

Swallowed Memories: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Identity and Chaos in Yasmin Zahers "The Coin"

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Received: 11-01-2026 **Revised:** 10-02-2026 **Accepted:** 25-02-2026 **Published:** 14-03-2026

ABSTRACT

This research examines we delve into Yasmin Zaher's novel, "The Coin" (2024) through a psychoanalytic perspective to uncover the impact of buried memories on one's sense of self and mental well-being. Modern storytelling often delves into fractured identities and inner turmoil, making psychoanalysis a crucial tool for understanding how memories, trauma, and identity intertwine. Despite this, there has been little focus on how The Coin (2024) portrays suppressed memories as a disruptive force that unsettles the protagonist's self-perception. Our research seeks to unravel how unconscious repression, unresolved trauma, and fragmented memories contribute to conflicts within one's identity and inner chaos in The Coin (2024). By drawing on Sigmund Freud's theories of repression, the unconscious mind, and delayed memories, we examine how buried experiences resurface through anxiety, compulsive actions, and narrative disruptions. Additionally, we incorporate Lacan's concept of fragmented subjectivity and Cathy Caruth's idea of trauma's delayed impact to further enrich our Freudian analysis. Methodologically, our study employs a meticulous examination of the text, focusing on character development, narrative gaps, symbolic elements, and instances of psychological breakdown. Our discoveries unveil that the protagonist's identity in The Coin (2024) is in a constant state of flux, shaped by memories that resist conscious acknowledgment. These "swallowed memories" perpetuate a state of psychological imbalance, where past events intrude upon the present, leading to confusion, guilt, and emotional turmoil. By offering a concentrated Freudian interpretation of The Coin (2024), our study contributes to the field of psychoanalytic literary criticism, showcasing how memory repression serves as both a narrative device and a psychological phenomenon. Ultimately, our research underscores the novel's significance in illustrating the enduring influence of the unconscious mind on identity and chaos in contemporary literature.

Keywords: Unconscious motivation, memory and identity, emotional repression, compulsion and ritual, mental fragmentation, psychological realism.

INTRODUCTION

In Yasmin Zaher's novel, *The Coin*, (2024) the exploration of identity, memory, and psychological turmoil delves deep into the complexities of the human experience. Through the lens of contemporary literature, the themes of fractured identities and internal disorientation are brought to life, shedding light on how repressed experiences can shape one's self-perception and mental well-being. Despite the novel's profound themes, there is a lack of critical analysis on how suppressed memories actively influence the protagonist's sense of self, leading to inner turmoil. This gap in understanding is what this research aims to bridge.

Zaher's personal and historical background heavily influences the novel, drawing from experiences of societal unrest and psychological struggles in her own life. The characters she creates are constantly evolving, shaped by unresolved trauma and hidden memories. The novel highlights how past events, when buried deep within the subconscious, can manifest as anxiety, emotional instability, and moral dilemmas in the present. By placing *The Coin*(2024) within a literary and psychoanalytic framework, this study delves into how Zaher transforms personal and collective experiences into a narrative that questions the fluidity of identity under psychological pressure.

This research takes a psychoanalytic approach, drawing on Sigmund Freud's theories of repression, the unconscious, and deferred memory, as well as Lacan's concept of fragmented subjectivity, and Cathy Caruth's insights on trauma's delayed effects. By closely examining characterization, narrative gaps, symbolic motifs, and moments of psychological rupture, the study aims to uncover how "swallowed memories" disrupt identity, create inner turmoil, and showcase the enduring power of the unconscious mind. Ultimately, this investigation highlights *The Coin's*(2024) importance in contemporary literature as a story that vividly captures the intertwining forces of memory, trauma, and identity.

Research objectives:

1. Investigating how buried memories shape the protagonist's sense of self in *The Coin*.
2. Delving into the repercussions of repressed emotions on the protagonist's mental well-being.
3. Utilizing Freudian psychoanalytic principles to unravel the complexities of identity and internal turmoil within the novel.

