

Shadows of the Metropolis: Repression, Guilt, and the Unconscious in Anjum Hasan's *Difficult Pleasures*

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Abstract— Anjum Hasan's short story collection *Difficult Pleasures* navigates the fractured psychological landscapes of contemporary urban life, exposing the profound emotional dissonance hidden beneath the surface of modern society. This paper explores the intricate manifestations of repression, guilt, and the unconscious across Hasan's narratives, arguing that the modern cityscape acts as a catalyst for her characters' internal moral conflicts. By employing a psychoanalytic framework, the study examines how individuals grapple with the shadow self, often evading moral responsibility and repressing the weight of their choices. For instance, the analysis highlights the profound moral blindness of the academic figure in "Immanuel Kant in Shillong," who ruins a student's future yet stubbornly fails to recognize his own culpability. Furthermore, the paper delves into the affective paralysis that characterizes interpersonal relationships throughout the collection, examining the severe psychological impact of fragmented family units on vulnerable children who face parental abandonment or divorce in poignant stories like "Birds" and "Hanging on Like Death." It also explores the suppressed desires and devastating physical consequences experienced by the protagonist in "The History of Touch," who is left completely isolated and deprived of human contact after pursuing an illicit romantic affair. Ultimately, the metropolis emerges as an oppressive psychological space where traditional bonds dissolve, leading to a pervasive sense of alienation. This research asserts that Hasan's characters remain caught in a perpetual, agonizing struggle between their conscious identities and repressed impulses, highlighting a postmodern condition where guilt is internalized and the unconscious dictates the trajectory of human connection.

Keywords— Shadow Self, Unconscious, Repression and Guilt, Anjum Hasan, Carl Jung.

I. INTRODUCTION

Published in 2012, Anjum Hasan's short story collection *Difficult Pleasures* captures the profound affective dissonance of modern Indian urbanity. The metropolis, in Hasan's rendering, is not merely a geographical setting but a sprawling psychological arena where the conscious self constantly wrestles with its repressed underbelly. Much like the narrative fragmentation and theoretical depth required to unpack the complexities of Hasan's longer fiction, such as the novel *The Cosmopolitans*, the brief, piercing narratives of this collection demand a rigorous psychoanalytic lens. The characters populating these stories are deeply entrenched in the isolating machinery of city life, navigating spaces like Bangalore, Mumbai, and Goa where traditional moral compasses frequently falter. This introduction sets the stage for examining the collection through a Carl Jungian framework, specifically focusing on the archetype of the "Shadow"—the repository of repressed desires, unacknowledged guilt, and moral ambiguities that the conscious ego refuses to accept or integrate.

In Jungian psychoanalysis, the Shadow represents the dark, unrecognized aspects of the personality, harboring instincts and impulses that society—and the individual's own moral standards—deem unacceptable. In *Difficult Pleasures*, this psychological shadow is externalized through the cold, transactional nature of the urban environment itself. The metropolis acts as a catalyst for moral conflict, stripping away the communal surveillance of traditional society and leaving individuals face-to-face with their darkest, most selfish inclinations. In the short story "Revolutions," for example, the city serves as a backdrop for profound disconnection; the narrative points out the cold city culture where true friendship has been reduced,

highlighting how people have started to use others for their benefits in their life. This collective shadow of the modern world infects the personal psyches of the characters, forcing them into corners where they must either confront their hidden motives or succumb to the neuroses born of severe repression.

The refusal to confront one's shadow often results in a paralyzing moral blindness, a theme Hasan masterfully dissects in stories of academic and intellectual evasion. In "Immanuel Kant in Shillong," an anonymous, widowed professor travels to escape his trauma, yet he remains deeply blind to the destructive consequences of his own professional actions. Even when confronted by his best student, John, regarding his role in ruining the future of another student named Francis, the professor does not seem to recognize his mistake. This evasion is a classic manifestation of the repressed shadow; the conscious ego protects itself by completely denying culpability, leaving the unconscious guilt to fester unresolved. The professor's intellectual engagement with Kantian philosophy serves as a mere defensive mechanism, a fragile intellectual shield against the heavy, unspoken weight of his moral failure and the lasting impact of his decisions.

