

“Home Is Always Elsewhere”: The Poetics of Location in Fred D’Aguiar’s Poetry

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Abstract:

This essay outlines the poetics of location in the poetry of Fred D’Aguiar as consisting in the configuration of subjective spaces in the context of the postcolonial and the postmodern condition. These are forms of resistance played out in geographies that often deny presence: the rural areas of the Caribbean, threatened by “civilizational” forces; the highly racialized British metropolis in the second half of the twentieth century; or the “melting pot” America, sometimes troubled by horrific mass crimes. The following theoretical commentary approaches Edward Soja’s concept of the “thirdspace” and other postcolonial and philosophical perspectives on location.

Key words:

Caribbean poetry, transnational subjectivity, poetics of location

One of the concepts that pervade Caribbean poetry – and Fred D’Aguiar’s work in particular – is that of location. If Nobel Prize winner Derek Walcott was considered to have put his native island Saint Lucia on the world map, D’Aguiar’s idea of belonging and home has had more a transnational – transatlantic, more precisely – meaning, probably due to his own travel experience at an early age. In an autobiographical essay entitled *Home Is Always Elsewhere* (2000), he discusses the acute sense of unbelongingness and in-betweenness that the main character, Mintah, from his novel *Feeding the Ghosts* (1997), experiences as a doubly dislocated individual. The author defines the condition of unbelongingness as “a nervous disposition coupled with a psychic tremulousness or sense of inadequacy in relation to time and place”. (213) Similarly, many of his poems are exercises of coming to terms with elusive places and illusive modes of belonging. Most of his work is built to overcome dislocation and loss, death, absence and separation, longing and lack of belonging. In-betweenness is conceived at the most intimate level: “When I finish a book and before I start another [...] I am in-between selves [...] Just when I thought unbelonging was geographical, cultural, psychic, I find it is creative too, that I lose selves along the way and acquire new ones, not only as I write but as a function of writing and because of it.” (218) As in the case of another Nobel prize winner of Caribbean origin, V. S. Naipaul (2002), who prefers to discard his belonging to England, India or Trinidad and to stick to his “own person” (3), D’Aguiar considers unbelongingness as a condition of writing. He cultivates “thirdspace” and what Soja (1996) identified as “a strategic awareness of this collectively created spatiality and its social consequences” (1) by casting light on additional spatial nuances. These are related to the importance of the environment and ecology, to the psychic response in the context of a certain socio-natural landscapes, to the relationship between migrant subjects and more or less multiculturally laden places, to the ability of migrants to change geographies, to a generally higher level of spatial consciousness and inner, spiritual spatiality.

Born in London of Guyanese descent, Fred D’Aguiar spent the first twelve years of his life in Guyana, before returning to Great Britain in 1972. After he trained, qualified and worked as a nurse, he studied English at the University of Kent and, in 1985, he made his debut with a collection of poetry based on his childhood memories. His fourth book of poetry entitled *Bill of Rights* (1998) was shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize. In the 1990s, he travelled as an academic to the United States and established himself in Virginia, where he

has been a professor of English at Virginia Tech. He has published poetry, prose, drama and essays.

In his first two volumes of poetry, *Mama Dot* (1985) and *Airy Hall* (1989), D'Aguiar deals with his upbringing in Guyana and his personal West Indian past: Mama Dot represents the figure of his grandmother, a keeper of the past who passes it on into the future for the younger generations, while Airy Hall is a Guyanese small town on the Atlantic coast. Far from his parents living in England and left only with his grandparents, the child conceived an unusual understanding of home, an idea the poet wished to transmit later as well. In his essay from the year 2000, which gives the title of this article, D'Aguiar compares the two locations and recalls that: "The place [Guyana] was captivating but my thoughts were elsewhere. My parents were in London. I knew, given an opportunity, I'd swap all that abundance and beauty that Guyana offered to me for a moment in London with my parents." (209) Such a view reminds us that, when childhood consciousness is at stake, belonging relates more to family members, and people in general, rather than to the physical, geographical place. After he was taken to London, the future poet realized that his parents were not together anymore, which casts another hue on belonging. To be always there as a form of affection and moral support gains further meaning because it connects relationships and places, as the title of D'Aguiar's first volume suggests: a dot alludes to a specific location and to someone always by your side. The figure of the grandmother embodied both. Mama Dot's portraits as a parent, an obeah healer, a warner, a treatise and letter writer – among other roles – are meant to describe and contribute to what Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) conceptualized as "third world women", a plural approach to the diversity and complexity of postcolonial feminism.

