

***Homo Viator* Ideals in the Postmodernist Creative Corpus of Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri**

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Abstract

The *homo viator* concept concerns humanity in its engagement with travelling that is beyond the physicality of existence. This concept considers the spatio-temporal (spatio-temporal) omnibus of human agents' earthly experiences, ranging from the philosophical to the most pedestrian of involvements, all highlighting existence as mental travelling towards hope fulfilled and hope dashed, through agonising conduits. The *homo viator* ideal is a given in the human being, and it has disparate impressions on individuals, depending on ideological and social factors. Therefore, the present paper tries to identify the varying ways through which Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri manifest the multiform dimensions of the *homo viator* character and disposition in some of their works. To evaluate the *homo viator* essentials in Okri's *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment* and *Astonishing the Gods*, and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and *The Moor's Last Sigh*, this exegete avails himself of theoretical notions like mainstream dialectical assumptions, existentialism, magic realism, postmodernism, Alfred North Whitehead's process thought-view, and, of constitutive essence, Gabriel Marcel's insights into the *homo viator* psychological makeup. *These theoretical concepts serve a useful purpose in this analysis because they are all concerned with the nature of being which the essay tries to ventilate in the selected works of Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri. The analysis is a revelation about the works of Rushdie and Okri that have been appreciated as compelling clarifications about cultural issues bordering on man's beingness, the activist resentment of potentate mentalities, dialectic-inspired contradictions that exist in earthly phenomena, and time as a driving force in man's wayfaring values, all bringing into view the homo viator as an individual with subjective conceptions of life as may have been opened, life being a tome trope, with its pages of multifarious and multidimensional sensibilities and experiences.*

Keywords: *Homo Viator, Dialectic, Existentialism, Postmodernism, Whitehead's Process ontology*

The idea of a journey, which is not usually considered as having any value or application of a specifically philosophic order, does however offer the inestimable advantage of gathering together determinations which belong both to time and space; and it would be worthwhile to try to find out how it accomplishes such a synthesis. (Marcel 3)

Introduction

The *Homo Viator* ethic puts in perspective the nature of the human species as a “traveller” through time and space in earthly conducts and experiences, from the cradle to the grave. This travel idea presupposes not only physical mobile sensitivities, which are but a miniature aspect of the phenomenon. The *homo viator* paradigm also relates to the essence, meanings, in fact the totality of interpretative possibilities that can render themselves open for a discourse on the being-ness of humanity. The *Homo Viator* construct is a revelation of the human race as one that is obsessed with living and all its accompanying trials, tribulations, successes, failures, entanglements and celebrations, arising out of contributions, participations and responses to social, moral, psychological and political stimuli. This construct is indeed an all-involving exegesis of the individuality of the human subject, one's relationship to the other in all situations, the impact of the individual or a mass on society and vice versa, with especial concern for how ideological initiatives explain events over time, all in a bid to have a bird's-eye view of existence. This comprehensive outlook makes it clear that “travelling” as *homo viator* constitutes the physical, mental, philosophical, ideological, social, economic, psychological and political comportment of personalities in society, and in all relationships, pursuant to having a composite picture of ontological perspectives. Specifically, the “who am I?” question underlines all facets of the *homo viator* discourse as personality appreciation constitutes a significant part of the ontology. The *homo viator* idea invariably reflects the consuming desire of *homo sapiens* to be apprised of the nature of existence in its ethereal and corporeal essences.

***Homo Viator* Ethos in the World of Rushdie and Okri**

The *homo viator* concept that reflects the primary nature of the human being, as gleaned from the earlier discussion, denotes a comprehensive and holistic engagement with epistemological issues in their relationship with space-time activity. The three-headed spirit's action of imploring Azaro to mind the omnibus reality is quite illuminating in the knowledge-acquisition context of the *homo viator* paradigm. The spirit puts it to an ignorant Azaro: “When you can see everything from every imaginable point of view, you will begin to understand” (Okri, *The Famished Road* 327). In this sort of holistic reasoning exists the fullness of the postmodernist fictive predilection of Rushdie and Okri, whose literary concerns take in some of the elements discoursed in the introduction. Of utmost importance is the “being-nothing pair” (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 419) interaction, which valorises the historicist “distinction between the *becoming* and the *having-become*” (419) in the dramatic peregrinations that encapsulate the metaphysic of hope and failure in the worldly exertions that permeate ruminations over the dignity-pursuing individual. The *homo viator* course can then be seen as a journey campaign of knowledge acquisition which shows an engrossment with the self in relation to the other after all “the best part of my personality does not belong to me. I am in no sense the owner, only the trustee” (Marcel 13). This self-other relationship is an upshot of the grappling with the condition of depersonalisation, the adversarial concept to “egotatry, the idolatry of the self” (Marcel 14). In Rushdie and Okri's writing, self-apprehension as a condition for self-fulfilment is vital in the light of the proposition that “I am possessed of unquestionable privileges which make me the centre of my universe, while other people are [...] mere obstructions to be removed or circumvented” (Marcel 13). A dialectics of possessiveness situate in the historical build of society, therefore, announces itself to place the idea of selfhood in the crucible of ontological reasoning.

Rushdie and Okri's postmodern fiction presents the *homo viator* conduct of the human entity as a convergence of existentialism, “a reality apprehended more and more intimately as a network of

protective or hostile influences” (Marcel 207) and the realities inherent in “transitory existence” (5). Karl Jaspers' variant of the existentialist ethic seems to have a more profound grip on the writers' creative conscience. Its primary focus is on individual crisis before situating it in cultural crisis (Varma 303). The individual, cum, cultural crisis arguably does not preclude the tension between realism and supernaturalism, and, of course, other social tensions that inundate the Rushdie and Okri journey-inspired fiction. This *homo viator* treatise is made more poignant in Jaspers relating the “truly human life” (303), that is, “a claim to self-will and existence” (303) to power structure, in which the State has domineering influence. Jaspers submits:

The reality of self-hood could only be actualised in the “real” world by means of power, and since power is politically incorporated in the State, it was necessary to create a “State will”, which would (a) on the one hand, direct a life-order promoting the general welfare and (b) create optimum or ideal conditions for creativity and the realisation of possibilities, on the other. (303)

The State, whether in its colonial or postcolonial countenance, is the repository of power, the fount of all ethos of possibility, possibility vistas being the élan vital for the quest-inspired immersion of the colonised writer. The conflict situation in the *homo viator* construct of Rushdie and Okri, in one sense, pits the individual against the State, which is presumed to have in no small way shirked its responsibility in both respects highlighted by Jaspers. The “life-order” is now aggressively pursued by the authors' wayfaring heroes. They express themselves in many instances through creativity that is pushed into the open through bruising engagements with social and political denials.