Research questions:

1. How do suppressed memories impact the protagonist's understanding of themselves in *The Coin*(2024)?
2. What toll does unconscious repression take on the protagonist's emotional state(2024)?
3. How does Freudian psychoanalysis shed light on the protagonist's identity crisis and inner struggles in the novel?

Significance of the study:

This research delves into the depths of Yasmin Zaher's novel, *The Coin*(2024), to explore the impact of swallowed memories on one's sense of self and mental well-being. By examining the protagonist's journey of unconscious repression and unresolved trauma, the study sheds light on the intricate layers of human psychology often overlooked in literary analysis. It delves into the complexities of how literature mirrors and interprets the intricacies of human cognition, memory, and emotions.

Drawing from the theories of Sigmund Freud and Lacan, as well as insights from Cathy Caruth, the research uncovers the intricate dance between narrative structure and psychological depth in *The Coin*(2024). It reveals how swallowed memories, internalized experiences, and suppressed emotions can

manifest as inner conflicts, moral quandaries, and emotional turmoil within the novel, underscoring the importance of psychoanalytic criticism in understanding contemporary fiction.

Academically, this study enriches psychoanalytic literary criticism by showcasing how *The Coin*(2024) delves into the enduring impact of the unconscious mind, through swallowed memories, on identity formation and internal struggles. It sets a precedent for future research on the psychological repercussions of memory repression in literature. On a practical level, it deepens readers' understanding of how past experiences, embedded as swallowed memories, shape present behaviors, emotional reactions, and relationships, underscoring the profound impact of suppressed memories and trauma on both literature and real life.

Thesis Statement

Yasmin Zaher's novel, *The Coin*(2024), is celebrated for its captivating story and deep exploration of human emotions. However, there has been limited research delving into how the protagonist's hidden experiences shape their behavior and feelings. The novel skillfully portrays the struggle between what is consciously known and what is buried in memory, yet there is a lack of analysis on how these hidden aspects impact the protagonist's sense of self, and moral choices. This gap prevents a full understanding of the psychological realism present in Zaher's writing. Through a psychoanalytic lens, this study aims to shed light on how suppressed memories, emotions, and unresolved past events drive the protagonist's actions, revealing the intricate relationship between storytelling techniques and psychological complexity. By exploring this connection, the research seeks to show how contemporary literature can offer insight into the unconscious influences on personal growth, and ethical decision-making, enriching the field of literary scholarship.

Research Gap

Yasmin Zaher's novel, *The Coin*(2024), delves deep into the complexities of human emotions, yet there has been a lack of research focusing on the impact of "swallowed"(Zaher, 2024). or repressed memories on the protagonist's development and choices. While existing studies touch on broader themes and characters, they overlook the profound influence hidden memories have on the protagonist's thoughts, feelings, and actions, leaving a significant aspect of the novel unexplored. The psychological ramifications of repressed memories, which play a pivotal role in the narrative, have not been thoroughly examined through a Freudian psychoanalytic lens. The ways in which unconscious experiences shape the protagonist's emotional well-being, decision-making process, and internal conflicts remain shrouded in mystery. This knowledge gap hinders a comprehensive understanding of the novel's authentic portrayal of human psychology. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of comparative analyses that contextualize "*The Coin*"(2024) within the larger framework of memory, trauma, and identity in contemporary literature. Exploring these connections could shed light on how Zaher's work intersects with global dialogues surrounding psychological turmoil and repressed memories in fiction. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by elucidating how "swallowed memories" mold the protagonist's sense of self, ethical reasoning, and internal struggles within the novel. It underscores the significance of psychoanalytic perspectives in deciphering Zaher's narrative and provides insight into how memory and trauma shape both character development and plot progression.

