

Meaningful Sense Perceptions: Existential and Transcendental Phenomenology in *Jawdat Haydar's* Poems

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All our knowledge begins with sense, proceeds thence to understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which nothing higher can be discovered in the human mind for elaborating the matter of intuition and subjecting it to the highest unity of thought. (Kant 2016: II)

Abstract: *In their transcendental and existential dimensions, Jawdat Haydar's poems manifest philosophical notions akin to those of Edmund Husserl's theory of consciousness. As a centenarian poet who has embraced diverse cultures, he reveals an unwavering desire to bridge the cultural and human divide between East and West in a style reminiscent of Husserl's notion of intersubjectivity. In poems that abound with beautiful, rhythmical and transcendental sense perceptions occurring within constant cyclical time, Haydar blends Self and Other rendering an otherwise bleak state of existence an aesthetic and transcendental dimension. His hybrid identity and what Husserl refers to as intersubjectivity, are the basic profound drives behind his poetic blending of the beautiful and the sublime easing his transition toward a reconciliation with his once dislocated and displaced state. This paper attempts to reveal phenomenological features in some of Haydar's major poems and establish how his meaningful sense perceptions project experiences of sublimity and transcendence in such a harmonious blending of image and reason, that man's existence acquires an enduring sense of beauty instead of the overwhelmingly depressive and futile post-war states.*

Keywords: dislocated, hybrid, intersubjectivity, phenomenology, transcendence

I. Introduction

In an abundance of concrete and abstract images, Jawdat Haydar's poetry focuses on sense perceptions as the basis for all human knowledge and highlights his profound concern for both nature and humanity in a language and style that blends Arabic, English and American cultural phenomena. As an emigrant or Mahjar poet, Jawdat Haydar, has befittingly earned the title 'prince of poets' and 'Shakespeare of the East' in his constant strife to merge East and West. In her book, *Jawdat Haydar and the Modern Spirit of the Mahjar Poets* (2009), Pamela Layoun identifies the modern spirit through which Haydar presents themes strongly related to those of the Mahjar School. The modernity of Haydar's poetry lies in his blending of the Mahjar poets' expressive and intense nostalgia for their native land with both a concern for nature and for morality. He reportedly attributed the source of his poetic inspiration to "the beauty of nature and the

diversity and mysteries of the world” (McDonnell 2007). In this sense John Munro (1980) affirms,

Jawdat Haydar is a poet who transcends national boundaries. Though he writes with affection about his native Lebanon, evoking, in particular, the natural beauty of his ancestral home in the Bekaa valley with its world famous ruins of Baalbek, his themes are universal rather than local.

Beauty intermingles with inspiration in poems whose nostalgic feelings, rhythm, and exaltation of man and nature motivate humanity to seek a state of harmony with the inner soul and to spread that harmony to the external world. It is an artistic stance stimulated by his dislocation from his motherland, Lebanon that simultaneously initiated an acute sense of longing and nostalgia for his adopted country, the United States. Two different cultures are blended in the beautiful and subliminal images of a man whose Eastern heart welcomed and loved the hospitable West. In words and experiences reminiscent of his Lebanese heritage, Haydar merges English romantic poetic vision, transcendentalism, and existential concerns to awaken the inner soul. As such, he stands out not only as a bard bridging cultures, but also as a ‘transcendental subject’ whose lived experiences are a reflection of objective truths. In such a frame of mind, his poems seem to echo Edmund Husserl’s philosophy of phenomenology (Husserl 1991:347) “*the science of pure consciousness...it encompasses all cognition, all of the sciences, and, with respect to objectivity, all objectivities, even the whole of nature.*” Strictly speaking, they reveal an existential and transcendental mood, woven within a spatial and temporal fabric, and mixed with a subjective sense perception or conscious awareness of phenomena.

2. Haydar and Husserl’s transcendental subjectivity or intersubjectivity

Husserl (1991: xxvi) refers to lived experiences and perceptions in poetry as “act[s] of thinking” which can include memories of family, friends, major poets, political figures and “*primal sensation-consciousness*” (Husserl 1991:338). Accordingly, one cannot fail to recognize a similarity between Husserl’s direct and indirect phenomenological conditions, and Haydar’s poetic expressions and imagery. While the former developed the philosophical theory of phenomenology with the ‘natural attitude’ as its cornerstone, the latter portrays vivid experiences or memories enclosed in a ‘now’ conscious moment enclosed within the transience of cyclical time. These memories are vividly evoked in a meditative state – ‘the natural attitude’ or the reductionist perspective that Husserl refers to as being the essence of a transcendental subjectivity or intersubjectivity. Though existential issues and questions predominate Haydar’s poetry, there have not yet been major investigations into a possible connection between him and Husserl, and there is no evidence of a familiarity with phenomenology during Haydar’s higher education studies at North Texas State University. Thus, while a direct influence by the Romantics is confirmed in his poetry, this is not the case concerning his affinity with phenomenology. Nevertheless, the discernable poetic/philosophical vision that coincides with that of Husserl cannot be overlooked.

