

UNITY AND CLOSURE THROUGH PERFORMATISM: A POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT OF POSTMODERNISM?

UNIDADE E FECHAMENTO ATRAVÉS DO PERFORMATISMO: UMA POSSÍVEL SUBSTITUIÇÃO DO PÓS-MODERNISMO?

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Abstract: Through the use of aesthetically mediated devices, the contemporary literary theory is argued, by Raoul Eshelman, to have ushered into a new epoch-making era of performatism by assigning unity and closure to the current art works in the world. Eshelman attempts to apply his newly formed concept in different art works ranging from literary writings to architecture, movies and paintings in his book, *Performatism or End of Postmodernism* in 2008. This paper is an attempt to overview and analyse the concept of Performatism by applying it, as an example, on a recent Pakistani narrative *The Party Worker* by Mohsin Hamid Shahid. The rationale for the selection of this work is owing to the claim by Eshelman that Performatism has seeped into art works globally. The textual analysis of the selected novel signifies that Eshelman's view of contemporary state of literary theory cannot be neglected as there are attempts at unification and closure of the narratives, a departure from postmodern disintegration and fragmentation. However, the imposition of unity and closure owing a great deal to the use of aesthetic devices and authoriality through the strategic maneuvering by the writer poses a threat to the smooth shifting from postmodernism to performatism.

Keywords: Performatism; postmodernism; unity; closure; aesthetic devices

Resumo Através do uso de dispositivos esteticamente mediados, a teoria literária contemporânea argumenta, por Raoul Eshelman, ter inaugurada uma nova era do performatismo, atribuindo unidade e fechamento às obras de arte atuais no mundo. Eshelman tenta aplicar seu conceito recém-formado em diferentes obras de arte que vão de escritos literários a arquitetura, filmes e pinturas em seu livro *Performatism or End of Postmodernism* em 2008. , como exemplo, em uma recente narrativa paquistanesa *The Party Worker*, de Mohsin

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Hamid Shahid. A justificativa para a seleção deste trabalho deve-se à afirmação de Eshelman de que o Performatismo se infiltrou em obras de arte globalmente. A análise textual do romance selecionado significa que a visão de Eshelman sobre o estado contemporâneo da teoria literária não pode ser negligenciada, pois há tentativas de unificação e fechamento das narrativas, um afastamento da desintegração e fragmentação pós-moderna. No entanto, a imposição de unidade e fechamento devido em grande parte ao uso de dispositivos estéticos e de autorialidade através das manobras estratégicas do escritor representa uma ameaça à passagem suave do pós-modernismo para o performatismo.

Palavras-chave: Performatismo. pós-modernismo; unidade; fecho; dispositivos estéticos

With the emergence of a lot number of propositions around the beginning of 21st century after the pronouncement of the death of postmodernism by Alan Kirby (2009, p. 84), each theoretical position tries to address and mark the shift in paradigm of literary theories. Some of the proposed concepts are post-postmodernism (Mann), Altermodernism (Bouriard), Remoderism (Childish and Thomson), Performatism (Eshelman), Digimodernism (Kirby), Hypermodenism (Lipovetsky), Automodernism (Samuels), Renewalism (Toth and Brooks) and Metamodernism (Vermeulen and van den Akker) being rigorously analysed and evaluated to define the moment of literary theory in the century where we have landed. The departure from postmodernism seems to be reactionary as the theory posited a too much of plenty, pastiche and irony which needed to be replaced by something new and hence the proclamation that “it’s over” by Linda Huchon, (2002, p. 166) came. This shift has also been ascribed to the change in attitude by the contemporary artist who seems to emphasize that his creation may seem silly or stupid but there is yet seriousness in it as Jerry Saltz ⁽²⁰¹⁰⁾ remarked. The argument that irony and pastiche could coexist with sincerity and hopefulness forms the basis for new theoretical underpinnings. Deconstruction, pluralism, fragmentation, plenty, pastiche, irony, schizophrenia, incredulity towards metanarratives and so many other distinguished aspects of postmodernism developed a mechanical boredom prompting a shift towards new theoretical avenues. However, it lacks unanimity as to which theoretical proposition may

be best suited to define the moment of contemporary art works. It could also be due to the assertion that we are, currently, living in “pre-theoretical innocence times” as Eagleton (2003, p. 1) puts in.