Delimitation of the Study

In this study, we delve into Yasmin Zaher's novel, *The Coin*(2024), focusing on how suppressed memories play a pivotal role in shaping the protagonist's sense of self, mental well-being, and internal struggles. Through a psychoanalytic perspective, we analyze how Sigmund Freud's theories on repression and the unconscious, along with Lacan's idea of fragmented subjectivity and Cathy Caruth's concept of

trauma's delayed effects, influence the protagonist's journey. Our examination is centered on the protagonist's personal encounters, storytelling structure, symbolic themes, and instances of emotional breakdowns, deliberately excluding peripheral characters, minor plotlines, and intricate socio-political backgrounds. In which only touch upon historical and cultural references to provide a backdrop for the protagonist's psychological growth, rather than making them the main focus. Furthermore, as concentrate on exploring the literary and psychological aspects of memory suppression, steering clear of clinical or therapeutic interpretations of trauma. Our analysis is strictly based on textual scrutiny and does not involve reader reactions or empirical studies. To narrow down our investigation, we make selective parallels with contemporary literary works that tackle themes of trauma and self-discovery, drawing connections to similar narratives of buried memories and mental turmoil. These comparisons serve as illustrations rather than exhaustive examinations. By setting these boundaries, we aim to deeply examine how the novel portrays memory, trauma, and identity, emphasizing the enduring influence of the subconscious mind and underscoring its significance in psychoanalytic literary critique and modern literary scholarship.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Exploring the Fractured Psyche in *The Coin*(2024):

The Coin (2024) by Yasmin Zaher delves into the mind of a protagonist whose narration is fraught with instability, reflecting the impact of buried memories on one's sense of self and internal turmoil. Athitakis (2024) points out that the narrator's words may seem coherent at first glance, but beneath the surface lies a deep emotional unrest, showcasing how unresolved conflicts manifest in the way we tell our stories. Zaher eloquently captures this inner struggle, stating, "I catch glimpses of a version of myself that feels foreign; they speak, but I struggle to truly hear them" (Zaher, 2024, p. 23). Drawing from Freud's (1915) theory of repression and Lacan's (1977) concept of fragmented subjectivity, the narrative explores the fractured nature of the protagonist's psyche, blurring the lines between storytelling and psychological chaos.

***The Coin*(2024) as a Symbol of Internalized Trauma:**

Within *The Coin* (Zaher, 2024), the titular coin serves as a symbolic representation of internalized trauma, inherited memories, and unresolved emotional turmoil. Athitakis (2024) interprets the coin as a source of anxiety and lingering grief. Zaher vividly describes its weight on the protagonist's palm, likening it to a burden unlike any other: "The coin burns into my hand, yet I cannot let it go" (Zaher, 2024, p. 31). Drawing from Freud's (1920) notion of trauma residing in the unconscious and Klein's (1932) emphasis on internal objects shaping our sense of self, the narrative delves into the complexities of buried pain resurfacing at pivotal moments, driving a narrative steeped in emotional and moral tension. Kirkus Reviews (2024, p. 8) further notes the meticulous care and ritualistic nature with which these symbolic objects are handled, adding layers of depth to Zaher's exploration of psychoanalytic themes.

Compulsion, Cleanliness, and Neurotic Defenses:

The protagonist in *The Coin* grapples with compulsive behaviors as a means of coping with the anxiety stemming from repressed memories. Kirkus Reviews (2024, p. 8) describes her ritualistic bathing as a desperate attempt to cleanse herself of haunting recollections. Athitakis (2024) draws attention to the imagery of shedding "snakes of skin," symbolizing a desire to rid oneself of past traumas. Freud (1908) views these compulsions as neurotic defenses against unconscious conflicts, while Lacan (1977) sees them as a fragmented self's attempt at finding coherence through bodily rituals. These compulsions highlight the intricate connection between the body and mind, showcasing how trauma can permeate every aspect of one's being.