What makes location matter as much as or more than kin and other people depends on many factors. In an interview with Harald Leusmann (1998), published in *Wasafiri*, D'Aguiar makes a commentary on his first two volumes that touches this particular relationship:

...and there is a shift between the two collections from person in *Mama Dot* to place in *Airy Hall*. Landscape is important, people are important – they are important when it comes to remembering and when it comes to writing and when experience is re-imagined. Of course, *Airy Hall*, the book, is a fiction since it cannot reliably be measured against the place. The place I write about was experienced as a child. (19)

Therefore, reaching a certain level of maturity and awareness involves a return – both nostalgic and critical – to people and places from the past, in order to build the present. The notion of place D'Aguiar configures in his work is a combination of real space, imagined space and what he calls re-imagined space, which is close to Levebvre's notion of the "lived space" and Soja's more abstract "thirdspace". The Guyanese landscape experienced in childhood stands more for the real space; the African and a part of the European references, which are always in the background, given D'Aguiar's double ancestry – African and Portuguese –, stand for the imagined space; the re-imagined space is best described through his writing, in which he weaves the personal, the spatial and the memory.

What is specific to his poetry, and to much of the Caribbean poetry, is the particular relationship between spatiality and temporality. If in Soja's terms spatiality forms a triad with the social and the temporal, in which history still plays a significant role, in D'Aguiar's works, spatiality invokes both the nostalgia for the place where he spent his childhood and a critique of it. He intimates that memory, as a means of postcolonial subjective or personal view on history, may not be enough in deconstructing the master narratives of the colonial past and new literary techniques and projects are needed, hence the original distinctiveness of Caribbean literature. What French historian Pierre Nora called *places of memory*, when referring to the monumentalization of the French history, gains quite another meaning in the context of the Caribbean. Given the colonial history archived mainly in the Western libraries, the monumentalization of the Caribbean history from Caliban's perspective, so to say,

involves the exploration of a mental space to a greater extent: it is a place of an archipelagic consistence that reflects a spiritual and physical geography of both continuity and discontinuity. In *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004), French philosopher Paul Ricoeur questions the relevance of Pierre Nora's syntagm for the contemporary society. He concludes that, because it was circumscribed to the national memory of France, it has left certain histories untold. Attempting to fill the gap and in contrast with the meaning given by Nora, the metaphor is still useful in understanding Caribbean poetry, where memory is often pictured as a floating realm. "The sea is history" is the title Nobel prize winner Derek Walcott (2007) gave to one of his poems from 1980, in which he uses the call-and-response technique:

Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?
Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,
In that grey vault. The sea. The sea
Has locked them up. The sea is History. (123)

As if in response to Nora, the poem calls to mind the maritime atrocities of the Middle Passage and the slavery era, while pointing out the "servitude to the muse of history [that] has produced a literature of recrimination and despair" (37), an idea put forward by Derek Walcott (1998) in 1974. The archipelagic geography of Caribbean culture and its tidalectics¹ could not but involve the chaotic sea as a site of memory, a Dyonisian perspective upon creativity aimed at disrupting the mainstream discourse.

D'Aguiar's second volume, *Airy Hall* (1989), is similar to a loose diary that documents and contrasts perceptions of a real place with the emotional responses to being present in that place. When dealing with the memory of his childhood town, the poem *Airy Hall's Dark Age* casts a medieval, European spell on the bond between the local society and the rural urbanity of the Guyanese coast:

Someone's, 'The child is a cross,
He has bad blood through and through,'
Is picked up and amplified across fields.

These vocals stick somehow in the acres
The town covers, against a gale
On its way to tearing islands.

A child doing the things
Children do: sly, brash, fidgety,
Becomes aligned with the devil.

All that remains is for one among us
To fetch the pint-sized stake
Dressed in razor-grass and bramble.