A strain of Gabriel Marcel's theoretical supposition on the *homo viator* paradigm to a large extent has a bearing on a *homo viator* consideration of Rushdie and Okri's novels, they being a postmodernist enunciation of socio-political disenchantment and disillusionment. Marcel delves into the captive's psychology to highlight the “traveller's” lot in the face of social deprivation. This deprivation, according to him, is not without the duration-durance effect, which creates “conditions under which endurance becomes part of the experience of captivity” (Marcel, 2010: 24), a situation in which one is not “merely precipitated into, but as it were pledged by external constraints to a compulsory mode of existence involving restrictions of every kind” (24). Marcel seems to hit the nail right on the head when he veers into the literary world, locating the captive's state in the deprived writer's psyche. He argues that “[...] the artist or the writer who suffers from a prolonged sterility has literally a sense of being in prison, or, if you prefer, in exile, as though he had been taken out of the light in which he normally has his being [opining that] all captivity partakes of the nature of alienation” (25).

Doubtlessly, alienation and captivity syndromes are integral aspects of postmodernist thematic preoccupations. The combative complexion of postcolonial literature is a response to these prison actualities, and the further empowering of its heroic figures in their travellers' mien to stand up against instruments of personality dismembering geared towards upholding the selfness virtue, inspired by the Marcel-constructed hope that “in tearing me out of myself, it gives me an opportunity in realising far more acutely than I should have done without it, the nature of that lost integrity which I now long to regain” (25). Integrity pursuit in its cultural, social and political hues occupy the thinking of some of the authors' heroes, who are sometimes invested with supernormal prowess through hyperbolic aesthetics “in realising far more acutely” than they should have done without depersonalisation, a realisation akin to the “leap of the incommensurable” (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 245). The *homo viator* instinct, the denials of the State being an impetus, thereon, arises through a mix of re-personalisation ideas, rooting

for one's roots, one's identity, disengaging from the prejudice of Western homogeneous and universal culture, and generally questing for the preeminence of humanistic values, albeit in a seething cauldron of enervating impediments or *impedimenta*, a picture of postcolonial propaganda. Instances of these re-personalisation campaigns are the identity pursuits of Azaro, Black Tyger and Jeremiah in Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* and that of Saleem in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*.

The physical manifestation of the journey idealism is, in some cases, expressed in Saleem's movement from Bombay to Karachi and then to Bangladesh in *Midnight's Children*, Azaro's wanderings in *The Famished Road* and *Songs of Enchantment* and the "visitor" leaving his home for the land of the "invisibles" in *Astonishing the Gods*. However, a metaphorical understanding of the *homo viator* concept has always been the vogue conduit for its analysis, purposed, in some senses, to prune the realist power of the master narrative, a self-dissolving mental war by the "traveller" to assert the self in the face of earthly burdens that daunt, depictive of *homo patiens*, "[...] human being [...] as a sufferer". (<https://www.elisabeth-lukas-archiv.de/welcome-englisch/books-and-more/homo-patiens/>). Issues like beingness, surmounting existential obstacles, captive and prison idioms, ego-centred I-ness propensities, power realities, change longings, and depressed mentation of physical and spiritual "travelling", as are extant in the "traveller's" condition, constitute the analytical nucleus of the title of this paper, "*Homo Viator* Ideals in the Postmodernist Creative Corpus of Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri".

Temporality as Driving Force in the *Homo Viator* Impression of the Surrealist World of Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri

For Ben Okri, temporal perspectives as captured in "beginnings", which hints at what the end will be, are a factor in his road metaphysics. "Time as closed, or, [...] time as a prison" (Marcel 47), a manifest content of the synchronic social order, is, therefore, of no importance for the Okri "travelling" agent. Realistic temporal stasis or the idea of permanence and unchangeability in the realist philosophy is, on that score, a sore. Diachronic sensitivities in hope "piercing through time" (47) strengthen the resolve of wayfarers, making them look beyond immediate hindrances. Progression, which either leads to growth or regression, is very much a component of the elemental continuum that the road is. Birth and dying are, therefore, twinned with the progress of life, an assertion that the "tragic vision" (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 39) is "not a sense of cosmic persecution" (39). The "tragic vision" is, therefore, a development toward "greater and greater self-realisation" (39), especially if Hegelian dialectic is not to be repudiated, a dialectic that sees "series of dyings" as positive. In which case, living encapsulates pre-birth experience with its terrestrial flavour, a concurrence with Alfred Whitehead's view that "there is some reenactment of data received from the past with the possibility of deviation or novelty". (Cobb, Jr. 11). Absolute genetic transition, from dialectical considerations, is, therefore, impossible.

"Time as a prison", for the reasons explained above, and according to the convictions of some characters in Okri's *The Famished Road* and *Astonishing the Gods* particularly, should be disregarded. Azaro, Black Tyger and Jeremiah, the photographer, prefer to confront head-on deprivatory situations to succumbing to them. Azaro is unfazed by the innumerable wars being waged against him by his spirit friends; both Black Tyger and Jeremiah resolve to square up to the socio-political problems in their society, daring the consequences. In the *homo viator* persuasions of some of the dramatis personae in these two novels,

to capitulate, [...] to accept the given sentence or even to recognise the inevitable as such; it is to go to pieces under this sentence, to disarm before the inevitable. It is at bottom to renounce the idea of remaining oneself, it is to be fascinated by the idea of one's own destruction to the

point of anticipating this very destruction itself. (Marcel 32)

The characters are amenable “to the duration of time, or more precisely to the temporal order, that is to say, to the fact that change is possible in reality” (Marcel 33). Okri and Rushdie (their creators), they themselves victims of an ungainly social system, decide to rise above the “fatum” reality of their deprivation, doing away with stoicism, having “recognised that the stoic is always imprisoned within himself [...] strengthens himself [...] but does not radiate” (Marcel, 32). They, against that logic, put on the non-acceptance garb and join forces in exposing societal ills, especially when the crisis is disappointingly wearing a picture of irresolution. This (wearing non-acceptance garb) the two writers do, though in different degrees, by creating characters that are daring and ready to embark on self-immolation, also in divergent measures, levels and proportions, towards righting societal wrongs.