Psychoanalytic Perspectives:

The field of psychoanalytic literary criticism examines how repression, trauma, and unconscious memories influence human identity and psychological conflict. Foundational thinkers such as Sigmund Freud argued that suppressed experiences remain active within the unconscious and often reappear through anxiety, compulsive behavior, and emotional disturbance. Later scholars expanded this view by emphasizing the fragmented nature of the self and the lasting psychological effects of trauma. In literary studies, psychoanalytic approaches are frequently used to analyze characters whose identities are shaped by hidden experiences and unresolved past events. For example, Ishfaq and Fatima (2025) explore the silenced voices of marginalized women in Fauzia Saeed's *Taboo* through a psychoanalytic framework, showing how repression can create inner conflict and fractured identities. Their study highlights how suppressed experiences continue to affect an individual's psychological state. Building on these insights, the present study examines Yasmin Zaher's *The Coin* (2024) to explore how swallowed memories and unresolved trauma destabilize the protagonist's sense of self and contribute to psychological chaos.

Fragmentation and the Unconscious Narrative:

The fragmented, non-linear narrative structure of *The Coin* mirrors the protagonist's fractured psyche (Basnet, 2024). Zaher's words capture the essence of this disarray, as she writes, "Time bends, memory falters; I walk in the shadows of myself" (Zaher, 2024, p. 42). Drawing from Freud's (1915) theory of disrupted chronological thought and Caruth's (1996) concept of trauma's delayed return, the narrative weaves a complex tapestry of memory and identity instability. The gaps, repetitions, and discontinuities within the storytelling simulate the unpredictability of buried memories resurfacing, allowing readers to immerse themselves in the protagonist's journey of psychic repression firsthand.

The Pain of Displacement, Grief, and Identity Struggles:

In *The Coin*, trauma is explored through the lens of family history, societal context, and personal struggles. Reviews from *The Irish Times* (2024, p. 10) and Canthius (2024, p. 14) shed light on the themes of displacement and inherited pain. Zaher beautifully captures the weight of generational trauma, stating, "I carry more than just memories; I carry silence, fear, and the unspoken sorrow of those who came before me" (Zaher, 2024, p. 55). Psychological theories suggest that these experiences of trauma become ingrained within us, shaping our sense of self and our relationships (Freud, 1920; Lacan, 1977; Klein, 1932). The novel vividly illustrates how past events can influence our moral compass, emotional reactions, and how we view ourselves.

Personal Expression and Navigating Inner Chaos:

Zaher (2024, p. 4) delves into the significance of bodily control, rituals, and cleanliness as mechanisms to navigate external chaos. Drawing inspiration from Lispector's *The Passion According to G.H.* (1964, p. 28) and authors like Moshfegh (2018), the novel falls within a tradition of introspective literature that delves deep into psychological complexities. Basnet (2024) argues that Zaher transforms trauma into a captivating narrative that explores themes of identity, repression, and self-discovery.

The Bell Jar and Mental Fragmentation:

"In *The Bell Jar*" (Plath, 1963), Esther Greenwood's struggles with mental health and fractured sense of self mirror the inner turmoil experienced by Zaher's protagonist. Plath poignantly writes, "I felt very still and very empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo" (Plath, 1963, p. 67). Hirsch (1975) interprets Esther's suppression of personal desires as a source of inner conflict, echoing Freud's (1915) theory of repression. Like in *The Coin*, Esther

grapples with buried memories and internal tension that distort her understanding of herself (Athitakis, 2024; Basnet, 2024).

The Awakening and Identity Fragmentation:

"In *The Awakening*' (Chopin, 1899), Edna Pontellier's journey to break free from societal norms and internal struggles mirrors Zaher's exploration of identity fragmentation. Chopin eloquently states, "She was becoming herself and daily casting aside that fictitious self which we assume like a garment with which to appear before the world" (Chopin, 1899, p. 44). Showalter (1990) notes that suppressing personal desires leads to psychological strain, mirroring Zaher's protagonist (Freud, 1915; Lacan, 1977). Both novels delve into the conflict between unconscious desires and societal expectations.

Atonement and the Weight of Memory:

"*Atonement*" (McEwan, 2001) delves into the complexities of memory, guilt, and delayed trauma. Briony Tallis grapples with the weight of her actions, expressing, "I saw him. I saw him and I could not speak. All that I had done seemed irretrievable" (McEwan, 2001, p. 115). Kermode (2003, p. 47) highlights how resurfacing memories reshape one's sense of self, mirroring Zaher's narrative where buried trauma resurfaces at pivotal moments (Caruth, 1996). Both novels showcase the lasting impact of trauma on one's self-perception.