Husserl's (1991:248) phenomenological perception is sparked by an individual's awe of a certain object that makes him aware only of its "*unity and self-identity*". In such a state of conscious unity he brackets or suspends the object (see Beyer 2016), allows himself to be absorbed in a chasm of beauty and emotions until he gradually discerns and grasps the object's intentional position in space and time within an "*entirely different consciousness of a whole made up of moments that continuously fall into sequence with one another in time*" (Husserl 1991: 249). From such a reductionist perspective or state of pure consciousness, an individual emerges with an intersubjective understanding of the perceived object and with an existential awareness unaffected by preconceived ideas of the reality of the objective world, making possible a pure transcendental experience. Alessandro Duranti (2010: 1) elucidates Husserl's notion of intersubjectivity as the most basic quality of human existence which is constitutive of the Subject and of the very notion of an objective world. By exploring the role of the living human body, empathy, tools, and the natural and cultural world, Husserl comes to see intersubjectivity as a domain of inquiry that spans the entire scope of human experience.

This is essentially "the primal basis for all legitimacy and validity..." (Gurwitsch 1966: 111) wherein the subject's ego is suspended to perceive a direct sensation of the essence of an object while being aware of the spatio-temporal quality of the moment. A transcendental subject therefore is one whose heightened sensations emerge from within and without his being. Consequently, the perceived object is essentially a part of the sensation and is drawn into the picture in a direct address or reference. As such, "experience of oneself proves to be inseparable from that of others" (Gurwitsch 1966: 443) and is precisely what Haydar's poetic reflections convey. As a hybrid, his sense perceptions function in-between consciousness and imagination, making an inter subjective experience possible as it transpires from his reductionist perspective. In his poem "The World is But What We Hear See and Feel" (Haydar 2012:45), he advocates experience as a conscious act, and not a mere memory. Addressing himself to a friend or to all humanity, he sets out to reveal how it is directly related to man's senses. In this manner, he encourages one's immersion into lived experiences as the only significant thing in a world where, "You cannot my friend and I cannot weet/ What's coming in the basket from our fate" (45).

Essentially, a subliminal encounter involves a poet's possession of an instinctive pure sense of wonder in an untainted relationship between himself and the object; a condition Husserl refers to as *epoché*. Hence, the subject separates or brackets himself/herself and the perceived object from acquired cultural beliefs and prejudices preventing their influence on his/her purely intuitive sensation at a given moment. As such, the subject can react to subliminal stimuli – experience the sublime – and in so doing adopt a transcendental attitude. This is essentially the manner in which Haydar renders a perfectly subjective memory or event in an objective manner to attract universal human appeal. In this sense, his sensitive nature makes him "a transcendental subject," who seeks to draw attention to a humanity that can harmoniously co-exist. For instance, in "To a Friend" (Haydar

2012:139) he calls for someone to share his phenomenological stance, to “look far away into the no end”... and to “walk the distance allowed within reason” so as not to “miss the glare”; to wonder and be actually aware of everything in life and nature. The places Haydar visited and the people he met, whether in reality or through books, have provided him with an enlightened view of the world. He expresses himself in a spontaneous and instinctive inter subjective manner typical of one aware that his state of being affects and is affected by everyone and everything around him. Such a subject-position or identity must have been kindled when he was forced to leave his motherland as an eight-year old child.