The deviation from the postmodern attitude calls for a new label that could summarise the post-postmodern condition (Hucheon, 2002, p. 181). Hence, various labels, as mentioned above, have come to the fore to track the changes and continuities of the present-day culture. For example, the concept of hypermodernism by Gilles Lipovetsky (2005) opines that the lives of the people have become ever more meaningless with more complexities living in hedonism and existential crisis. It is a hyper human state which further aggravates the situation. Altermodernism of Bourriard (2015) considers the current state as the juxtaposition of modernism and post-colonialism. Human lives are stacked with lamentation on the meaninglessness of human existence yet there is a marked otherness overshadowing the globalized perceptions of human beings in the world. Yet some theorists like renewalists (Toth & Brooks, 2007) and metamodernists (Vermeulen & Akker, 2010) seem to present a culture where hope seems to co-exist with melancholy and modernism with postmodernism with a shift like pendulum between the two extremes.

Vermeulen and Akker (2010) substantiate their arguments and need for the new label for contemporary literary theory by charting the cultural changes that have been brought forward since modernism. Modernism that stood for “utopism, linear progress, functionalism, and formal purism” was replaced with postmodern irony distinctive in “nihilism, sarcasm, and the distrust, and the deconstruction of grand narratives, the singular and the truth” (p. 04). However, they are adamant to claim that postmodernism is completely over, but they are clearly suggestive that the changes in the certain major arenas of human activities have brought about significant changes in the global culture. These areas are economy, climate, geopolitics, and the shift in the political center in the world (from west to rising eastern economies). The changes in these areas

have restructured the global culture that calls for new labels and definitions. The transformation, though not complete in any sense, is harbinger of new sensibilities and meanings for the world. The response by the cultural industry to these changes has also been significant and swift. Pastiche, parataxis, melancholy and exhibitionism have given ways to myth, metaxis, hope and melancholy. The naivety has returned but in an informed manner and the idealism has become pragmatic too. Vermeulen and Akker also suggest that different strategies are being identified by the theorists in the artworks that chart the contemporary cultural phenomena, one of the “poignant” (p. 06) being Performatism by Raoul Eshelman (2008) and also the theoretical position adopted for this research paper.

The term performatism is ascribed by Eshelman (2008) to refer to a “strong performance, which is to say a successful, convincing, or moving attempt by an opaque object to transcend what I call a double frame” (p. x). This performance is presented by the artist through the use of monism, double framing, theistic mode and opaque or dense subjects. Monism here is a kind of unity which is ostensive through the use of specific semiotics. This unity is constructed in such a manner that the reader has no option but to believe in what is being offered by the author. This making of the belief maybe temporary for the reader could later on reason away from it but for the time being he is led into a “willful self-deceit” (p. 54). The monistic tendency is also theistic in mode which tends to suggest the existence of divine reality. There is a use of coercive means which could be dogmatic or ritualistic or any other by the author. The reader is temporarily disconnected from the context in which he is sitting and is pitched against the only available solution presented to him by the author. He is made to believe or identify with the solution through the use of these coercive means. This is how monism is achieved in performatist works. This happens through the working of the double frame i.e., the inner and the outer frames. The inner frame is constructed through monistic semiotics and the outer frame

is inserted to give the work a specific type of closure so that the reader is not left with any other option.

The inner frame consists of the originary scenes in which dense subject is moving and the conflict is developed. For the resolution and solution of the conflict the author introduces outer frame. The introduction of the outer frame happens towards the climax of the work so that the reader is led to the only solution through the outer frame. That solution is “unequivocal” (Eshelman, 2008, p. 03). The reader is also aware of the use of the coercive force that is being used through the insertion of outer frame in the work but that is held at check through the solution which is intellectually moving for him. It is presented in such a convincing way that the postmodern irony and skepticism are held back through the frame. This situation also justifies the use of the outer frame by the author. Within these inner and outer frames, the author takes specific care of the coordination of time and space. This coordination is organized in theistic or authorial mode. Deviating from the death of the author, Performatism is reclaiming the role of the author by justifying that author is omnipresent in the work for she/he is the one organizing all these things in the work and also enforcing his solution upon the readers. Eshelman uses theism and authoriality synonymously suggesting that the author is present in the work like the divine reality who wants to make the readers believe in the specific meanings through the coordination of double frames, opaque subjects and time and space. The reader, thus, is not allowed to digress or go into regression as has been the case with the postmodern works being devoid of central point/goal.