Furthermore, when the shadow is continually repressed, Jung argues that it inevitably finds destructive ways to surface, often disrupting the physical and emotional reality of the individual. This is vividly illustrated in "The History of Touch," where Dweepa's engagement with her repressed, neurosensory desires outside of her marriage leads to devastating consequences. The price she pays for pursuing an affair with Akvir is contracting leprosy, forcing her into a hospital stay where she longs for the touch of other men but is deprived of any human contact. The physical illness becomes a stark, metaphorical manifestation of her internal moral conflict and resulting isolation. Similarly, the deep-seated guilt and anxiety of fractured families materialize in the domestic sphere. In "Hanging on Like Death," the young boy Neel prepares for a school drama by wearing a mushroom umbrella, where the mushroom signifies the newly grown difference between Neel's father and mother, expanding relentlessly like a fungus after rain. The vulnerable child becomes the unwitting recipient of his parents' projected shadow, his life hanging in uncertainty due to their decisions.

The postmodern urban landscape in *Difficult Pleasures* is replete with characters who treat interpersonal relationships as disposable, further highlighting the dominance of the shadow self over ethical consciousness. In "Birds," the extreme manifestation of this shadow is seen in Samir's father, who flees to start a new life with his new girlfriend, leaving his son behind in India because he views him as a hindrance for his happy life. This complete dissolution of the parent-child bond underscores a society where individuals are utterly unable to integrate their moral responsibilities with their selfish desires. Even the radical attempts to awaken others from this moral slumber are tinged with the shadow's chaotic energy, as seen in "Saturday Night." Here, the maid Savita abducts her masters' child simply to grab their attention, attempting to force them to look beyond their materialism and value simple things in life.

Ultimately, this paper argues that the characters in *Difficult Pleasures* are trapped in a Jungian landscape of their own making. By consistently refusing to confront their shadows—whether through intellectual evasion, physical escape, or outright abandonment—they are condemned to a metropolis of the mind defined by repression, guilt, and an inescapable affective dissonance.

II. THE INTELLECTUAL PERSONA AND THE UNINTEGRATED SHADOW

In Jungian psychoanalysis, the "Persona" functions as the social mask an individual constructs to interact with the external world, often shaped by professional identity, cultural capital, and societal expectations. When this Persona becomes too rigid—particularly within academic and intellectual spheres—it necessitates a severe repression of the Shadow, which houses the primal, irrational, or morally compromised aspects of the psyche. In *Difficult Pleasures*, Anjum Hasan frequently interrogates this dynamic, revealing how characters employ intellectualism not as a tool for self-discovery, but as a formidable psychological defense mechanism. By adopting the respectable veneer of the scholar, the philosopher, or the cultured expatriate, these characters attempt to distance themselves from their internal chaos. However, because the Shadow remains unintegrated, it inevitably ruptures the polished surface of their lives, exposing a stark dissonance between their elevated social masks and their underlying predatory or fractured realities.

The deceptive nature of the intellectual Persona is acutely dismantled in the short story "For Love or Water," where the pursuit of higher education in a congested metropolis intersects with concealed predatory instincts. The narrative follows a pharmacology student grappling with the environmental anxieties of Bangalore, yet the most immediate threat emerges from a figure cloaked in scholarly respectability. Edwin Dominic initially presents himself to the protagonist as a harmless, physically challenged well-wisher. His Persona is carefully constructed through visual markers of intellectual and social status, notably his "scholarly spectacles" and his "big car". However, this facade violently shatters when he uses a fabricated stumble

to physically violate the protagonist, caressing her bottom while pretending to merely labour to get back on his feet. The protagonist's sudden, chilling realization that "Everything was a lie, suddenly" perfectly encapsulates the terrifying moment the Persona drops to reveal the unintegrated, predatory Shadow. Dominic's intellectual guise is exposed as a calculated instrument of manipulation, highlighting Hasan's critique of how urbanites use perceived sophistication to enact their evil plans upon vulnerable emigrants.

Similarly, in "Good Housekeeping," Hasan explores the failure of the intellectual Persona to contain aggressive, primal impulses. The story navigates the disoriented family dynamics of Tara John and her daughter Anaya, who seeks to forge an individual identity by moving to England for her studies. In this foreign, ostensibly enlightened academic environment, she encounters Jagdeep Singh, also known as Jack, who holds the prestigious position of a university professor. As an academic, Jack's public Persona would ideally project rationality, authority, and stability. Yet, the narrative quickly subverts this expectation when Anaya is deeply startled by his unexpectedly aggressive behavior, prompting her to flee from him. Hasan effectively emphasizes the shock of the psychological rupture itself; the prestigious title of 'professor' provides no sanctuary from the volatile, unintegrated Shadow of the man holding it. The academic environment, rather than fostering intellectual connection, becomes a site where the aggressive shadow emerges to alienate and traumatize the younger female subject.