The unbecoming facts of human life, as expressed by Azaro in “the rigours of existence, the unfulfilled longings, the enshrined injustices of the world, the labyrinths of love, the ignorance of parents, the fact of dying [...]” (Okri *The Famished Road* 3), which have turned the socio-political system into a festering sore, constitute an enormous encumbrance on Azaro's identity-seeking sojourn. He repines, without reservation, the wicked ways of people. The unappreciative posture of the creditor-friends of Black Tyger (the father of Azaro, the main character), the vast gulf between the rich and the poor, which manifests itself in some people living in clover while others are condemned to the impecuniousness of the slums, religious perversity, political insincerity on the part of both the party of the rich and that of the poor and other individual eccentricities are a baulk to Azaro's intent to define himself permanently within the corporeal reality.

All that Azaro remonstrates against in *The Famished Road* are doubtlessly and pitiable a common feature of life in the author's country. In like manner, the decolonising temperament of Black Tyger regularly pits him against thugs of the Party of the Rich, grieving the odious reality that people have forgotten the fantastic powers of their forbears, one of which urges his grandfather to wander through the village unaided, despite his sightlessness. The man he talks about is, of course, the head priest of their shrine, priest of the god of roads, saying, “[...] all the power that people have is selfishness, money and politics” (70). The powers he refers to are presumably those from the “differently coloured ages” of “legends and rich traditions” (Okri, *Astonishing the Gods* 3) that the author alludes to in *Astonishing the Gods*. Black Tyger's victory over the boxer from the spirit realm in *The Famished Road* instantiates this power. Black Tyger's fame as a boxer may have influenced his position against the establishment. He begins to have visions of transcendental paradigms (420). His patriotism and nationalism know no bounds. He organises men, beggars included, to clear rubbish off the streets, and even singularly tries to “clear the rubbish that had accumulated in the consciousness of our people” (408) when he blames them for their “sheep-like philosophy, their tribal mentality, swallowing of lies, their tolerance of tyranny and their eternal silence in the face of suffering” (420), in the process condemning the despair, negative hope and acceptance complexes of the people's *homo viator* slant.

Against the background of his abject poverty and his sack from work, he resolves to become a boxer to earn a better living, revving up the temperament of his 'non-acceptance' struggles. His status as a boxer and non-conformist pits him against the Party of the Rich, the governing authorities, his landlord, and at times Madame Koto, the last two being members of the party. Because of his unyielding opposition to the

Party of the Rich, the landlord jerks up only his rent, leaving other tenants' rent unincreased, which he bemoans in statements tinged with socio-political rage and Marcelian prescriptive mixture of patience with non-acceptance:

Where am I going to find that kind of money every month, eh?" "[...] That's how they make you commit murder". "Do you see how they force a man to become an armed robber? (Okri, *The Famished Road* 237)

His ire against the landlord's directive that all his tenants must vote for the Party of the Rich is understandable. He growls: "what right has the landlord to bully us, to tell us who to vote for, eh? Is he God? Even God can't tell us who to vote for. Don't be afraid. We may be poor, but we are not slaves" (203). The non-deterministic and existentialist visage of the *homo viator* conscience in him is triggered. The battle line is drawn. He threw away the Rich Party's milk which his wife brought home. Fortunately, it is good riddance to bad rubbish. The milk is discovered to be poisonous, and a wave of the epidemic spreads through the ghetto. Black Tyger's rock-solid opposition to the Rich Party is vindicated as he says exultingly that "the whole world is sick, but my family is well. That's how God reveals the just. By their fruits, we shall know them" (131). His mental battle "journey" against despotism flowers and flourishes.

Black Tyger's homo viating conscience-stricken essence takes him to the boxing arena, pugilism being a materialist and ego-driven political obsession to fructify his self-apprehension pursuit.

Through the pugilistic campaign, he widens his "travelling" horizon, incorporating into it the *homo metaphysicus* ("metaphysical man")

(<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>) dimension, when he reveals the spiritual strength that countenances the decolonising principle behind magic realism. After his remarkable victory over tyellow jaguar, a boxer from the spirit realms, who had died three years earlier, Black Tyger tends to agree that maybe one has to overcome things first in the spirit world before doing them on the physical plane. This is corroborated when he faces Green Leopard, an ex-robber with a myth of terror, but now the chief thug of the Rich Party. The contest is indeed a continuation, through the pugilistic trade, of the war between Black Tyger and the Party of the Rich. He confounds everybody by crushing his foe. His widening the *homo viator* campaign beyond the temporal world to the incorporeal locus evidences his non-acceptance conviction as a shade of the pilgrim's theoretical argument "that all human life develops in the manner of a drama" (Marcel 4) with its exciting, tense and gripping quality.

Orthodoxies are quite challenging to subdue, and destroying them is not without its searing effects, and this is projected in Jeremiah's time-challenged predisposition. Jeremiah is, of course, the photographer character in the narrative, who is an ancillary in Azaro's war against societal declivities. The conscientious character has a tall task upturning the conventionalism of disorder as established by political potentates whose idea of order is to strengthen the prejudicial pillars of absolutism. Such is the fate of Jeremiah, the photographer in *The Famished Road*. His statement below speaks volumes about this conflict situation: "A small thing [...] Nothing that a man cannot bear [...] I heard all about what happened in the street. It is happening everywhere. One way or another, we will continue to fight for the truth. And Justice. And we will win." (189)

Jeremiah, the photographer's political agitation, amplifies his unwavering desire to help establish a

society built on justice and truth on account of the power of his photographic art. In this *homo viator* regard, he represents the *homo aestheticus* (“aesthetic man”) or *homo pictor* (“man the artist”) (<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>). He employs the sublimity in aesthetic finesse to undermine totalitarian structures, his mechanism being journalistic photography, a bilious burden on despots' unconscionable response to change. Jeremiah's travails are reflective of the cat-and-mouse relationship between the press and a repressive regime. Disappearing for a long time because of minatory attacks on him by the Rich Party thugs, he reappears and escapes into the quagmire when his house is invaded. A relative dismissed him from his (the relative's) house when it came under surveillance. His troubles began when he took pictures of the riot against Party of the Rich as poisoned milk was being distributed. Pictures of the miserable members, especially Black Tyger's landlord, who is left reeling in the mire with his torn clothes, become part of his collection.