Haydar’s numerous collections of poems published in *101 Selected Poems* and in *Shadows, Echoes, and Voices*, deal with diverse themes, ranging from love, war, peace, injustice, death, nature, time, philosophical and moral issues, monumental places, with allusions to British romantic poets and many literary and political figures. May Maalouf in *The Ethics of Representation* (2013:149) has compared him to William Wordsworth, and John Munro, in his forward to *Voices* (1980) compares him to the Victorian essayist and poet Matthew Arnold. In fact, some of his lines or images like, “Paradise where the sacred rivers run” from “We shall Ever Be Yearning For Beirut” (Haydar 2012:63) bring to mind Coleridge’s “Kuba Khan.” Others, such as “A Period within a Question Mark” (Haydar 2012: 107) present a series of images, of “dreams within a dream” reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe’s poem “A Dream Within a Dream.” At the same time, Haydar’s poem discloses images in a Chinese-box manner not unlike Coleridge’s style in “Kubla Khan.” Where Coleridge’s “romantic chasm” opens up to a “mighty fountain” to “dancing rocks” and then to the “dome of pleasure” amid other intriguing images, Haydar, in a four-line stanza, uncovers an unpolluted world, with abundant sunshine, singing birds and sacred rivers (2012:63). Moreover, Haydar’s “Wash, Wash, Wash” (2012:183) runs parallel to Tennyson’s “Break, Break, Break” with identical images of waves beating against rocks. Though in Tennyson’s poem it is the sound of the beating of waves against solid rock that resonates in one’s ears, Haydar’s repetitive “wash” has a milder effect upon one’s hearing and brings to mind the sound of waves falling softly upon sandy and “old brownish shores” more attuned to a Mediterranean setting. However, in spite of certain similarities in style and form to Western poems, and of the use of the English language as the medium of expression, Haydar’s poems are basically intertextual harboring essential differences. Unique in tone and rhythm, they are colored with an existential quest for the meaning of life and death and manifest an exclusively intersubjective stance.

3. Transcendental reduction and the path to intersubjectivity

Though Haydar adheres to the basic defining features of English romantic poets and to the thematic focus of the Mahjar poets – through recollections of the beauty and reality associated with his nostalgia for the homeland– Haydar’s existential and transcendental phenomenological approach, endows his poetry with a unique difference: he brings to life memories that conform to an intersubjectivity that

“span[s] the entire scope of human experience” (Duranti 2010:2). Jayson Iwen (2005:25) has described Haydar’s poetic style as one that “boldly fuses the poetic styles and sentiments of the Romantic, Victorian, and Modern Periods of Anglophone literature, while exploring issues of common interest to people living in regions as far apart as Texas and Iraq.” In a sense, his hybrid piety is the door through which the once unfamiliar is understood, while his inter textual tendency allows the removal of boundaries and eases the way for an interrelation to others. According to Haj Yazdiha (2010:33) the “freedom to move between identities carries its own power in defying the claims of essentialized racial identity.” Whether it is a real image, experience, or dream, it is what urges him to call upon the Other to be involved in the emotion, object, or image and paves the way for shared visions and existential concerns. Therefore, through his transcendental reduction or what Husserl refers to as the “natural attitude” Haydar’s intersubjectivity materializes through transient imaginative experiences. As Sandowky (2006:17) explains, “consciousness, in its time, is essentially spaced-out. In consonance with Husserl, it can be said that these moments are not ‘distinct existences,’ but rather phases, modes, threads, or streams of one ‘unity of lived-experience.’” It follows that the reality represented by language is primarily initiated by a subject’s perception of a phenomena or object at a given moment in time. Through language, the poet exists within a borderline of imagination and reality and exalts in a transcendental experience.

Hence, Haydar (1991:91) manifests concern for both man and nature in a unique poetic style that conforms to the basic qualities of intersubjectivity; a term first introduced by Husserl who posits that “nature is an inter subjective reality and a reality not just for me and my companions of the moment but for us and for everyone who can come to a mutual understanding with us about things and about other people.” This assertion is effectively rendered in many of Haydar’s nature poems whose simple, informal style and tone inspire readers to share his experience and vision. He delivers the essence of his lived experiences and pays tribute to major Romantic poets all from within his own cultural space, and in a manner that skillfully allows others to share the cultural memories of both East and West. For example, he exalts and praises great leaders such as Ghandi and Bonaparte, and landmarks as The Great Wall of China, Texas and his native Baalbak, vividly giving the impression of a real encounter with the ‘Other.’ His poems also take on the form of dialogue with the ‘Other’ whether addressed to his wife, daughter, friend, stranger or simply the reader. For example, in “Lebanon” (Haydar 2012:161) he directly addresses an invisible friend and the reader:

I would that you were with me hence, sharing
This celestial view seen, unseen, before ...
Come to me, darling, and look at the strand...
Come, darling, to see what I see, and more
Stars above, stars below, moon in between.

“Come Brothers and Let Us Read the Chart” (Haydar 2012:57) is another poem that not only communicates with the ‘Other,’ but also ponders upon the mark or the trace of an existence that a person leaves behind, in the past, to be

remembered in the future. In establishing himself as a “being-with” the experiences of others, Haydar attempts to initiate empathy for his motherland and for nature. For Husserl (Marosan 2009: 93-94), “Empathy is being-with from a transcendental point of view ... Through empathy, I can know in the phenomenological attitude that I am an inter subjective being.”