The tragic consequences of prioritizing an intellectual Persona over emotional integration are further underscored in narratives involving profound loss and the inability to process grief. This disconnect between high intellect and raw emotional reality is painfully evident in "Banerjee and Banerjee." When the expatriate Banerjee, living a cosmopolitan life in Paris, receives a final parcel sent by Ludmilla Halmstad containing what his brother wished to give him before committing suicide, his intellectual Persona anticipates a grand, complex revelation. Tearing open the packet, he is deeply disturbed and disappointed to find only a "simple book," feeling that his dead brother had nothing special or profound to say to him from the threshold of death. Banerjee's inability to comprehend this mundane object reflects a psyche so rigidly attached to intellectual expectations that it cannot process the unintegrated, bleak despair of his brother's reality. The Christian echoes of resurrection he contemplates—"Certainly we shall all rise"—function merely as abstract intellectual comforts that fail to alleviate his own underlying despair and his confrontation with the lack of permanency in life.

This reliance on high-minded abstraction over grounded empathy echoes the thematic core of "Immanuel Kant in Shillong." Here, the protagonist's deep immersion in Kantian philosophy acts as a sophisticated Persona that effectively blocks any meaningful confrontation with the emotional fallout of his own actions. Philosophy, in this context, is stripped of its moral utility and reduced to an academic fortress that shields the ego from the guilt residing in the Shadow. When confronted by his best student, John, about the ruined future of Francis, the professor relies on the sterile distance of his intellect rather than acknowledging his culpability.

Through these varied characters, Hasan suggests that the intellectual Persona is inherently fragile when it operates in active opposition to the unconscious. Whether it is the predatory academic hiding behind scholarly spectacles, the aggressive overseas professor, or the cosmopolitan brother unable to read the simple text of human tragedy, the failure to integrate the Shadow results in profound moral and interpersonal failures. The intellect, rather than elevating the individual, becomes a complicit agent in their affective paralysis, rendering them incapable of genuine human connection or ethical accountability within the unforgiving landscape of the modern world.

III. THE TRICKSTER ARCHETYPE AND THE ERUPTION OF THE COLLECTIVE SHADOW

In Jungian psychology, the Trickster is an archetype of subversion, boundary-crossing, and chaotic energy. Operating outside the bounds of conventional morality, the Trickster disrupts rigid social structures and exposes the hypocrisies inherent within a society. In Anjum Hasan's *Difficult Pleasures*, this archetype becomes a crucial narrative device used to rupture the "collective shadow" of the modern Indian metropolis—a shared, unacknowledged repository of urban apathy, materialism, and institutional cruelty. When the societal Persona becomes overly sterile or oppressive, Hasan deploys marginalized figures as Tricksters to enact chaotic interventions, forcing the privileged or the powerful into a sudden, uncomfortable confrontation with reality.

This dynamic is vividly illustrated in the short story "The Wild Things," which utilizes dark humour and irony to dismantle the collective shadow of institutional authority and the mythos of urban migration. The protagonist, Prasad, is explicitly framed as a "mischievous schoolboy," instantly aligning him with the disruptive, rule-breaking nature of the Trickster archetype. Operating within a rural setting that looks toward the city with naive aspiration, Prasad is subjected to the rigid, hypocritical discipline of the school principal, Mr. Hosaralli. The educational institution here represents a collective shadow of authoritarian

control disguised as moral instruction. Mr. Hosaralli enforces his dominance physically, choosing to cane Prasad most liberally while refusing to engage with him personally. The narrative notes that the principal "has conversations with none," a calculated distance that Prasad recognizes as "the man's way of being neutral and powerful".

Prasad's subversive Trickster energy is evident in his mechanical, almost parodic chanting of reform: "I am sorry for my bad behavior and I will reform myself according to the precepts of Basava". His outward compliance masks an inner unruliness that institutional violence cannot tame. Driven by the illusion that the grass is greener on the other side, Prasad attempts to cross the geographic and social boundary into Bangalore. However, in true Trickster fashion, his short adventure serves to demystify the urban utopia, ultimately forcing his return to the village after realizing that city life is above his reach. Through Prasad's mischievous transgressions and inevitable failure, Hasan exposes the cruel irony of a society that punishes the rural poor while simultaneously dangling the unattainable dream of metropolitan success before them.