Moments of triumph by the ghetto dwellers and the burnt van of the Rich Party are not left out. The Rich Party's humiliation gains so much prominence in the papers that thugs seek Jeremiah for extermination. The photographer is arrested by the police but released after three days to tell tales of torture and brutality he receives from security agents. For displaying the moments of the Rich Party's disgrace in his cabinet for public glare, thugs vandalise it. Nonetheless, he becomes a hero in the neighbourhood, and Black Tyger fetes him. His name appears boldest in the papers, and journalists want to see him. Now a legend but highly endangered, he could no more practise his trade without molestation. Making only nocturnal appearances, he becomes a tramp, leads a vagrant life and begs for food as he could not practise meaningfully, the pitifully unfortunate aftermath of his distaste for despair and capitulation on his *homo viating* path in the face of Machiavellian behavioural coarseness or oppressive mentality.

Despite being hounded, his resilience, courage, and uncompromising will to become are exemplary and legendary. He continues to take pictures of market women fighting with thugs and policemen collecting bribes. To underscore his assertion of will, the abiding phenomenon in Wole Soyinka's myth-conceptualisation of Ogun, the Yoruba wayfaring god, he prints on his photographic encasement a legend: “To become a man”. (230). He is even presented as a liberation symbol when he gives rat poison to Black Tyger to destroy the rats in his house, which could represent the oppressor regime and its conspiratorial cohorts. He explains how imaginative he can be when he boasts to Azaro that he can become invisible in order to flee from the police, fly to the moon in a flash, and that with his camera, he can make people ugly or beautiful. All these show his ability and creative capability to survive, as *homo pictor*, in the face of mounting “disintegrating” odds, especially pouring scorn on the *homo sanguinis* (“bloody man”)

(<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>) response of the oppressor.

Jeremiah, the photographer, filliped by his resilience and uncompromising will to become, becomes a socio-political *homo viator* in league with Black Tyger, employing his creative vocation as a weapon. Their travails are thus part of the realisation of the “abiku” malady that a nation is beset by. Azaro expatiates on the epistemic content of the “abiku” *homo duplex* wayfaring comportment:

there are many nations, civilisations, ideas, half-discoveries, revolutions, loves, art forms, experiments, and historical events that are of this condition but do not know it. (487)

Against the background of the abiku epileptic condition, the *Famished Road* is a *homo aestheticus* creation, lucidly acknowledged as a moral, cultural and socio-political metaphor. The pillaging of forests (deforestation) under the guise of construction is a specific example of this. “Trees were running away from human habitation (243) and “trees [were] protesting” (297) due to the action on the eco-system by *h o m o d e g e n e r a t u s , " d e g e n e r a t i v e m a n "* (<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>)

Through lampoon, a sort of seriocomic exposé on the mythical divide of the realism argument, Azaro's journey ordeal takes him through the shenanigan of a lecherous and corrupt herbalist, a reason the spirit-child argues that spirit-children do not like to stay permanently in this world. The herbalist goes to pray over Madame Koto's newly-bought car. He makes laughable wishful pronouncements:

This car [...] will drive even to the moon and come back safely [...] this car will bring prosperity, plenty of money. Nothing will touch it. Any other car that runs into it will be destroyed, but nothing will happen to your car. This is what we call superior magic. Even if you fall asleep while driving this car you will be safe. Anyone that steals it will immediately have an accident and die. Anyone that wishes evil on the car will die! [...] If people want to be jealous of you, let them be jealous. Jealousy is free. People can eat it and grow fat on it if they want. But anyone who thinks evil of you, may this car run them over in their sleep. This car will hunt out your enemies, pursue their bad spirits, grind them into the road. Your car will drive over fire and be safe. It will drive into the ocean and be safe. It has its friends in the spirit world. Its friends there, a car just like this one, will hunt down your enemies. They will not be safe from you. A bomb will fall on this car and it will be safe. (Okri, *The Famished Road* 380, 381)

The drunken herbalist, after these prayers, goes on to utter “the most controversial statements” (381). He says:

This car will be a coffin [...] I have just seen it [...] Unless you perform the proper sacrifice this car will be a coffin! I have to speak the truth when I see it or I will die [...] But if you give me one of these women [referring to Madame Koto's prostitutes] then I will drive the coffin away from the car (381).

Most of the on-lookers leave immediately. All other larger-than-life characters in the novel affect the same consciousness-constricting or consciousness-expanding changes in Azaro's knowledge-filled *homo viator* narrative. Characters like Madam Koto and her customers at the palm-wine bar, many of whom are not really human beings but spirit personalities with various forms of deformations, viz. “blindness, eyelessness, [...] hunched backs and toothless mouths [...]” (Okri 136) in their actions no doubt create interesting perspectives about reality, the latter having seemingly “borrowed bits of human beings to partake of human reality [for] they want to taste human things, pain, drunkenness, laughter, and sex.” (136).