Furthermore, Haydar’s direct address to Byron in which he mourns the loss of the poet, his elegy to Keats, and his imagined father-son conversation with Gibran Khalil Gibran are among repeated instances where his transcendental reduction initiates experiences of a real encounter with an ‘Other.’ “The Fiber of Will” further manifests such an absorption into nature as the poet portrays a state of being-one with nature, enters its sublime space and gains an immediate experience of the creative mystery:

Having lost the spring would I in the fall
Find a lone green leaf still hung on my tree,
When the stem dying core dried all in all.
Leaving but the fiber of will in me. (109)

He deftly detaches himself from his own physical space and perceives nature from a perspective that holds majesty and beauty. By projecting his unconscious into the depths of nature, he becomes one with it and relives the loss of the spring of his life: his youth.

Haydar’s experience and expression of the sublime is also apparent in “The Break of Dawn,” (Haydar 2012:143) which projects the feeling of one completely absorbed in nature. The first four quatrains deal exclusively with the physical perception of nature through sight and sound: “Once the break of dawn o’er our hills was seen/ The cock crew the darkness dwindled away” while the last four quatrains, address the effect of such natural visions as they enlighten him to the wonder of creation and to the bond between man and nature: “By the heart of man the pith of a tree /Alike in feed growth pulse and excellence”. What emerges in this sublime image of nature is the use of action verbs or verbs of movement intermingling with onomatopoeia and alliteration to enhance its musical quality. As such, the poet “sitting alone” experiences visions from a “reductionist perspective” and enters a sublime state. Consider how “...the trees have a breath like you and me,” invokes a theme of unity as he becomes part of all that is infinite and wondrous in the world. What is also striking is that Haydar’s transcendental condition is not completely divorced from an awareness of reality since, through the accompanying sound effects, “the cock crew”, “swishing sound” of the wind, and “I listened well” to the sound of the trees breathing, his imagination and sense perceptions remain alert and create a balance between the living-present and imagination.

4. Transcendental reduction: The flux of time and infinity

The natural scene in “The Break of Dawn” (Haydar 2012:133) assumes an aspect of what Kant refers to as the mathematical sublime in which the imagination is compelled to conceive things in nature as infinite: as the poet sits all alone under “the banyan tree” surrounded by its protruding roots, he experiences a sense of

intense isolation amid the boundless vastness around him. He occupies the middle position between the sound of the wind and the sound of the trees while being connected to an immense landscape into which the reader finds himself drawn. This contributes to the idea of an infinite connectedness with the world that places man at the center of the universe. In “Overall” (Haydar 2012:51) he calls for a continuous search for the truth as experienced through nature with a “heart that never fails/within its endless mission forever.” For him, the creative mystery is an “en’igma of mystical genesis/ A heavenly secret” within which man exists “gloved by noth’ngness...” in a vast universe that maintains the balance between space and emptiness: “Existence gloved by noth’ngness its o’erall/ Make the universe and naught all in all” (51). Once again, man is placed at the center of the universe as the most elevated and noblest of creations.

Even more so, the “The Willow” is a beautiful musical depiction of the mystery of creation. The image of the weeping tree, “A shrouded mystery of up and down,” promotes a vision of “the charm of the divine creation” (Haydar 2012: 205). According to Kassim A. Shaaban (1999: iii) Haydar is “the great mind that dressed the eloquent content in beautiful rhythmic, rhyming verse without letting old age and the burdens of his life journey affect his creativity, originality and dedication to the cause of poetry.” On the same wavelength, Husserl has also considered the natural world as one of “a shared world of experience as well as the co-world made possible by the language faculty in all of its realizations” (Duranti 2010: 2). Haydar presents a transcendental experience in the image of the willow which, through language, induces a flux of feelings associated with anxiety and concern for nature. It is essentially Haydar’s anxiety, his experience in the ‘living-present’ that is projected unto readers. Once more, he seems to echo Husserl for whom, “the structurality of the opening-up of the Living Present is precisely flux –through which the giving of temporal objects is lived “ (Sandowsky 2006:19).