The density and opacity of the subject in performatist works is owing to the social setting or the originary frames in which the subject is making a performance. Unlike postmodern characters who are disintegrated and fragmented owing to their contexts and understanding of the signs within the frame, the performatist characters are “singular and inscrutable” (Eshelman,

2008, p. 08) and also in some cases invite the enmity of the characters around them. Sometimes, the conflict is resolved through the scenes which could be “reconciliatory, amatory, or erotic” (p. 08), and if the surroundings become extremely violent against the subject, a sacrificial scene is introduced by the author which presents the solution to the problem in the work. This kind of scene causes the end of the subject but in this ending the subject is deified and the unity and closure are brought about in the work. It happens in an aesthetically mediated way and the reader is impressed to believe in the meaning of the work. Instead of relying upon the intellect of the reader, the reader is presented with a beautiful choice to believe. It is a framing through the aesthetically mediated devices of double framing, theistic modes and opacity of subjects. The framing is theistic as the dense subject develops a kind of world (the way plot is developed by the author) in which the other subjects are also influenced. This kind of plotting may be in five patterns i.e. “playing God; escaping from a frame; returning to the father; transcending through self-sacrifice; and perfecting the self” (p. 13). Any of these above patterns could be told in authorial modes. The authoriality can also be confirmed through the use of first person, a common mode of storytelling in performatist works, as the narrator is all powerful in enforcing his point of view.

Vermeulen and Akker (2010) also note other metamodern strategies and concepts being offered in the contemporary times of literary theory. There is Jerry Saltz’s (2010) concept of oscillation between the beliefs, assumptions and attitudes which divulges the seriousness in the artwork un-present in postmodernism. Jorg Heiser’s (2008) view of romantic conceptualism is another concept in metamodernism that marks the shift from postmodern rationalistic and calculated art to the sentimental abstractions. Similarly, James Macdowell also notes “a childlike naivety” in the contemporary cinema, a shift from irony and cynicism of the adults (Vermeulen and Akker 2010, p. 07). However, metamodern neoromanticism is considered to be the most viable way of

defining the current literary moment which is the “re-signification” of the “commonplace with significant, ordinary with mystery...” (p. 12). Yet the commonalities in all the metamodern strategies and concepts are the oscillations between the ordered and the disordered, unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, and the modern and postmodern.

However, the main objective in this paper is to analyse the relevance and significance of what is regarded as the most “poignant” of strategies i.e. performatism in the backdrop of the textual analysis of a contemporary Pakistani novel i.e. *The Party Worker* by Omar shahid Hamid (2017). Since the publication of the book *Hybrid Tapestries* by Kamila Shamsie (2017) and the placement of the Pakistani English literary works among the significant pieces around the globe by tracking its development overtime, Pakistani English literature could be easily marked as having international reception and scope. Hence the rationale for the selection of recent award winning Pakistan English novel. The setting of the novel also oscillates between New York and Karachi to develop the linkage of power games and politics between the two countries. The aim is to explore in the following paragraphs the use of aesthetic devices of double framing, dense subjects, theistic and authorial modes, and monism in the work to establish if performatism of Eshelman (2008) has really seeped into the literary works in this globally interconnected world with shared universal consciousness and connectivity. To adopt a theory postulated by Eshelman sitting in Germany on a novelist sitting in Pakistan, writing in English, is to enter into the domain of comparative world literature and emphasize that each member of this global village is influenced by the activity and concept of another member, thanks to technologies and politically interrelated world. Furthermore, as the era of postmodernism also had its clear marks on Pakistani English literary writers like Muhammad Hanif, Bilal Tanweer, Mohsin Hamid, Uzma Aslam, Moni Mohsin, Bina Shah, Kamila Shamsie and Bapsi Sidhwa (Ashraf

and Ahmad), it is hypothesized that current theoretical endeavors must also have their considerable influence on Pakistani writers.

