaha* (Dhaka: Pathak Samabesh, 2019).

authority over themselves and slowly surfacing an identity crisis as the story progresses. People cannot get past the fact that they are experiencing something this much unique in their daily lives. From the text, it is clear that the incident happening in their vicinity has made their mind think like that. Although they try to seek forgiveness for the abolishment that occurred at that time, their consciousness still remembers it all. Thus, the phenomenon continues in an unfathomable way, though their daily lives are being passed by doing everyday work.

Almost the same form of repentance can be seen in Murakami's stories named '*Burn Burning*' and '*First Person Singular*'. In '*Burn Burning*' the protagonist loves a girl who has a boyfriend with a bizarre hobby of burning down old barns in the month of December. And, though he suspects something fishy about the girl's boyfriend when she disappears, he cannot find any solid evidence that can be linked to him. So, as every December passes, he remembers the incident. He tries to find solace within by searching for any burning barns in December but his repentance never gets its heel. As the writer says, "I still run past the five barns every morning. No barn in my neighborhood has burned down. And I haven't heard about any barn burning. Decembers come again, and the winter birds fly overhead. And I keep on getting older."⁹

Murakami has shown his absolutely astonishing power of writing to establish such bizarre stories in a surreal format that only complements his prowess. Thus, whether readers find the true conclusion or not, it surely makes them sad but leaves a craving for more of it. On the other hand, readers are drawn to something magical but believable in Shahidul Zahir's story named '*The Lumberjack and the Raven*' (*Kathure o daarkaak*), where the poor lumberjack lives with his wife and does day-to-day work to provide for himself and his family. One day, a raven shows up in their lives, and they suddenly get a gold pot inside a tree. Although it has a good vibe, it is ruined when people from their village get to know about their sudden fortune. They ultimately have to leave their house empty-handed. Thus, the chronicle of the raven begins. Whenever they meet a raven, they get a good fortune in some manner, but ultimately have to lose it all anyway. The story seems like any other fable until the words of the surrounding people come into play. The narration provides a vague description of this incident in a detailed manner. This surely raises the question of whether it really happened or not. Thus, the author is successful in promoting the surreal theme. The time paradox is visible

⁹ Murakami Haruki, *The Elephant Vanishes* [Vintage, 2017]

from the starting line of this story, where a vague statement starts the whole story as, “The elderly people of Dhaka city could remember that, the city became totally raven less when it might have happened for a long year or five years and it all started from the village named Boikunthopur.”¹⁰

Where surrealism promotes the idea of “detailed” magical reality to make people believe the story, Zahir uses his extraordinary technique of vaguely detailed description which, in fact, feels more intriguing.

In the paper written by Varnika Raizada and Dr. Tanu Kashyap, they discussed loneliness and isolation in Murakami’s *Men Without Women*, where they labeled such stories as “deals in empty spaces and phantom spaces.”¹¹

They praised his idea of telling stories of the modern world, which also represents loneliness and isolation. Murakami mastered the art of telling lonely people’s stories in a fascinating way that only he can do in such an intriguing fashion.

On the other hand, author Shahidul Zahir has received almost the same accolades in his effort to describe the human psyche, or identity crisis, and isolation from society. Although his writing style and narration differ significantly from Murakami but resonate with the same topic of identity crisis and isolation in society. In an interview, Shahidul Zahir precisely described that writing comes from within. “There is no satisfying explanation of why a person writes the way he writes rather than he writes because he likes to write and because it’s in his blood to write.”¹²

In an effort to write about the time-looping paradox, Zahir also added that he wanted to mix present, past, and future, thus breaking the space-time

¹⁰ ZahirShahidul, *Shahidul ZahirGalpasamagra: Granthita, Agranthita, AprakāṣitaSamastaGalpa, SadyaSamgrhita* (2018) *CāraṭiGalpasaha* (Dhaka: Pathak Samabesh, 2019)..

¹¹ VarnikaRaizada and Dr. Tanu Kashyap, “Loneliness and Isolation in Men without Women by Haruki MurakamiVarnikaRaizada ,” Issue, June 30, 2020, <https://issuu.com/tjprc/docs/2-67-1594279249-261ijmperdjun2020261>.