Furthermore, in “A Shadow of Light,” (Haydar 2012:79) he directly portrays the “sense impression” of sight and sound in an image of the Lord ‘frowning’ at war and bloodshed. In Husserlian terminology, this image reflects both a protention and a retention both of which constitute “present modes of orientation of that which is no-longer and that which is not-yet” (Sandowsky 2006: 25). In a transcendental reductionist state, the poet brings to life a phantasy that gradually gives way to an absolute “primary impression”— the space that disrupts his ideal: “Still awake and how I look away beams/A shadow of light every which way seems” (Haydar 2012:79). Thus, within a poetic space of raging thunder and storm, Haydar seems to do justice to Husserl’s notion that, “consciousness, in its time, is essentially spaced-out” (Sandowsky 2006:17) making a deep impression upon the subject. Essentially, Haydar’s transcendental vision remains the pivotal point from which “thunder struck,” he projects his vision of an angry god and questions humanity’s vile actions and interests.

Haydar’s speculations upon the constant flux of objects or creations moving within cyclical time is expressed in a rhythmical, repetitive style that establishes

the infinite nature of existence. The poem “Perhaps” (Haydar 2012:241) is one such rhythmical contemplation or meditation that completely lacks punctuation:

In a round trip go'ng ahead we go back
And we are impotent to make a change
Of a proc'dure go and wait to come back

The notion of transient experiences or the sense of wonder is further portrayed and expressed in an unusual and unconventional manner in “A Period Within a Question Mark” (Haydar 2012:107). The title does not reflect what one would expect in the content since it lacks both punctuation types. However, the image or notion of something *within*, calls attention to Husserl’s notion of bracketing, or the *epoché*. It serves as a symbol for the transcendental phenomenological experience where the period stands for the subject in-between two worlds, isolated from the beyond, while immersed in a lived experience. The ‘period’ suggests man’s temporality in the mysterious universe while the ‘question mark’ refers to the beyond or to the creative mystery. It is the sense of repetition, of a return, that rhythmically holds the stanzas together and functions as the unifying thread bracketing and connecting the lines together.

It is in “The Wonder Man” (Haydar 2012:243) that Haydar efficiently evokes movement in time. In this three-stanza poem, as is characteristic of most of Haydar’s poems, lines run on rhythmically and breathlessly with neither a period nor a coma until all abruptly ends with a question mark. Here, it is a rapid melody that propels the poem onward. Interestingly, this accords with Husserl’s assertion that if something “comes to an end, then we have a boundary characterized precisely as a boundary: the consciousness of completion. The manner of the ending, like the period of a sentence, leaves me nothing new to expect or demand” (1991:142). What is thus experienced and presented by Haydar is a sense of incompleteness. There’s an inherent call for continuation – for an answer to the question. Invariably what is expounded is the working method of *epoché* which allows the vision to be suspended in a spatio-temporal state while being “*immanent in its transcendence*” (Sandowsky 2006:19). In a sense, it involves a sense of future expectation. Thus, this poem, which wonders at the possibility of the circularity of existence,

is a waiting-towards presence. It is not so much the present (in an objective sense) as the *living through of presencing*, since the consciousness of continuous alteration / temporalization is none other than its own temporalization. (Sandowsky 2006: 25)

As such, it moves relentlessly on with no punctuation other than two exclamation marks and a question mark for closure. The image alternates between the present and the past as Haydar (2012: 243) poetically expresses: “Could I on the ladder of the years climb/And go backward while I’m going ahead...?” His longing to fly through time gives way to images that reflect what Husserl refers to as “time-constituting consciousness, as moments of the flow” (1991:80). Husserl also advocates that (1991:43) “... every individual is extended in time in some way, having its now, its before, and its after; but now, before, and after are merely imagined, as is the whole object.” His theory of imminent temporality in which

meaning is affected by a subject's direct reaction to phenomena gradually extending along the time axis, is precisely what is involved in temporization and the exercise of reduction. Another poem that particularly stands out in this respect is "Days Seem Centuries" (Haydar 2012:97). Here, Haydar's present time is intruded upon by the sound of a singing dove: his auditory sensations bring to mind his beloved; a recollection that initiates an intense reaction in the very moment of remembrance thereby initiating further intimate recollections when in Spain. The sound of the Linnet once more "call[s] him lure[s] him" and this auditory effect encourages him to "go/Forward on the road that leads me west" (97). Perceptions in the living present attract the poet into a state whereby the only thing he anticipates is the healing power of his beloved. Yet he gently breaks off his reverie with "Days seem centuries since we parted," and continues with cherished memories that lead him to another time and place, "Till I reach the west and meet you there" (97). Hence, Haydar is 'time-conscious' and performs what Husserl has explained as part of the working method of *epoché* in which he, explore[s] the question of the primordial possibility of an extending consciousness which, when understood in intentional terms as a transitive consciousness of something, gives duration. Without duration there cannot be change and without an enduring (temporalized / temporalizing) consciousness there cannot be a consciousness of change. (Sandowsky 2006:14/15)

It is not due to ordinary consciousness but to transcendental reduction that such primordial associations are brought to life. The images are rendered in a continuous flux of perceptions between present, past and future – of sound and image, and from a phenomenological perspective "...the 'now' is intrinsically spanned within itself as the locus of an inter-/ intra-play of intentionalities: retentions, primal impressions, and protentions. This flux or play of interpenetration is not originally that of a successive order, but rather it names a certain kind of simultaneity at the heart of the present and presence" (Sandowsky 2006: 6).