No sooner the child is ambushed,
An empty paddy-bag he raced in
Swooped over his head and tied,

Rough-shod about his waist level
A lasso from a hand he looked up to
And he is beyond us all. (16)

¹ Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2007) conflates Caribbean author E. K. Brathwaite's expression of "tidal dialectics", a cyclical rather than linear approach to existence.

The child's supposedly "bad blood" story pervades the local land, whose center seems to be "the pint-sized stake", a symbol of old-fashioned morality. Although the child is caught, the final line indicates a subtle, social spatiality, a "thirdspace" announced in the first line. "The child is a cross" implies not only he is an undesirable mongrel. The symbol of the cross is also a reassessment of what hybridity may represent nowadays. Indeed, the Greek root of the word, *hybris*, reveals old problems of morality that lie at the heart of hybridity: What if the resulting hybrid is not of an acceptable quality? What if the hybrid is too unusual or even monstrous? Why should or should not we go hybrid in general? How does it change nature? Nature, as both human nature and natural force, surfaces as a theme in the second stanza. The contrast between "these vocals" and "a gale" builds tension, whose negative charge is aimed at the child "aligned with the devil". The tender and ironic tonality of the poem alludes to old dilemmas concerning dichotomies such as darkness/light or blind faith/enlightenment and their relationship with the claim of civilization. Asked to compare London and Guyana, D'Aguiar's reply (while being interviewed in London) betrays legitimate nostalgia and the determination to value the chronotope of innocence represented by his childhood country: "The light is brighter in Guyana and I have more of a sense of an open space – the sky seems a bit bigger. I don't know why that sensation is there. The sky seems to be a bit closer here. It might be a Northern light thing." (Leusmann 17)

In his next volume, entitled *British Subjects* (1993), D'Aguiar explores what it meant to be a young black man in Great Britain in the 1990s. Drawing on his experience as an immigrant teenager, his poems often approach themes such as racial discrimination and urban exclusion just because of skin color. According to McLeod (2004), London used to be "a conflicting location" (6) in the 1990s, when 29% of Londoners belonged to a minority ethnic group, as compared to 9% in Britain as a whole. In comparison with the anti-racial poetry of the Jamaican British poet Linton Kwesi Johnson of the 1970s or 1980s, for example, D'Aguiar's is more introspective and in search for a place "far from the madding crowd", where reason and sensitivity are more valued.

Although not all the poems in D'Aguiar's third poetry volume are about racial matters, many of them in this particular collection testify to his concern about the conflicting multicultural environment in urban England in the 1990s, in comparison with the atmosphere in his home country. In *Home Is Always Elsewhere* (2000), he confesses:

All the time I felt away from home (Guyana) and never quite in step with the rhythm of London. The sense of being out of step faded with time and London grew familiar and my longing for Airy Hall lessened. But my new sense of belonging to a resented, even hated and despised Black minority, heightened. In Guyana I was the majority, or at least felt I was. (209)

The poem *Inner City* retells a piece of news related to racial violence in London and shows how this is externalized or internalized by a number of characters and public institutions such as police, school or the English law:

The way a man lets his dog
strip the bark off a young tree
and the children of that man
break branch after branch
till the naked trunk of the thing
stands, a dead stump.

Who's to knock their heads together
now that the bobby on the beat
is part of the gang you meet at night

roaming the city's streets,
brazen in their uniform,
smiling through their teeth?

That same dog has slipped its leash
stripping a child's flesh
off her soft bones. Who can stop it?
Here's the police just when needed.
They tie a rope around its neck
(the dog's) cutting its steamy breath.

The children report the attack
as something miraculous. One says
he heard the girl's bones crack.
Another liked how the dog wagged
throughout. A third bragged
that after a while it was hard

to tell the colour of the ground
from the girl's smooth brown:
both were dug-up, both were raw;
both were under English law.
The children grow up feeling like dogs,
they worship stumps for gods. (13)

The repetition of the news, to which the poet adds disconcerting poetic discursive devices and an ironic, tender tone, may be meant to question the rapport between identity and otherness, to insist on an obvious crisis of authority and to imply that microhistory might be the answer to the deadlocks of macrohistory. Searching for answers to large questions in small places, as Charles Joyner (1999) put it, fits well when the place is predisposed to conflict, especially when the place is culturally hybrid and hubris might easily emerge. D'Aguiar's volume was published at the time when cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha (1994) was analyzing some of the forces at stake within the process of hybridity:

Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. (112)

Trained as a psychiatric nurse in his youth, D'Aguiar seems to be convinced that good poetry can cure or alleviate personal trauma and social confusion, generated by the unbridled forces of cultural hybridity. If it does not do that, it can at least display the awareness of that condition. With repetition which is not mere imitation, but a rhetoric device that can put forward additional perspectives on the spatial phenomenology of everyday life, poetry can be considered an interface of social communication, when it brings together clashing forces and incompatible points of view that shake the system of power relations. In *Home Is Always Elsewhere* (2000), the poet reveals the role of repetition in the context of his own mnemonic experience: "I need to forget in order to continue, but I must remember if I am to survive.

Continuity is about repetition. To repeat something that is unpleasant or dangerous requires both the impulse of pretending that this time is the first time and the memory of knowing how to proceed with care.” (216)

As the above poem suggests – and this has proved to be one of the main critiques to the “thirdspace” – the latter is not simply a location where various forces interact. In *Inner City*, the girl’s helplessness is in stark contrast with the policeman’s indifference and with the other children’s insensitive mockery. Such a description shows cultural agents have different inherited powers in the conceptual “thirdspace”, therefore spatiality is bound to be considered together with many other factors, among which temporality and the social play significant roles, as Soja advocates. Yet, they may not be the only ones and, as the poem implies, the bond between nature, symbolized by the tree, and the emerging hybrid human nature in an urban context should be the subject of further interdisciplinary investigation.

D’Aguiar extends the explorations of unusual chronotopic aspects in his part narrative, part ballad poem *Bill of Rights* (1998), which re-tells the terrible story of the 1978 mass suicide in Jonestown, Guyana, from the perspective of a man seduced by the confusing rhetoric of the reverend Jim Jones. The poem attempts to explain why the radical project of building a multiracial town in the middle of the Amazonian tropical forest failed so dramatically and which were some of the effects on people’s lives. What was initially supposed to be a paradise on earth ended up in the tragic death of more than 900 people. The encounter between former urban people and the luxurious and threatening environment of the tropical forest, and between naive imagination and faith and brutal reality turned into a life and death struggle that made the international news at the end of 1978. It was the largest loss of American civilian life in one day in a non-natural catastrophe before September 11, 2001.

In contrast with the novel *Jonestown* (1996) by Guyanese author Wilson Harris, who approaches the same event starting with “The Day of the Dead” followed by flashbacks, D’Aguiar imagines the personal history of a single man, a Caribbean immigrant to England who returns to the Caribbean in search of a possible paradise. The poet gives insights into his thinking and feelings, his relationships with the others, with nature and with history, during the whole four-year Peoples Temple Agricultural Project (1974-1978), located in the north of Guyana.

Concerned with the effects of historical and cultural trauma on the psyche of an individual, the poet tackles the subject with a double-fold strategy. He weaves two types of poetic discourse that clearly evoke two distinct rhythms of living: one is specific to the man-made postmodern world, it is fragmented, rich in interruptions (caesuras, enjambment) and closer to prose; the other is more incantatory, based on repetition and enumeration, and aims at preserving a form of profound continuity and relationship with the natural elements. The systematic comparison between the hard immigrant life in Brixton, London, and the dangerous life in the jungle may be meant to remind us that our imagination of a better place should involve not simply another place somewhere else, but another perspective of the same place. However, the poet draws attention to the fact that this is not an easy undertaking, since the narrator is eventually portrayed as a numb and morally confused survivor of the whole tragedy. That the urban, interrupted type of poetic discourse mentioned above overwhelms the incantatory one in the last quarter of the book suggests the very concept of continuity reaches a critical point and nowadays existence may dwell on sets of interruptions:

Brixton market was rough but this is rougher.
I could find saltfish and eddoes near the reggae
Shop that shook my fillings and made my years ring.

A 37 bus always came eventually –
Often after a long wait – in twos and threes.
And at my council flat there was a hook

Behind the door and a jabbering set
That snowed, drizzled, then cleared after a thump.