The story of *The Party Worker* (2017) starts from Asad Haider, the central opaque subject in the novel, who watches the baseball match in New York central park and is drawn to the memory of his youth when he used to be a batsman and was greatly attracted towards hitting the balls. He is there to see Gringo, who used to be his most trusted hitman, to make sure that his recent act of betrayal would not have dire consequences for him and his family as was customary of the party when any sort of disobedience to the Don, the party head, occurs. He is shot along with two other Americans on the spot and is rushed to the hospital. shooting incident in those suburbs of the city was a rare one so the American agencies become conscious and start their investigations. During his recovery from the wounds which takes a long time, Asad comes to know that his family and only beloved Mumtaz had also been murdered. Lying there on the hospital bed, he starts recalling his past especially when the party was started and how he had joined Don in Karachi who turned out to be a brutal Machiavellian power hungry psycho. All the killings that he had done on behalf of Don's orders start haunting him and he is left with nothing but repentance and a dedication to take revenge from Don. In the meantime, the political and power hungry culture of Karachi is also described with violent skirmishes among the two groups, the Party and Liyari Gang. However, the party is in control of politics and power in a much more organized manner. Other characters like Bayram, Sadia, Baba Dacait and Guddu are also introduced who are in quest for any opportunity to settle their own grievances with Don. Ismail, the journalist is also there with his own ambitions to acquire power and money through Baba Dacait. Asad is repatriated to his country but he also develops a liason with the New York officers to bring Don down. With the help of Bayram, Sadia and Guddu, Asad makes a plan to attack Don when he would be coming back to Karachi, as various cases of scam had been opened up against him in

New York. It was a suicidal mission. Don had not come out of the airport that the suicide bomb blasts which had been prepared for Don and Asad also dies in the incident. This gives a plea to Intelligence Officer Guddu and the CM of the province to send Don back to New York. Don, afraid of his life, hurries back to New York where police is waiting to arrest him on charges of money laundering and drug trafficking. Bad actions lead to bad ends. Poetic justice is served. A monistic plot is given closure through the use of aesthetically mediated devices in theistic mode.

Performatist works use aesthetically mediated devices of double framing, the inner and the outer frames, which is the significant feature of this theory to develop unity and closure in the work. The use of ostensive semiotic signs in the inner frame of the novel from the very start are suggestive of the monistic unity that is carried till the end by the author. The novel begins with the ostensive sign “Watch the ball” (Hamid, 2017, p. 3) that continues to be expressed throughout the novel. The round shaped ball is transformed into the human “skulls” (p. 139) with which Liyari gang members were playing. The hitting of both the balls continues throughout the novel. It goes on with football matches and then with the human skulls when Baba Dacait, Asad Haider, civilians and police officers are killed towards the end. The concept of round shaped object serves as the ostensive sign that unifies the story and renders it with coherence required for monism. There are also other semiotic signs used to elaborate the conflict in the novel e.g. the use of the words for Don, “Pheron. In English you call it pharaoh, I think. A man who thinks he is god on earth. Power has driven him mad” (p. 151) are part of the shared universal religious culture of both Muslims and Christians. “Ak-47” (p. 163, 288) could also be seen placed at various places throughout the novel is yet another semiotic sign suggesting violence and terrorism peculiar to outlaws in the Asian continent or “the third world” (p. 69). The very conflict between the religious and the secular parties in the political environment of Karachi delineates the typical culture of

Pakistan which is never resolved and continues to play its part even today. This perpetuation of the conflict is shown as serving the demands of the powerful elite of the country who do not seem to have much to do with the intricacies of their ideologies except power. These and likewise other signs are ostensive in nature and develop the semiotic environment of the inner frame of the novel.

The “inner frame or scene is grounded in an originary scene” (Eshelman 2008, p. 04) in which the protohumans are involved in a mimetic conflict that could be violent as well. However, in the originary scene the violence is temporarily deffered which intitates the future semiotic signs in the novels. The originary scene in the novel is the meeting between Asad and Don in which Asad is marked and pronounced a traitor to the party. Yet, the violence is temporarily deferred and new set of signs like the ring of Nani Amma is introduced by the writer. This is the very ring that confirms the death of Asad in the outer frame. This violence deffering moment givs way to other events and signs that develop the story within the inner frame until the outer frame is introduced. This outer frame is the suicidal bomb that takes place on the landing of Don in Karachi. Violence deffering characteristics of the originary frame generates more signs and inner frames that develop rationale for outer frame. The introduction of the outer frame i.e. the sacrifice of Asad presents novel as having a typical performatist plot pattern. It is what Eshelman regards as “transcending through self-sacrifice” (p. 13). Transcendence is specific to performatist subjects whose performance is only acknowledge when they transcend their inner frames. The inner frame of the novel that consists of various ostensive signs and events develop the story to such a point where transcendence from the painful existence of Asad is inevitable. Although he is advised by Guddu to “stay alive” (Hamid, 2017, p. 271), but Asad had made up his mind when he says, “In fact, I wish for my own death. But I only want to live so that I can in some way atone for my sins, and that atonement will only come when I rip this party apart” (Hamid, 2017, p. 252). Revenge that was taking shape like lava in the mountain

is erupted in the outer frame which marks the transcendence of Asad. The atonement of sins through self-sacrifice is the act of the opaque and dense subject which can be measured through his performance. The character of Asad Haider just gives that opacity and density.