Furthermore, in "Orpheus" (Haydar 2012:33), he demonstrates the working of Husserl's phenomenological transcendental reduction when he directly addresses the gifted Greek minstrel as though he were right there in his direct line of vision, and asks him to stretch his heart strings to play music in an evocative and realistic vision, "Tighten them, tune them and please quickly start/The yearning melodies of my desire" (33). This is an audio-visual scene which for Husserl, involves "the appearance of something not in time" (1991:80); a transcendental object, a phantasy. He directly addresses Orpheus asking him to tune his heart and play its music in an overwhelmingly tranquil scene resounding with a melody that echoes throughout the world. It is an example of a fluid transcendental ego which "is on the one hand an infinite, open realm of forms, which is itself an essential form too.... On the other hand she [ego]... is the functioning of transcendental subjectivity ('she lives, but she has no subsistence')" (Marosan 2009: 88). The whole unified image is experienced as a movement through melody and dialogue with successive flows in time reminiscent of Husserl's notion of the "flow of consciousness" (1991:85).

More importantly, one cannot ignore the fact that the majority of Haydar's poems are endowed with action verbs that convey "primal sensations" in constant harmony and unity with the flow of time. His "Motion and Speed" (Haydar 2012:191) highlights what Husserl believes to be the sense of "the law of the transformation of the now into the no-longer –and, in the other direction, of the not-yet into the now" (Husserl 1991:80) in its brilliant portrayal of a moving image. Together with Haydar's suggestive title, the poem continues with:

There's naught but in the heart of time to find
 The speeding sound of motion without end
 The sun, the stars beyond and deep behind
 A paradox we cannot comprehend.
 Inherently we are driven in speed
 Circling rings within a circling tower
 We are of it, living in it, a weed
 A man, a fish, a bird and a flower. (Haydar 2012:191)

As witnessed above, the portrayal of the constancy of time against the consistent flux and cycle of man's existence is exceptionally evocative. The word 'speed' and 'circling' are repeated twice in beautiful alternating rhymes suggesting the repetitive circularity of all creatures whether, "A man, a fish, a bird and a flower" (191). The circularity of one's life is basically a recurring theme in most of his poems and is given further prominence in the poem "Lines" (Haydar 2012:225) which is structured as a series of questions on the mystery of time and existence. In "A Great Wall" (Haydar 2012:231) he questions "why we are destined to evolve forever" and instead of a direct answer, is provided with an image and a declaration "that the truth only by the revelations made/was descried" (Haydar 2012:235). This answer refers to the truth acquired from a subjective experience and an immersion into natural contemplation – the truth brought about through a transcendental phenomenological experience. The image of a "heavenly God" (Haydar 2012:263) is also present in "The Coming Quietus" and is reminiscent of W.B. Yeats's "The Second Coming" with its infinite image of the "*Spiritus Mundi*." Essentially, both the idea of circularity and the existence of a heavenly God are Cartesian and Phenomenological beliefs; the former considers that circularity "infers ... the necessary existence of God" (qtd. in MacDonald 2000: 178) and the latter "takes this same position" (MacDonald 2000:178) as it rests upon the belief of the existence of a transcendental ego or being. According to Paul S. MacDonald (2000:178/184) "This would make the phenomenologist open to a charge of circularity in the way that Descartes was alleged to commit circular reasoning, though for a different purpose ... the Cartesian point of departure is a way into phenomenology."