*Chump chump went the piranhas
On the children who jumped
Unthinkingly into the river
During a spell without supervision
Oh red river
Howls under water
Blood signalling miles downstream
For more, more piranhas to come feast (12)*

The negations in the following fragment from *Bill of Rights* and their call to explore confusion in terms of spatiality leads to a journey back and forth from real places to an imaginary space, in which instability is part of the game:

You guessed right. My new address –
Denmark Hill. From my room
On the locked ward, I hear trains
Clackety-clack to somewhere
I can't go: Ghattanooga, Kalamazoo
Or even Timbuctoo. Not Karaudanawa.

I am not a pork-knocker.
Nor have I hollowed an enemy's bone
Into a flute. I am made dizzy
By the very thought of a Gideon,
Never mind the unexpurgated version.

'I don't know, I don't know
Why they got people bad minded so.' (130)

Denmark Hill in London is the residence to the Institute of Psychiatry and a site where the narrator seeks at least temporary healing. The quick mentioning of all the other places – from the United States, Africa and Guyana – emphasizes the precarity of real omnipresence. The general absence of confidence, highlighted by the presence of Gideon's Bible², brings to light a more profound crisis related to religious practice and belonging, in the context of the postcolonial era. The two ending lines are quoted from a Caribbean song of the 1960s and hint at an intimate childhood experience, which will be revealed in "Calypso", a poem from D'Aguiar's later collection, *Continental Shelf* (2009), discussed below. Asked about "the place of the Caribbean in the British cultural identity", D'Aguiar reply alludes to the ancient times of Pangaea and Panthalassa and to the mythical Genesis, in his attempt to find a common ground on understanding difference and its impact on the contemporary world:

The rock we are standing on here in England broke off from South America and came North. I was in Guyana a few weeks ago and they were telling us about bits of granite found in Scotland, because millions and millions of years ago it broke off, that piece of Europe and headed upwards like that and left South America there. Guyana has bits in common with Scotland in terms of rock formation. It's strange, yes, but it points to some kind of impulse that says that we are all one family in some kind of way. Now, I understand that's true but I also understand that there are amazing differences in terms

² Gideon's Bible is the evangelical Christian organization dedicated to distributing the Bible in the world.

of culture and history. Those differences are simply more powerful than the similarities. (Leusmann 17)

In the 1990s, Fred D'Aguiar focused his attention on the history of slavery in the United States. After publishing *The Longest Memory* (1994), a novel about early nineteenth century slavery in Virginia, United States, and *Feeding the Ghosts* (1997), a novel – poetic in style – about the history of a slave ship, named Zong, he returned to writing poetry rooted in European literary style and routed in the American interracial history. In 2000, he published *Bloodlines*, a novel-in-verse, inspired by the versification of *Don Juan* by Lord Byron and by narrative devices of *Eugene Onegin* by Alexander Pushkin. The verse novel narrates the story of a young female slave who falls in love with the white son of an American plantation owner and runs away with him in search of freedom. Their story is narrated by their son, who never knows them because his mother is sold back into slavery and dies at childbirth. D'Aguiar invents places of memory, in which supernatural anamnesis is possible, so that he can *re-imagine* his parents' experiences. For example, before the slavery rule of the time separates them, the two runaway lovers reach a farm next to a town where they are offered shelter. They hide in a special place in the house: “a wall”, usually a symbol of separation and difference (especially during and after the cold war, when the book was written), which here becomes a productive metaphor of cultural hybridity.

In the first chapter, entitled *I and I*, D'Aguiar describes such a place of extreme restriction not as a site of misfortune and grief, but as a site of love and survival, where common things such as sneezing can happen:

The lovers' room was not a room, more a cupboard
Two people could lie down in with a squeeze,
Locked from outside, windowless and boarded
Up, with floating dust that made them sneeze
Louder than the heavy furniture pulled forward
To block the half-door entered on their knees.
Lodged in a wall, they listened to the affairs
In the house, so that the wall really did have ears. (25)