Azaro's *homo viator* on the social plane, especially his activist resentment of the seamy side of life in *Songs of Enchantment*, is geared mainly towards preserving the society's weaklings, that is, women and children. He is worried by the “tumultuous gathering of women” with “suffering faces, scoured with the

religion of misery. They were petty traders, women without children, women with ailing children, women with angled faces and hollow cheeks and sober eyes, faces that never smiled” (Okri, *Songs of Enchantment* 55,56), all seeking Madame Koto's solitary solution just because the society's macro-structure has shirked its responsibility. Playing the environmental activist (*homo reciprocans*) (<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>), the author deplors the actions of agents of environmental degradation, the *homo degeneratus* genre, whose unthinking incursion into the woods and deforestation equipment have a negative influence on biodiversity. He goes on to pour satiric notes on blood-letting politicking involving both Party of the Rich and Party of the Poor. The suffering motif is apprehended when Azaro accidentally finds himself in the blind old man's dreams. What he finds there is a social eye-sore. He narrates in part:

I flew into a world of violence, of famine, of pullulating hunger, with beggars swarming the city centre, with maggots devouring the inhabitants, with flies eating the eyeballs of the children who were half-dead with starvation, with traffic jams everywhere, and people dying of hypertension at their steering wheels; with gases burning in the air, multiplying the ferocious heat of the sun; with housing projects built by corrupt businessmen collapsing and crushing to death their inhabitants all over the country [...] I suddenly found myself on a battleground deep in the country, deep in the dream of the unborn nation, and I saw a war raging, a war without beginning and without end [...] I saw soldiers stick their bayonets into the eyes of their countrymen. I saw bombs explode, laughing, while limbs scattered about the place in unholy jubilation. [...] Limbs, intestines, eyeballs and pulped torsos grew from the earth and writhed and crawled among the rain-washed undergrowth. Flowers sprouted out of slit and rotting throats. Mushrooms bristled out of the suppurating anuses of the dead. The battleground became a liverish carpet of sliced tongues and slug-infested hearts. (Okri, *Songs of Enchantment* 89, 90)

Okri, taking advantage of the third person-manipulation of the “invisible” man hero in *Astonishing the Gods*, aerates, albeit obliquely, the character's *homo viator* faith in glorifying epistemological watchfulness. In that wise, the dramatis persona sees man as *homo educanus* (“to be educated”) (<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>) and *homo discens* (“learning man”) (<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>) species. Hence, the “invisible” man character “appeals” to the growth sentiment through socio-political knowledge-perspectives, obliquely transmitted through socio-moral exhortations. Thematically strong in this reasoning is the glorification of the intellect and intellectual development.

The “invisible” man sees the city as a “vast network of thoughts” (Okri, *Astonishing the Gods* 66). An ideal state of acquiring knowledge is built as “sages listened more than they talked” (66). In the universities, which are places for self-perfection, all are teachers and students simultaneously. In other words, nobody is conceived of as having a monopoly of knowledge, contrary to what some people in the West think. Everybody is a researcher to become more creative for the “perfection of the spirit and

mastery of life” (67). The whole idea of the functions of banks and hospitals is deconstructed to highlight the idea of the development of the individual. Banks become places where people exchange notions of well-being, wealth and serenity. This is an indirect condemnation of material inclination. People go to banks when they are ill and to hospitals when they are healthy because hospitals on the island of the invisibles are not places of sorrow as conventionally believed, but places of amusement and recreation.

The *homo viator* proxy, now being a repository of more deeply philosophical and surrealist epistemic information, pronounces on the symbolic value of “silences”, which are said to have come from mountaintops, depths of the unfathomed ocean, from the face of the moon and forests at night, and represent the beauty in invisibility. The magical thoughts of the sublime world of the invisible also sprout from natural things like trees, birds, from the dreams of the living and the continued meditations of the dead, from the sea and cloud, from spirit and star (140). Possibilities, therefore, only exist in innate capabilities. The importance of passion is explained lucidly by the third master during the “great convocation” (12) because the invisibles have their highest acts of creativity in the empty spaces, in the air and in dreams which can only be felt but cannot be touched, and which occasionally “astonish even the gods” (148) of transcendence. Only a formless or pseudo-reality (the source of the idea of invisibility), and not the “solidity of specification” that the West stresses with the use of the intellect, is prescribed as existential virtue for the growth-inclined *homo viator*.

The visitor (invisible man), in his pilgrim's progress towards cultural and socio-political self-fulfilment, has to imbibe the essence of passion, the enabling factor behind his presence during the “great convocation” (12) in the gathering of the invisibles. In rhetorical terms, a successful *homo viator* is only attainable with a load of passion. The idea of passion being implanted in him, he becomes a symbol of the “perfection” (155) of the invisibles, imbued with the “creativity and grace” (155) of celestial realms, and he is quite cognizant of the need to build the ideal civilisation on 'justice and Love' (155).

Of course, the innocence of a child, for the *homo viator*, is necessary to comprehend all the values being instilled in him. This cosmological awareness is tempered by the allusion to the child-figure of Jesus Christ, referred to as the “gentle master” (92). Engrafted in the *homo viator* visitor (the invisible man) through spiritual cleansing are political, social, moral and philosophical values of the highest order. He is now in a better position to understand the in-built structure of his society concerning his invisibility, the *homo viator* instinct being engendered for development ends.

Temporal concerns also drive the *homo viator* initiative of Saleem Sinai, the protagonist in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. The disputed head of the midnight coterie in *Midnight's Children*, he is assailed right from birth by the physical and psychological horrors of living. He commences his journey from Bombay, but his manner of arriving, from several phrases, shows that a transitional quagmire could have existed in the “chthonic” region in preparation for the confrontations in the corporeal abode. That Saleem “tumbled forth into the world” (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 3) presupposes a struggle of significant dimensions presumably in anticipation of the debacle that will accompany his growing. The child seems to have pored seriously on the exact moments of his birth-to-be, “on the stroke of midnight” (3) on August 15th, 1947 (the day India got independence from Britain). The child, in the light of the travails of the new nation, must have had a prophetic insight into the parlous and ill-omened companionship of his arrival.

Saleem is presumably fed up with ruminating and, in a fit of confused reasoning, convinced that temporizing in the matter is fruitless, he decides to dare and accept the presages of his journey on earth by somersaulting into terra firma. He may have been right after all. The “tumbled” diction could not have been inappropriate, bearing in mind the child's fortuitous coming “at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence” (3), a trouble-laden history. The dialectics of ambiguity may have further seen the word “tumbled” as an interpretative picture of the “Abiku” problem in, importantly, the Indian State, one that is not ready to be. No wonder it came into being accosted by “gasps” (3), difficulties of sorts. Saleem bemoans the time-driven misfortune of his coeval birth with the Indian State:

A few seconds later, my father broke his big toe; but his accident was a mere trifle when set beside what had befallen me in the benighted moment, because thanks to the occult tyrannies of those blandly saluting clocks I had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was no escape.