¹² Kamruzzaman_ Jahangeer, “শহীদুল জহিরের সাথে কথাপোকথন,” *bdnews24*, March 26, 2008, <https://bangla.bdnews24.com/arts/interview/1265>.

continuum in his writings, as those mentioned times in his stories enact the same volatile vibe that he wanted to tell anyway.¹³

Thus, we see people of a vicinity forming collective amnesia in *'The Lumberjack and Raven'* or even getting delusional to not recognize their present, past, or even future in *'thorn'(kata)*. Moreover, it is interesting to see that both maintained Erikson's theory of personality.

However, discoveries in many branches can still be made, and outcomes can alter previous discoveries. And, remembering such things, the aim of this paper still proves to be valid because, up to this certain point, the claims made in this paper appear to be justified and evenly established.

Identity Crisis and Time Loop in Play

As mentioned above, Haruki Murakami and Shahidul Zahir both showed their ultimate prowess when enacting a surreal story. And, although the difference in the geo-social environment has allowed them to write in their own fashion, but both embraced the inspiration from Latin American surrealistic literature and especially from author Gabriel Garcia Márquez, who is one of the most famous authors of this genre.

While their writing patterns might vary a bit, both of them embodied the philosophy of telling the story of people suffering from an identity crisis and showed the connection between them and an unwelcoming world. While the characters suffer from indecisiveness and ultimately form a complex identity crisis their confusion and dilemma get, even more, deeper when they even lose track of time and feel stuck in a time loop.

People always try to remember their good memories and are fond of dreaming about their good times. But the truth is, people are more moved by despair and the continuous motivation of improvement, which is pre-instilled within their instinct. Thus, sufferings make them quit or become a stronger version of themselves. Another major thing to notice is that the time loop is actually referred to as a safe checkpoint in video games, from where one can start fresh and redo their previously mistaken works. In another study made on

¹³ Mozaffer Hossain, “শহীদুল জহিরের প্রবণতা ও স্বকীয়তা,” *Bangla Tribune* (Bangla Tribune, September 11, 2022), <https://www.banglatribune.com/762634>

the mind and psyche, it is shown that positive feedback can alter and change memory cells where constant failure and despair result in the deterioration of brain cells and memory loss.¹⁴

Murakami and Zahir have tried to show the time loop as a purgatory for their characters where they suffer indefinitely, but somewhere deep within all these patterns, we find hope of reconciliation and a place for a contented mind. Sufferings might be the truth, but it is optional if one still hopes for redemption. So, the time loop paradox can be seen as a format or option to change which the authors provided to the characters and also to the readers subtly.

Conclusion

Both writers narrated the stories brilliantly, maintaining certain boundaries and criteria. Nonetheless, both followed their style of persuasion to narrate the stories, and they did use similar metaphors and strategies to proliferate eventual conclusions evident in their stories. Shahidul Zahir narrated his story in a vague, collective manner to describe his characters' experiences and show their confusion about the time loop and identity crisis. Haruki Murakami also showed the same point of identity crisis and looping within their memory in his stories, but his characters were conscious, and the whole experience was adamantly detailed only to cater to the needs of the characters and provide necessary backgrounds to certify his showing of identity crisis and time loops in humans. Understanding all these things with the help of Erikson's theory makes it more fascinating as we can fathom the depth and evolution of our society and personal endeavors with it. Now, we should not forget that it is achievable by using different techniques and other formats of analysis. But using surrealism has landed us on two major grounds here. The first one is the opportunity to understand and appreciate the subtle beauty of this genre and the prowess of both writers to enact such narratives filled with social and personal conflicts. The second one is that literature has always been the mirror of human desire and despair. People have always used magic and surreal elements as a cushion to be content in life. So, this is one of the closest points to discovering our unseen part of life. Surrealism is definitely

¹⁴Lisa Trei, "Psychologists Offer Proof of Brain's Ability to Suppress Memories," *Stanford News*, January 9, 2009, <https://news.stanford.edu/news/2004/january14/memory-114.html>

a much better fit to understand contemporary society and its desires. Influential and prolific writers like Haruki Murakami and Shahidul Zahir are perfect ensembles to discover such entities. As García Márquez said, “It’s enough for me to be sure that you and I exist at this moment.”¹⁵ It only seems logical that people will dissolve into their own reality and form their own indecisive time loop in the situation that occurs to that extent. But there is still much to recover from other aspects too, and that remains to be seen. And we hope to see many discoveries in the future.

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