Dwelling on difference and on the very concept of the color line, a phrase specific to African American culture, coined by Frederick Douglass (1881) and used by W. E. B. DuBois (1903), the metaphor of the wall in D'Aguiar's poetry attempts to be an inhabitable space and to represent what Edouard Glissant (1990) called “poetics of relation”. It represents not simply what brings people of different cultures together. As the title of the chapter implies, it connects two different particular perspectives of the same self, African and American, and alludes to the DuBoisean concept of “double consciousness”. In the same volume, in the last chapter, entitled *I and I* too, the author takes over the metaphor of the wall, empties it of its material substance – the memory of his parents and, to a larger extent, the history of slavery in the Deep South – and replaces it with the wider and vertical metaphor of “the gap”, an allusion to the Indian phrase “Trishanku's heaven” and its meaning³:

I have no one left on earth to speak of.
No flesh and scent I can follow away
from harm. No names to drop, or trip off
my tongue. No 'mother' or 'father' to say
without thinking. Only a gap big enough
for me to spend the rest of my days

³ A space seen as a compromise between the earth, as a site of belonging, and the heaven, as a place that Trishanku sought.

between earth and sky, my cloudy head
humming full of Slavery's towering dead. (146)

In this way, the main character, the narrator, attempts to come to terms with the emptiness of being in between races, with never knowing his parents and with death itself, in which all races and family members meet again. "I and I" represents then what brings together the living and the dead, the known and the unknown, the familiar and the unrecognizable, the former and the present subjectivity.

The last volume selected for this essay, *Continental Shelf* (2009), includes two types of poems. On the one hand, the first and the last sections, "Local Colour" and "Continental Shelf", mainly evoke the spirit and the memory of Caribbean, in an anthropological and autoethnological sense. In poems such as "Calypso" or "Demerara Sugar", D'Aguiar weaves his childhood time spent in Guyana with the present time, which bridges South and North America and helps delineating a transnational type of belonging. In the former, the meaning of location is reduced to the skull, the place where memories become conscious, where a song finds a nest to hatch new poetic eggs:

... Everything about
1966, 600 feet below sea level,
drained from me, everything except

that little strain lodged in my skull
and always budding on my tongue.
It tea-teases, tau-taunts, tan-tantalises. (8)

The latter poem brings local geography into the picture, which is personified and talked to:

Demerara whose east coast raised me
From a mere stalk to stand straight

To stand tall no matter what current
Help me find your grain your flow
And Demerara sweeten me

So my art keeps your river's caveat
Your sense of cane fields bathed in sweat. (29)

On the other hand, in the middle section of the volume, entitled "Elegies", the poet explores the aftermath of the shootings at Virginia Tech in 2006, when thirty-three people were killed by a student. The sonnets envisage the impact of death on civil and private life in a university town such as Blacksburg and shows that, no matter how grief and tragedy are produced, life is still worth living. What is astonishing and yet interesting in the fragment selected below is that the poet finds meaning in death. The shooter was one of his students and, while acclaimed American poet Nikki Giovanni excluded him from her class for bad behaviour, D'Aguiar reflects on his relationship with him by referring to space.

... I found out the name of the shooter
And remember him from three meetings we had in my office
As part of tutorial, after he was ejected from Poetry by the professor

Who was right to throw him out. But he fell into my space
And will rent room in my head for the rest of my days. For
As long as I can think I will wonder if I could have seen

Something in him to ring an alarm and get him treated.
But I swear he showed nothing but extreme,
Stubborn, shy, idiosyncratic retreat.

He held his tongue as one holds onto a precious thing
So I could only guess his real thoughts from his writing. (56)

The word play of *treat* and *retreat* from the third stanza above seems to transmit the unspoken lessons that lie behind the whole tragedy: How much should we retreat when we live in an urban society, in order to protect that “precious thing” inside ourselves and not offend the Other? This is in line with the wider presence man can find within, wider than his or her own self, which Saint Augustine wrote about long time ago. And what social and individual practices might help in dealing with unusual behaviour? Have the concept and the practices of social distance changed over the last decades due to mass migration and mass media? D’Aguiar’s concern with the incomensurability of otherness opens up new questions and his answers constitute a return to the practice of human values such as love, forgiveness, rebirth, will to survive, a constant search for beauty and meaning in everything that life offers, good or horrible, natural or man made, and literary writing as a form of self-discovery and collective discovery that man has refined over millenia.

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