(3)

Words and phrases like “chained”, “handcuffed”, and “no escape”, and “blandly saluting clocks” in the quote above identify the besieged humanity in Saleem, a subject in a state of war. From a composite analysis, in the light of especially “the occult tyrannies of those blandly saluting clocks”, it is apparent that the *homo viator* chronology of his stay will be everything but palatable.

Spacio-temporal (spatio-temporal) exigencies take him through Pakistan and back to Bombay, his course being impinged on fundamentally by the psychic torment of being a “birth cheat”, Shiva's unbroken resolve to exact vengeance from he that “stole” his birthright, the women in his life, the filthy politics in India, the “transcendental suffering” he went through in the Sundarbans, *et cetera*. With all these at the back of Saleem's mind, he veritably posits that his son, the result of another bastardy, “will have to be a magician to cope with the world” (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 528). That he defines his jeremiad as a “long-winded autobiography” (529) is, therefore, necessary, he taking a surf on the winds of the vicissitudes of time, the *homo viator* per excellence.

“Time as a prison” (Marcel 47), the sentiment towards capitulation, is also discernible in the temporal *homo viator* analogy in *Midnight's Children*, and it is majorly entrenched in the “road” mien of the central *homo viator* agent, Saleem. He may have succumbed to the wishful but docile expectations of the optimist “who has a firm conviction or in certain cases just a vague feeling, that things tend to “turn out for the best” (Marcel, 27), thereby becoming satisfied in just being “essentially a maker of speeches” (28), words without concrete action. It is not in doubt that Salman Rushdie has the acclaimed resolve to symbolically right what he thinks are social aberrations. He avails himself of the first-person narrative strategy to propagate his *homo viator* ideology through the *homo viator* persona, Saleem Sinai, whose trouble-laden movements in *Midnight's Children* help to reveal a picture of revolting societal indecencies. These indecencies are the optimism epidemic, which snuffed life out of Mian Abdullah, invasion of the magician's ghetto, Indira Gandhi's mischievous politics, especially the vasectomy case, behavioural crudities, one of which is committed by Mary Pereira (Saleem, the narrator benefiting from it) children dying due to “malnutrition, disease and the misfortunes of everyday life” (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* 225), and, of course, scenes of squalor, poverty and corruption, visual components of a system plagued by institutional disorder and maladministration. However and unlike the

uncompromising stance of the characters in Okri's *The Famished Road* and *Songs of Enchantment*, the *homo viator* process of Saleem openly involves the active acceptance fervour (accepting the crudities of life as given), inclining instead towards the patience, hope, and despair ontology, as there are no active efforts to upturn the unacceptable social system, the narrator vacillating between “purely sentimental optimism and [...] pessimism, which is the exact counterpart of such optimism [...] (Marcel 28). The active acceptance picture is elaborated by the suggestion that both the “purely sentimental optimism and pessimism” are “oratorical in the same way, and there is no fundamental distinction between them. They are like the inside and outside of the same argument” (28).

Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* could not have been without timekeeper concerns as it is in the grip of characters that are engrossed in the determined resolve to actualise some personal and ideological expectations. Time, for that reason, as conceived by the wayfarer, is an open affair. The main character, Moraes, is faced with time (*homo viator*) trials, for he is aware of the imponderables that are concomitant with his passage through the eccentricities of other characters in the plot. However, his time travails commence with the psychogenic department of his mother, Aurora, the upshot of which are twists and turns in which both are encircled. The Whiteheadian view that “all occasions of experience are alike” (Cobb, Jr. 11) is reflected in the fractious growth of Aurora, explicating the affinities between the past and the present in her descent from an ancestral and art-induced villainy. Aurora is committed to the tragic, cum, aesthetic evaluation of art. Moraes expatiates:

My mother Aurora Zogoiby was too bright a star; look at her too hard and you'd be blinded [...] her bending of other people's light, her gravitational pull, which denied us all hope of escape, the decaying orbit of those too weak to withstand her, who fell towards her sun and consuming fires (Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh* 13).

Deploying her “consuming fires” potency, one driven by psychopathic instincts, Aurora shows her love for Moraes, though paradoxically through making his deformity the subject of her painting art, a form of sublimation. That is, Aurora artistically sublimates her sadness in Moraes' unearthly physique (224). In fact, between Moraes and Aurora exists a psychosomatic order that is webbed in a psychological thriller. Ideologically committed to expounding the author's anti-realist passion, Aurora's inordinate pursuit of the ideals of insubstantiality, “the art of making something out of nothing” (185), coupled with her instinctual drive for wickedness, turns her first against her grandmother Epifania, her children, Vasco Miranda, with whom she contests for aesthetic vileness, and indirectly her husband Abraham Zogoiby, whose crime-infested mien is responsible for her fatal demise. The “hard fall” prophecy of Epifania haunts her, and Moraes partakes irresistibly of her mother's trouble-laden existence. Time, to Moraes, is unfortunately eventful. Because he is on the dark side of time's peristaltic movement, Moraes' deformity becomes a traumatic implant in his psyche, and for him, the interchange between dusk and dawn is a stretch dominated by footnotes of apprehension.

Though time in the story is about him, he drifts on its wave of doubleness of care and nonchalance. This is because he is a pawn on time's human chessboard, manipulated by other characters to support their Machiavellian ends. Engendered malformed, he daily ruminates over the “incurable”, “inevitable” (340) truth of his personality. “The nightmare of my halved life was simply a fact, and there is nothing to be said of a fact, except that it is so [...] It was borne in upon me by a series of indispositions and

hospitalisations [that] *I did not have a very long life to live*" (340). His particularly brief life receives the moulding of Uma Sarasvati who "transformed, exalted and ruined" (237) it, bringing into grim reality the fact that his "outer, apparent age" (241) (seventy) had simply become his age, and not thirty-five, the temporal course he had rightly passed through, and Aurora, who, apart from unduly influencing his marital concerns, turns his pre-natal deformity into the "epicentre" of her art.