5. Spatio-temporal existence within the flow of time

Consequently, one of the most recurring motifs in Haydar's poems is that of cyclical time and temporality which "means that the very possibility of the present and the continuity of presence rest on the possibility of return / repetition. It is the structuralizing possibility of return – returnability –that produces a continuum"

(Sandowsky 2006: 10). In “Overall,” Haydar directly calls upon readers to marvel at the mystery of creation and “look at the wonders overhead that will/Keep moving calmly wave-like never still” (Haydar 2012:51). Also, in “Heart Strings of Israfel,” (Haydar 2012:71) a poem reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe’s “Israfel,” he projects his in-between place in the world from his individual space and time: “And I stand here, pencil in hand, showing/A sketch of the universe punctuated on the sheet of time.” He also makes affinities between time’s stability and a blank sheet upon which man can sketch or leave imprints of life experiences. The reader is prompted to envision objects endowed with eternal life, in a particular time and space, as they appear “spaced-out” in the poem. Therefore, in a sketch of words or signs, Haydar lures the ‘Other’ into experiencing a timeless image from his own perspective. According to Kelly (2008: para.1.d), he does not describe the angel nor his music, but presents the thing itself, in “the living-present” accompanied by the sound of music heard by travelers who “listen, swoon, and brake” (Haydar 2012:71). In a way, it seems as though Haydar is calling upon the angel Israfel to return to his homeland from the West, (albeit from Poe himself), and with the sound of Apollo’s song and music, “commingling feet welcoming the gods to their abode/ In the remote town of Baalbeck at the welkin stretch on the road” (Haydar 2012:73). Once more, Haydar’s poem strengthens Husserl’s notion of an individual’s ability to eternalize a spatio-temporal or living-present experience through an intersubjective perspective that,

...marks the essence of all manifestation, for in its automatic or passive self-givenness the living-present makes possible the apprehension of the elapsed phases of the life of consciousness and thereby the elapsed moments of the transcendent spatio-temporal object of which the conscious self is aware (Kelly 2008: para.1.e).

In fact, nowhere is Husserlian phenomenology more evident than in “Believe It or Not” (Haydar 2012:83). His poetry expresses Husserl’s “time-consciousness,” his belief that “time is fixed and that time flows” (as cited in Kelly, 2008:para. 1.b) and that amidst the temporality of lived experiences that connect past, present and future, one can retreat into nature and be inspired to re-awaken and eternalize memories. Consequently, cyclical repetitive time and the splendor and beauty of nature are in “perpetual motion.” When contemplated and appreciated together, “man might discern the organs/of the whole nameless senses within the apperceptive system still in the blind” (Haydar 2012:83). Thus, present temporality or the “now” lived experience which “Husserl describes [as] the living-present’s flow as a non-temporal temporalizing” (Kelly 2008: para.1.e) acquires a transcendental dimension while the poet’s internal time-consciousness is cognizant of spatio-temporal entities. Other such instances are recognised in his depiction of memories of his wife, of “Sally,” of dreams, and of Texas. In-between the past and the future is a subject aware of his spatio-temporal existence and willing to suspend it through living-present experiences in which he becomes the pivot around whom everything spins; the object who fills the emptiness of eternal time. In “Think Again” (Haydar 2012:115) he affirms,

All beg’nnings must have an end to begin

In a circle circling within the ring
 The ring but space and the objects in it
 We look at them agape without knowing
 of their end to know of their beginning
 Lift your head up drink sky and think again.

An artistic illustration of the flux in time is creatively depicted in the breathlessly evocative poem “And” (Haydar 2012:43). Essentially “And” is crucial to the signifying chain; it is a coordinating conjunction that is meaningless unless ‘bracketed’ by words before and after. It is quite unusual for a poem to be thus entitled and yet, upon reading it, one is carried along by an ongoing chain of advice in lines smoothly connected to one another in a manner Husserl (1991:LV) refers to as an “absolute time-constituting flow.” The poem establishes the relevance of this simple conjunction and displays how its repetition in a number of different contexts is an intentional act designed to produce several meanings in its constant movement through a steady flow of signs and rhythm. ‘And’ therefore becomes more than a simple connector. As a matter of fact, it is an essential factor in determining meaning and initiating sense perceptions while at the same time, drawing attention to the relational aspect of language; that language is not a closed system but an eternal process of signification responsible for the flux within time.

Moreover, “And” starts with a strong negative imperative that is repeated twice in the first line, “Blink not wonder not” thus stimulating the reader’s sense of inquisitiveness and anticipation. At the same time, the quick and almost breathless pace with the incomplete and almost endless references to signifiers with a ceaseless promise of ‘something more,’ invoke the sublime. Upon reading each subsequent line and encountering words like: heart, love, peace, liberty, pleasant, and brotherhood, one cannot but remember the earliest emotions associated with childhood. Such words are suggestive of innocence and pure peace, while their accompanying sounds with their alliterative repetition of the ‘m’ and ‘n’ are reminiscent of the humming of a lullaby. In this case, the linguistic balance between the perception of a phenomena and its accompanying sense impression cannot be ignored. At the other extreme, one is made to contemplate, envisage, and feel the inherent cruelty and sense of pain that nature undergoes through the image “Never to skin nature” from man’s cruel and insensitive touch. According to Mario Kozah (2016:10), Haydar “‘converses’ with nature in many of his other poems thereby personifying it as it lays out for him its beauty and words of wisdom on more than one occasion. The lack of punctuation produces the feeling of a rapid moving rhythm accompanied by an almost discernable sound of music initiated by both internal and end rhyme. Even more musical is the fact that the poem opens and closes with a repeated beautiful and musical rhyming couplet:

Blink not wonder not my most precious friend
 The world has a beginning must've an end

The lines above, with their identical end rhyme, open the lid to an infinite series or to a chain of signs invoked by the repetition of the word “and” throughout. It is

thought-provoking to note that the final word “end” does not signify an actual end in itself since it is not followed by a period to enclose it within the border of the poem. The flux of perceptions is left open, and language, or the sign, is not given final closure by the use of a period. In spite of the significance or meaning of the word ‘end,’ the lack of a period leaves the sign without a definite final signified, and thus the poem lacks closure. With no period to demarcate its completion, this unit of language seems to be both separate from the next (literally severed by the line break) and yet still a part of it since the sentence has not been formally completed. In a way, it is suggestive of an imaginary “And” in the minds of readers, one that implies the endless and ongoing cyclical nature of time where every end entails another beginning. In fact, poems like “Cavaliers”, “Come Brothers and Let Us Read the Chart,” “Keep Your Faith”, “Motherhood,” “My Will,” “Overall,” and “The World Is But What We Hear See and Feel” to name but a few, have punctuation issues.

6. Conclusion

According to Husserl, nature is the essence of a phenomenological experience, and if “we exclude nature, we exclude our own egos as well as the egos of others and we exclude them for the sake of the enigma of transcendence” (Husserl 1989:360). This is what Haydar has beautifully depicted in poems that ascribe universality to a subjective experience of nature. Munro (2016:xi) accordingly maintains that his “is [the] voice of a man who has seen so much but is still able to derive solace from the natural world, viewing it with silent wonder.” Though his poems sometimes convey a harsh tone, it is essentially directed at man’s disregard of nature, since he “excoriated those who would destroy the sacred bond which should exist between Man and his environment” (Munro 2016: xv).

Hence, it appears that Haydar’s poems provide a good understanding of Husserl’s phenomenological philosophy and its working methods. In spite of there being no evidence of a direct connection between the philosopher and the poet, one cannot but wonder and be overwhelmed by the balanced intermingling of art and philosophy in the poems. Haydar’s love of nature, of his native land, of his adopted country and of humanity is reflected in poetry with intertextual qualities and in a language he has appropriated to suit his hybrid and intersubjective position. As an in-between, he considers the whole world his domain and that of others and inspires the reader to share his aesthetic vision. He achieves this in the numerous instances he uses apostrophes directed at the reader, a friend, or an unknown person. This style is a two-way process where he allows both the addressee and the reader or the ‘Other’ to share his vision or philosophical musing on the universal love of nature and the world. “Baalbeck and the Ruins” (Haydar 2012:163) is another beautiful and profound expression of his intense longing for a reconciliation among nations and peoples inspired by love of nature and motherland. Another significant intertextual instance is his wish that Milton were alive to write another version of *Paradise Lost* containing “Messages from the east to the west/To look at the same sky and enjoy this beauty of the world” (Haydar 2012:165).

In essence, Haydar's childhood experience of pain, sadness, and dislocation resulted in a trans-cultural experience that helped him develop a hybrid identity from which a unique sense of belonging ensued: one that is in harmony with the multicultural and multiracial nature of the age and which moves beyond cultural boundaries. As such, the ability to be immersed in a middle position, to experience an "absolute consciousness" that "is the original sphere of philosophical reflexion" (Marosan 2009:87) comes naturally and effortlessly considering his hybrid status and identity. It is from within such a third space, in poems whose limits go beyond the perceivable edges of the page, that Haydar re-imagines his subjectivity and acquires an intuitive awareness of an interconnectedness with his surroundings that is his *raison d'être*. Thus, on reading Haydar's poems, one cannot but notice how the bounded space of the page becomes a mere shadow he rhythmically crosses to portray a colossal collection of images- images that move beyond his nation, beyond his race, to give voice to the poet's visions, philosophies and concerns. In a sense, he beautifully blends philosophy and poetry in his portrayal of the beauty of creation.

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