Eshelman (2008) also gives a criteria for successful performance. It is two pronged. The performance is successful if the subject transcends the given ordinary frame and “when a reader’s belief pattern is changed in some peculiar way” (p. 37). The act of self-sacrifice clearly shows that the performance has been extremely successful as Asad transcends the given frame. He does not want to linger on within the given set of signs and situations anymore. A higher purpose had been grounded in him as he had had too much of the world. Yet this performance also renders meanings to the readers. Throughout the given inner frames, the readers are told of the Machiavellian style of politics and power. Karachi is presented as the complex hub of conflicts of power where each character wants to dominate through money and power. Yet there are also the effectees who want to take revenge. This culture has been going on for years and the real forces could be seen enjoying favourable positions and status in the society. The rest of the common folks were shown to be good for nothing. Yet, amidst these hungers of power and money, there is a character who, even having better opportunities after the fall of Don, chooses to atone for his sins and not to live without his beloved. He finds meanings in his death. Love and atonement come up as the new meanings through the strong performance of Asad Haider. These are the meanings that signify that power and money are worthless. A new belief pattern is formed in the readers which holds back postmodern irony and disintegration and connects them to the unified concepts of love and atonement.

Being dense and opaque subjects, the performatist characters are also “singular and inscrutable” (Eshelman, 2008, p. 08). Asad Haider has remained a performatist subject throughout the novel. Before joining the party he was

singular in pursuing his passion for cricket. He was a good player but was denied of the opportunities due to corruptions at governmental level. His decision of joining the part makes him inscrutable. The way Don motivates him using religious and social contexts set him off to another track where he singularly works hard. His work earns him a reputation of being the right hand of Don and a merciless killer. He followed that path singularly without hesitating for a second until he denies Don of killing their mutual old friend Kaleem. Afterwards as he chooses to take revenge and atone for his sins, he is also singular and dedicated. His singularity and inscrutability earn for him the animosity of his surroundings. Characters like Bayram and Saida are constantly in the look out to take their revenge from Asad. For Bayran, he was the very reason of the death of his son and for Sadia, her brother's. His disagreement with Don also drags him towards his animosity. There again he was singular as he had made the decision not to murder Kaleem. Asad's decision of self-sacrifice also comes suddenly. Within the inner frame, it seemed as if Asad would take the revenge from Don and would be dismantling the remains of the party, but he opts to transcend the inner frames without letting anyone know exactly his intentions. This inscrutability is also a significant feature of performatism which makes the characters look dense and opaque. The readers cannot easily pierce through these characters.

The temporal and spatial coordinates in the novel are also constructed in specific manner. The beginning of the story is picked up from New York almost from the middle when Asad Haider was a popular hitter of the party. It directly moves the readers into the originary frame which sets the foundation of future semiotic signs and inner frames. The mimetic conflict, between the Don and Asad, is deferred to open up the complex web of events unified together to derive the readers to the sacrificial act of Asad. During his stay in the hospital, Asad has the "chance to orient" (Eshelman, 2008, p. 38) himself before moving back to the space where it all actually started i.e. Karachi. The act

of re-orientation is aptly timed to give way to subsequent events of Karachi. It is also this very orientation that gives Asad time and space to transcend the inner frame. This situation is regarded as theistic in performatist writings. The way time and space are coordinated in the novel also assert the implied presence of the author. The postmodernism declared the death of the author, whereas performatism, gives him life though in an implied manner. One of the significant authorial imposition in performatist works is also through the use of first person pronoun. *The Party Worker* is divided into chapters bearing the names of the character. Either the characters recount their own events in first person as is the case with Ismail, Bayram, Asad, Sadia or Guddo or in certain instances there is also the use of third person particularly the character of Russo, the officer at the agency in New York. It gives author the authorial control required to force his will upon the readers. It is the will that serves as the closure of the novel where along with the sacrificial act of Asad to revive the themes of love and atonement are juxtaposed with the theme of cruel power grabbing acts of CM and Guddu. Both seem to live side by side in a perpetual conflict as part of the Karachi society. The result is “a kind of paradox or conundrum whose real meaning is beyond our ken” (p. 38).