Besides these feminine impressions on his personality, Moraes' relationship with Vasco Miranda, the author of curious duplicity about the author's pursuit of unearthliness, inspires another time-controlled sequence of events, a manifestation of a strict sense of time value in the overall exegesis of the Moor's homo viating. A hyperactive fiend, Vasco creates a fraternal bond between him and Moraes in the light of the latter's out-of-the-ordinary physique, instigating a time-challenged companionship between the duo. Vasco delights in the time comradeship: "I am like you [...] I also am short of time" (154). Time indeed installs Moraes in the kernel of the whirlpool of the internecine conduct of Aurora, Vasco and Abraham, as he violates the Benengeli fortification of Miranda to aesthetically unravel the face of Abraham, the concealed murderer of Aurora. Essentially, Moraes' "time-traveller" (219) description keeps him permanently within the influential "gaze and grip" of the plot's time perspectives, he being a progressive outcome of every episode that matters, the quintessential *homo viator*.

The "Abiku" *Homo Aestheticus* Paradigm in the "Road" Consciousness of Ben Okri

The "Abiku" homo viating travail is a recognition of the holistic expression of man as *homo religious*, in its concept as *homo duplex*, "the double or divided man" (<https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=utis&logNo=70176700363&proxyReferer=https:%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>). Coming into being of man in Okri's myth-literature, from the "abiku" personality analysis, traverses three temporal processes: man in the ethereal realm, man between the ethereal and corporeal realms, man in the corporeal realm. The transitions between the three stages metaphysically, metaphorically and realistically engage with struggle essences. Of course, in Whiteheadian "process" ontology, "the being and the becoming of an actual entity are two different modes of existence. The occasion exists first as a 'becoming' and then as a being; but its existence as a being is the outcome or result, of its existence as a becoming." (Nobo 275).

Clarified, the "abiku" trope is not a constrictive description of the "abiku" child as culturally acknowledged but a defining image of the human being *sui generis*, the being whose being transcends physical realism, man whose corporeity and all its accoutrements are a reflection of "process"-defined, developmental and transitory recollections from pre-telluric or extraterrestrial "occasions" (<https://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2009/03/07/objectiles-and-actual-occasions/>), to use one of Alfred Whitehead's terms. Concerning the road metaphysics, the "collective Abiku ego" (Ibitokun 19), the subject of a continuum that is consummated from an earlier existence in a transitional course, is emphasised; thus, the "Abiku" exists in every individual only as a double personality, one of which is the same and different from the other in a dialectic of anguish-laden metamorphosis, manifesting Whitehead's becoming-being cleavage. The "becoming" phase of the "Abiku" transits to the "being" other, which progresses but as a traveller burdened with curls and spirals of expectations. The king of the spirit-children makes a pronouncement before Azaro's departure for the world corporeal, as a "becoming". He tells Azaro: "[...] You will cause no end of trouble. You have to travel many roads before

you find the river of your destiny. This life of yours will be full of riddles. You will be protected, and you will never be alone” (Okri, *The Famished Road* 6). Azaro's “being” (on the corporeal plane) arising from his “becoming” (in the ethereal realm) puts him in the “historicising capsule” (Ibitokun 5) of the “acting principle” (5) of Wole Soyinka's “Ogun” theory, which represents “change, creativity and rejuvenation” (4), as has been highlighted in the *homo viator* influence of Kierkegaard's dialectics on the writings of Rushdie and Okri later in this essay.

Beyond the quick return of the child to the spirit realm, in the repetitious comings and goings of the child are the generic man's pains of growing, of anticipating, of making plans, of fulfilment, of successes and failures (components of the *homo viator* concept), all shrouded in the whirlpool of innovative resourcefulness. The ungainly ontology of repetitiousness and freakish “historicizing temper in deaths and births” (Ibitokun 19) of the primordial “abiku” aura notwithstanding, the king's assertion is an optimistic statement on the earthly journey of the human figure, whether the person is an “abiku”, as culture sees it, or not; after all, *homo sapiens*, no matter the status, share the homocentric character of being *homo viator*, with all the attendant obstacles en route accomplishment or otherwise. The king does not mince words that Azaro (who in this analysis is everyman) will be assailed by worries on end before getting fulfilled. He seems to be careful with his choice of words in respect of Azaro's course to achievement. The king's use of the phrase “[...] travel many roads before you find the river of your destiny” clearly presupposes a myriad of challenges on his way to becoming. But then, that Azaro “will be protected” and “will never be alone” are pointers to not only the optimism of his maintaining his human presence but also surviving his countless ordeals, an oblique exhortation to the individual to embrace the hope and non-acceptance values of Gabriel Marcel's *homo viator* phenomenology, which the spirit-child is already invested with through his supernatural forte and fort.

There is no disputing the view that the “abiku” progeny has come and gone many times. But Azaro submits: “And how often to the same parents?” (Okri, *The Famished Road* 5) His repeated coming to the same parents logically argues for sameness in character if genetic factors are considered. The child's repetitive appearance may be a means of reinforcing his in-built capacity to withstand the horrors inherent in “the rigours of existence” (1) that are pervasive in the society through “the heartlessness of human beings, all of whom are born blind, few of whom ever learn to see” (1). However, that he goes away afterward may have created a lie in the afore-stated “capacity”, thereby advancing duplicity in its recurring appearances.

A paradoxical face of Whitehead's process thesis strengthens the dialectics intrinsic in the “Abiku” rebirths. First, Whitehead's theory is reinvigorated, as it is not incongruent with this idea of sameness of character both in the past life and the present. That is, “the being of an actual entity is created by its becoming” (Nobo 275). In contradistinction, the pseudo-continuity in Whitehead's thought system, which may have accounted for the connection between the past and the present in the “Abiku” journey, is expounded on in his “physical prehension” (Cobb, Jr. 11) supposition, which reflects on “the causal efficacy of the whole past for the new occasion, largely mediated by adjacent occasions but finally reflecting the whole course of past events” (Cobb, Jr. 11). Definitely, the present is “mediated” by the past, a sort of guiding the present to be a better “occasion”, presumably through being apprised of the presence of intervening journey pains, and not the case of the present being an absolute facsimile of the past.