While Prasad's disruptions are mostly contained by his socio-economic limitations, the Trickster's capacity for profound domestic sabotage is fully realized in "Saturday Night." Here, Hasan shifts her focus to the affluent, metropolitan household of Mohan and Keya, whose lives are entirely consumed by the collective shadow of extreme materialism. They are portrayed as deeply self-absorbed, constantly in motion—epitomized by Keya getting ready at night to catch an aeroplane—and completely disconnected from the emotional realities surrounding them. To puncture this impenetrable bubble of urban privilege, Hasan introduces Savita, a maid working in another house, who operates as the ultimate Trickster figure.

Savita is entirely marginalized, yet she possesses the cunning required to dismantle the ruling class's illusions. Driven by a desire for "excitement in life," she orchestrates a radical, transgressive scheme: she decides to steal the child she is hired to look after, deliberately aiming to "annoy her master". The abduction of the baby is a classic Trickster maneuver—morally reprehensible on the surface, yet symbolically necessary to shatter a stagnant psychological order. By placing the abducted child inside the car of Mohan and Keya before running away, Savita forcefully imports chaos into their carefully curated, materialistic sanctuary.

The resulting confrontation is startling and primal. When Mohan turns around, he is met with the sight of a baby "without its blanket," with "eyes half-opened and his mouth shaped into a grimace," looking "straight into Mohan's eye". This crying child functions as a metaphorical representation of the simple, vulnerable things of the world that the affluent deliberately ignore. Savita's Trickster intervention successfully hijacks the couple's busy, upwardly mobile trajectory. By utilizing shock and transgression, she forces her masters—and by extension, the materialistic world—to wake up, look at their surroundings, and acknowledge their blindness to the ordinary pleasures in life.

In both "The Wild Things" and "Saturday Night," the Trickster archetype is essential for navigating the oppressive collective shadow of modern existence. These mischievous or radical figures do not necessarily solve the moral failings of the society they inhabit; rather, their function is purely disruptive. They break the polished surface of institutional neutrality and urban materialism, unleashing chaotic truths that the conscious, collective ego of the metropolis desperately tries to keep hidden.

IV. THE ORPHAN ARCHETYPE: INHERITING THE PARENTAL SHADOW

Within the framework of Jungian psychoanalysis, the Orphan archetype emerges when the fundamental illusion of childhood safety is shattered, initiating the individual into the harsh, unvarnished realities of the world. While this archetype is traditionally associated with the literal loss of parents, in the postmodern, urban landscapes of Anjum Hasan's *Difficult Pleasures*, the Orphan is frequently birthed through psychological and emotional abandonment. As adult characters succumb to the pressures of the metropolis, they often fail to integrate their own moral conflicts, selfish desires, and relational failures. Consequently, this unintegrated parental Shadow is violently projected onto the most vulnerable members of the family unit: the children. In Hasan's narratives, the child does not merely witness the breakdown of the adult world; they actively inherit it, bearing the full, crushing weight of their parents' unacknowledged psychological debris.

The profound trauma of this archetypal inheritance is most starkly realized in the short story "Birds." The narrative centers on a small boy, Samir, whose entry into the Orphan archetype is twofold: he is bereaved by the physical death of his mother and subsequently subjected to the emotional erasure orchestrated by his surviving parent. The story opens with a visceral confrontation with absence, as Samir and his father travel to India to dissolve his mother's ashes. Hasan captures the boy's desperate yearning for maternal connection when his father opens the carton; Samir hopes to smell his mother's familiar perfume, but is met with the bleak reality that the ashes carry no scent.

However, the true devastating blow of the Orphan's journey comes not from the deceased mother, but from the living father's complete surrender to his own selfish Shadow. Driven by a desire to escape his responsibilities and start anew with a new girlfriend, the father actively plots to leave his son behind with his grandparents in India. To the father, the child is no longer a bond to be nurtured but a direct hindrance to his own pursuit of a happy life. Through this devastating betrayal, Hasan highlights a dark facet of postmodern society where parents prioritize their identities as separate individuals, ruthlessly choosing to snap their relationship with their offspring. Samir is thrust into an isolated existence, and his intense pain is expressed through his rebellious behavior and tears. He becomes a living receptacle for his father's unresolved guilt and selfishness, inheriting a profound, unearned abandonment.