Although performatism manifests itself through the mediation of aesthetic devices of double framing, density and opacity of subjects, monistic semiotic mode, and theism in *The Party Worker* by Hamid (2017), yet there are certain conflicting implied concepts on which performatism seems to rest. Primarily performatism is considered to be a reaction to postmodernism in order to fulfill the void that has been created after the pronouncement of the death of postmodernism. It is a reaction to the mechanical boredom (Ngai) that had been created due to the concepts like irony, pastiche, fragmentation, schizophrenia, pluralism, disintegration, death of author, incredulity towards metanarratives and deconstruction. However, the artificiality in the use of

aesthetic devices like double framing is a voluntary act of constructing a performatist work which in a way gives artwork a mechanical look. Eshelman (2008) points out that the aestheticism that is established and conveyed to the readers in performatism is coercively established. It seems as if the beauty is forced upon the readers coercively and they are let to believe that it is a beauty and is “objective, privileged, and positive experience” (p. 37). The implication here is then that the attraction of beauty in the positive sense is diminished among the human beings and that they are forced to get convinced about it. Or there is contrivance, concoction and pretention in performatist beauty. The beauty is thus “untrue” (Eshelman, p. 37). A beauty that is untrue is a clear deception. This has also been admitted by Eshelman that a performatist work drives the readers to “willful self-deceit” (p. 54). As it is a deception, the truth and true meanings are never going to open up to the readers or the reader is never going to acquire the true meanings. This inability of the reader to never being able to understand the true meanings is also present in postmodernism due to its pluralism. Yet, Eshelman emphasizes that the contemporary art works are monistic. This is where it seems to suggest a deviation from postmodernism. But still, the deception of the beauty is illusory. It is like living in a world that actually does not exist. Postmodern schizophrenia is also a world where subjects and readers are induced into a world that actually does not exist. The deceptions that are created in performatism for the readers are also temporary which are likely to break away as soon as another enforced art work is confronted by him. Thus the readers are likely to constantly move from one deceptive world to another and never staying at any centre. A centerless world is that of postmodernism. Performatism does not seem to completely rid itself from the burden of postmodernism in this sense.

The act of navigating the reader to willful self-deceit also has tinge of postmodernism. There was incredulity toward metanarratives as Lyotard (1979)

had suggested for postmodern condition. In Eshelman's performatism there seems to be incredulity towards the petit narratives as well for all narratives are based on inherent deceptions due to its artificial and constructed patterns. The truth is still a farce. Besides, the development of the performatist work of art also seems to be based on the language games as Lyotard had defined the postmodern condition. The ostensive making of the semiotic signs in performatist work is also through the language games. Even the insertion and introduction of outer frame in some metaphysical manner like *due ex machine* lends a performatist work with postmodern markings as outer frame is also loaded with signs and language games.

The confession by Eshelman (2008) that,

Because of its obvious constructedness and artificiality, this set-up or frame causes us to assume the existence of an implicit author forcing his or her will upon us as a kind of paradox or conundrum whose real meaning is beyond our ken. (p. 38).

is also suggestive that the real meanings are beyond knowledge or range of understanding. Derrida (1976) had also claimed that the meanings are lost in postmodernism owing to the unending chain of signifiers. Eshelman also seems to profess to the same conclusion. Yet the route to arrive at the conclusion is slightly different. Derrida is deriving this result on the basis of the meaning making activity of signs while Eshelman takes the whole work into consideration including the plot, subjects, semiotic signs, and temporal and spatial coordination within the text. The performatist work also seems to end in a paradox which is unreachable and un-understandable. Even after the temporary shift in the belief of the reader as one can experience in *The Party Worker* when Asad dies in suicide bombing, he is led back into the paradox, a mysterious ending in which the belief falls apart by itself. The belief in poetic justice, love and atonement is shattered when power and politics re-join their hands through the characters of CM and Guddu to suggest a perpetuation. This

is the very perpetuation that began from the fall of Jamat in Karachi followed by the fall or disintegration of party with new faces. The actual context of the society remains the same. The self-deceit of the reader is fallen apart quite immediately. With the notions of deceptions of the readers, incredulity of all sorts of narratives, and the paradoxical nature of meanings being beyond grasp and understanding, performatism does not seem to rid itself of postmodern notions completely.

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