Tragic Vision in the *Homo Viator* Trajectory

The post-colony in Okri's writing is a harvest of confrontations due to ideological variance. Taking the society out of the tragic mode, therefore, seems a will-o-the-wisp, especially where power is reposed in the State and the existence of individuals with powers of their own self-proclaimed dictatorial making. It has to be iterated that the "tragic vision" (Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* 39) is "not a sense of cosmic persecution" (39) but a development toward "greater and greater self-realisation" (39). This self-realisation is extant in the homo viating cognizance of Azaro in the conceptualisation of the road phenomenon with its near-multiplex signification. The road is primarily conceived of as a death-reality syndrome. This dawned on the individual when Black Tyger philosophised on the ubiquitous form of the death aura in the journey of life. That is why most, if not all, deaths in the novel occur on the road. The policeman's son is killed in a road accident. The unfaithful policeman is crushed by a vehicle. Madame Koto's prostitutes and three electricians are electrocuted on the road. Three road constructors also meet their deaths in the stomach of the road. The road is thus understood as life that is full of riddles "only the dead can answer" (Okri, *The Famished Road* 40).

Gaining admittance into the "travelling" mentality is the metaphysical glow and hermeneutics of the road. The riddle of the road is explained in its ill-omened nature if it is not propitiated. Sacrifices, therefore, litter the roads every now and then. This ill-starred nature comes alive when "[...] the road woke up" (9) during the fire riot and other riots in the book. Actually, many dangerous things happen on the road. All Black Tyger's boxing matches take place on the road. Azaro's many torments are road-related. He is once swallowed by the road and even driven over by a vehicle when the "road-spirit rages". This may have prompted Madame Koto's prayer that may the road never swallow him and his mother's admonition that he should be careful how he walks on the road. However, Azaro's road-inclined existence is already predestined, as he is told by the king of the unborn realms: "You will have to travel many roads before you find the river of your destiny" (6), implying clearly that he will be faced with many obstacles in his self-realisation quest, a premonition of the "tragic vision" in his *homo viator* status. "From a certain point of view, the universe seems to be composed of paradoxes. But everything resolves. That is the function of contradiction" (327), says the three-headed spirit. With these dialectics of truth, he rhetorises Azaro into agreeing that ambivalence is a functional outlook of the road, which Wole Soyinka harps on as he unravels the myth of Ogun, the Yoruba god of iron, in "The Fourth Stage". The road is a contradictory phenomenon of destruction and creativity or resourcefulness, a corroboration of the ambiguity that is the driving force of the "tragic vision" as intellectualised by Kenneth Burke. The three-headed spirit exemplifies it with the story of the inhabitants of the strange island who are told by their prophet that the road they have been building for two thousand years will never be completed. If they did, they would have nothing to dream of and no need for a future, for they would be uncreative and so die of boredom. "The road", the spirit says, "is their soul, the soul of their history" (329). In essence, the natural course of the enthusiastic *homo viator* persona is conceived in the fullness of the preoccupation with tasks, worries, obsessions and anxieties, without which the *homo viator* spirit lacks vivacity, animation and life force.

Black Tyger re-echoes the same creativity issue when he imploringly tells his ill-fated people that "we can change the world [...] that is why our road is hungry [since] "we have no desire to change things"

(451). In *Songs of Enchantment*, the journey-of-life torment continues for Azaro. He contends with “an era twisted out of natural proportions” (Okri, *Songs of Enchantment* 3) because “the road began to speak in the bizarre languages of violence and transformations [...] the world breaking into unimaginable forms” (3). The tragic vision is, from the foregoing, not an enthronement of cataclysmic order but that in nature-bred human life, everything inheres, the good, the bad and the ugly, an ambivalence that is the foundation of creation.

Kierkegaardian Dialectical Image in Rushdie and Okri's “Road” Construct

“Changing finite species into the currency of the infinite” (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 244) presupposes Soren Kierkegaard's view on dialectics. To Kierkegaard, “the change that comes back is not merely something subtracted or abstracted from the original sum; a notable element has been added as well. This sort of change is a rebirth or a transformation.” (244). Kierkegaard's dialectic is, to some extent, notably at variance with the idea of sameness in identity construction regarding the 'Abiku' precocious existence. This oppositional impression reveals the dialectic of self-reflexivity in the postmodern world of Rushdie and Okri, which lends itself to “the form of self-conscious, self-contradictory, self-undermining” (Hutcheon, 1) instrumentality of knowing the ideal truth. This Kierkegaardian dialectical picture is built philosophically and spiritually into Azaro's journeys. He asks: “How many times had I come and gone through the *dreaded gateway*?” (Okri, *The Famished Road* 5) (emphasis mine). The “dreaded gateway”, the interspace, is itself a vortex of mutations, which opens into roads numberless, each road an idea, an ideology, with its pliant makeup.

Kierkegaard's newness dialectics as a drive for the *homo viator's* epistemological reasoning is also a veritable shade of Salman Rushdie's postcolonial literary conviction. Rushdie is very assertive in respect of its importance in his intertextuality-induced fiction, and he excogitates over it: “In *The Satanic Verses*, I tried to answer the question, how does newness enter the world? Influence, the flowing of the old into the new, is one part of the answer” (Rushdie, *Step Across This Line* 66).

Conclusion

Cogitations on the *homo viator* concept are pronouncements on the sturdiness and frailties that form the distinctiveness of the individuality of the human kind. This individuality of the human being is conceived in individualised experiences, which are moulded by ideological perceptions, social intimations, moral conscience, and behavioural subjectivities of all kinds in the course of demonstrating one's beingness. *Homo viator* insights into the imaginative precincts of Salman Rushdie and Ben Okri thereon revealingly draw attention to cultural issues, philosophical niceties, existential ambivalences, and individualist contentions about the time-inspired cosmos and how the individual navigates its multifarious facets in order to access and understand its multicolorous and veld presences in the tortuous route towards self-assuredness and self-assertion, very much mindful of the layers of obstacles (many of which being epistemological in nature) between conceiving an idea and bringing it to fruition.

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