This inheritance of the parental Shadow takes on a more insidious, atmospheric quality in "Hanging on Like Death." Unlike Samir, the young protagonist Neel is not physically abandoned across continents, but he is psychologically orphaned by the impending dissolution of his family. Neel is trapped in the liminal space of his parents' divorce, an environment thick with unarticulated adult conflict that he is too young to process but is forced to endure. Hasan brilliantly uses the mundane rituals of Neel's preparation for a school drama to illustrate how the parental Shadow infects the child's domestic sanctuary. As Neel practices his lines while wearing a tiny umbrella painted to look like a mushroom, he looks into a mirror "flecked with his father's toothpaste spit". This physical residue on the mirror serves as a powerful symbol of the messy, lingering, and careless imprint the father leaves on Neel's self-image.

The costume itself becomes a heavy metaphorical burden. As Neel repeatedly asks his reflection, "If a mushroom could talk what would it say?", the mushroom signifies the corrosive, rapidly expanding difference between his father and mother that grows relentlessly like a fungus after rain. Neel is burdened with wearing the physical manifestation of his parents' marital decay on his head. The title of the story perfectly encapsulates the Orphan's psychological state; the child in the broken family must struggle through an existence where their life is entirely uncertain due to their parent's decisions. Neel's emotional security hangs precariously like death, completely at the mercy of adults who are too consumed by their own interpersonal failures to shield him from the fallout.

In both "Birds" and "Hanging on Like Death," Hasan utilizes the Orphan archetype to critique the moral failures of the contemporary adult world. The children in these stories are innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire of metropolitan neuroses. Because the parents refuse to confront or integrate their own Shadows—choosing instead to flee, divorce, or erase their pasts—the chaotic energy of those Shadows flows downward. Samir and Neel are forced into premature psychological maturity, inheriting a fractured world devoid of permanence or unconditional love. Through these young characters, Hasan warns that the ultimate consequence of an unexamined life is the tragic, generational transmission of despair.

V. TAPPING THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS: MYTH, FAIRY TALE, AND REBIRTH

Beyond the personal repository of repressed traumas and unacknowledged guilt, Carl Jung posited the existence of the "collective unconscious"—a deeper, inherited layer of the human psyche populated by primordial images, archetypes, and universal myths. In *Difficult Pleasures*, Anjum Hasan explores how individuals, when overwhelmed by the stark alienations and temporal anxieties of modern life, instinctively reach into this ancestral wellspring. Characters attempt to tap into fairy tales and creative expression not merely as forms of escapism, but as profound psychological mechanisms for survival, striving to transcend their immediate suffering and achieve a sense of permanence or symbolic rebirth.

In "Fairytale in the 12th Main," the collective unconscious manifests through the desperate invocation of mythic time as a defense against the agony of separation. The narrative centers on Inayat and Hina, an unwed couple whose intense, intoxicating romance forces them into a hyper-vigilant existence, preferring the archetypal cover of night where they believe their love can prosper away from societal scrutiny. When a phone call dictates that Hina must depart, the unbearable reality of their parting drives Inayat to seek refuge in universal myth. Hasan explicitly incorporates the ancient narrative of Sleeping Beauty to articulate Inayat's profound desire to completely halt the progression of time. He fixates on the image of the princess falling asleep at the spindle, the kingdom ceasing to function, and the thorny hedge rising to enclose its inmates for a hundred years.

For Inayat, the fairy tale is a vital psychological blueprint. He equates the distance between himself and his lover to a century of separation, desperately wishing to freeze time so that their youthfulness and passion might be perfectly preserved. He conceptualizes liberation from his pain through drastic, symbolic ruptures of reality: drinking poison, stopping the clock, and the skipping of a stuck record. However, the collective unconscious is vast and contains terrors as well as salvation. When Inayat realizes he cannot actually stop the passing of time—that he cannot prevent the rising sun or the changing seasons that lead inevitably to old age and death—his unprotected psyche spirals into a hyper-real state. His intense loneliness unleashes

catastrophic, apocalyptic visions drawn from the darkest corners of the human mind; he hallucinates babies slipping from their mother's grasp and aircraft catching fire. Hasan masterfully uses this fairy-tale framework to decode the overwhelming neurosensory emotions of love, ultimately demonstrating the tragic impossibility of living within a magical, fantasy-flavored world devoid of logical, earthly constraints. The myth provides a temporary psychological container, but it shatters against the relentless forward motion of reality.

While Inayat fails to harness myth to arrest time, other characters successfully engage the creative layers of the unconscious to facilitate psychological healing and individuation. Jung argued that engaging with art allows the ego to process profound trauma, bridging the conscious and unconscious minds to initiate a process of rebirth. This restorative aspect is central to "The Big Picture," which chronicles the psychological journey of Mrs. Ali, a fifty-two-year-old widow who turns to painting to cope with her deep-seated bitterness.

For Mrs. Ali, the act of painting is devoid of external, ego-driven ambition. As the narrative states, "She didn't paint to get somewhere. She painted to stay where she was". This profound stillness represents a deliberate descent into her own interiority. By shutting herself in a study room to paint the things that have captured her mind, she actively channels the contents of her unconscious onto the canvas. Through this creative engagement, she achieves a form of psychological rebirth; the passion of painting keeps her continuously occupied and allows her to forge a new identity independent of her grief. Her journey culminates in a literal and symbolic voyage to Europe to display her work in an art museum, facilitated by her introduction to Frieda.

Yet, Hasan brilliantly grounds this transcendent psychological rebirth in the inescapable realities of the physical body. Amidst her artistic triumph, Mrs. Ali suffers from severe bleeding, a physical affliction that puts her in highly uncomfortable situations and causes her anxiety about what her younger traveling companions might be thinking. This bodily reality serves as a potent anchor. It juxtaposes her soaring artistic actualization with the messy, painful, and mortal constraints of human existence.

Through these narratives, Hasan illustrates the lengths to which individuals will go to find meaning and refuge when traditional social structures fail them. Whether seeking the temporal stasis of a classic fairy tale or the healing permanence found within a painted canvas, the characters in *Difficult Pleasures* continuously reach into the depths of the collective human psyche, utilizing its ancient tools to navigate the fractured landscape of the postmodern world.

VI. CONCLUSION

In Anjum Hasan's *Difficult Pleasures*, the journey toward Jungian individuation—the psychological mandate to integrate the conscious ego with the darker, repressed elements of the unconscious—is depicted not as a triumphant arrival, but as an agonizing burden. Through her masterful use of narrative fragmentation, Hasan reveals how the modern metropolis relentlessly tests the fragile boundaries of the human psyche. Rather than achieving psychological wholeness, her individuals frequently buckle under the weight of their own unresolved moral conflicts, retreating into isolation or defensive postures when forced to face their inner darkness.

This aborted individuation and the heavy cost of unintegrated emotions are acutely visible in the story "Eye in the Sky." When Dawn flees to Goa on a coach following a misunderstanding with her husband Jasim, she acts on a chaotic, unintegrated impulse, believing she can take revenge on him by venturing out alone. However, her attempt to assert a fiercely independent, individuated self is quickly compromised by the predatory reality of the city, embodied by Vinay, who perceives her solitude as a vulnerability to be exploited. The inconvenience and fear created by Vinay's unwanted advances force Dawn to seek protection from strangers like Patel and Johnny in a bar. Through this terrifying ordeal, Dawn arrives at a profound realization: acting purely out of anger does not solve the underlying issue, and impulsive decisions driven by unexamined emotions only lead to adverse consequences. She is forced to confront the harsh limitations of her own agency in a space that strips away her defensive illusions.

Ultimately, the fragmented structure of *Difficult Pleasures* perfectly mirrors the fractured psyches of its protagonists. The collection asserts that in contemporary urban spaces, true individuation demands an excruciating, honest confrontation with the Shadow self. For Hasan's characters, the failure or refusal to bear this psychological burden results in a perpetual state of affective dissonance. They remain suspended in the shadowy corridors of the metropolis—caught between who they pretend to be and who they actually are—haunted by the guilt of their evasions and forever alienated from the elusive promise of a whole, integrated existence.

Ultimately, Hasan's collection offers a profound meditation on the psychological costs of modern urban existence, demonstrating that the failure to confront and integrate the Shadow self leads not only to personal suffering but to the transmission of trauma across generations.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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