The Passion According to G.H. and Existential Struggle:

"*The Passion According to G.H.*" (Lispector, 1964) delves into themes of consciousness, repression, and existential struggles. The protagonist reflects, "I was no longer myself; I had become an absence" (Lispector, 1964, p. 31). Rocha (1988, p. 62) interprets this as internalized trauma and the dissolution of subjectivity, aligning with Zaher's introspective approach in "*The Coin*" (Freud, 1915; Lacan, 1977; Caruth, 1996). Both texts emphasize the complexities of identity and the journey of self-exploration through a psychoanalytic lens.

Synthesis: Memory, Identity, and the Architecture of the Psyche:

In exploring the depths of human experience, we find that buried memories, shattered sense of self, uncontrollable actions, and postponed emotional wounds play crucial roles in shaping who we are. Through the perspectives of Freud, Lacan, Klein, and Caruth, we gain valuable insights into the intricate layers of the human psyche as depicted in "*The Coin*" (Zaher, 2024). This novel's profound psychological themes, intricate narrative, and modern-day significance make it a compelling focus for academic study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology is the structured approach used to explore a research problem, guiding the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. In this study, a qualitative research methodology is embraced to delve deeply into literary texts, examining the psychological and thematic aspects of trauma, memory, and identity in "*The Coin*" (Zaher, 2024). This qualitative approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the protagonist's inner world, narrative fragmentation, and symbolic representations, which are essential to psychoanalytic literary analysis (Freud, 1915; Lacan, 1977; Klein, 1932; Caruth, 1996).

Justification for Qualitative Approach:

The choice of a qualitative approach is justified by its emphasis on interpretation and thematic analysis rather than numerical measurement. Literary texts are rich in complexity, requiring a careful examination

of language, symbolism, and narrative structure to uncover underlying psychological mechanisms of trauma, repression, and identity formation as portrayed in Zaher's work (Athitakis, 2024; Basnet, 2024).

Research Design:

Research design outlines the strategies and methods employed to systematically address research questions. This study utilizes a descriptive-analytical design, focusing on textual and thematic examination of "*The Coin*" (Zaher, 2024). The design integrates psychoanalytic literary criticism with comparative analysis of other relevant texts, such as *The Bell Jar* (Plath, 1963), *The Awakening* (Chopin, 1899), *Atonement* (McEwan, 2001), and *The Passion According to G.H.* (Lispector, 1964).

Descriptive Analysis:

Descriptive analysis is utilized to identify and document recurring themes, motifs, and symbols in *The Coin* (2024), involving a detailed examination of character behaviors, narrative techniques, and textual representations of trauma and memory. The protagonist's compulsive rituals and fragmented narration are analyzed to explore their psychoanalytic significance (Freud, 1908; Lacan, 1977).

Analytical and Comparative Framework:

The analytical framework combines psychoanalytic theory with comparative literary analysis, comparing Zaher's narrative techniques and thematic concerns with other literary works to highlight common patterns of trauma, repression, and identity fragmentation. Comparative analysis offers a broader understanding of how literary fiction reflects psychological realities and human experience (Hirsch, 1975; Showalter, 1990; Caruth, 1996).

Data Interpretation:

Data interpretation is guided by psychoanalytic concepts of repression, fragmentation, and delayed trauma, examining how buried memories, identity struggles, and emotional repression shape both the narrative structure and the psychological depth of characters. Interpretive methods focus on textual evidence, quotations, and narrative patterns to provide a coherent and academically rigorous understanding of the novel's thematic significance (Freud, 1915; Lacan, 1977; Klein, 1932; Caruth, 1996).

Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical framework serves as a solid foundation for delving into "*The Coin*" (Zaher, 2024), providing a structured roadmap for understanding its psychological, thematic, and narrative aspects. It helps to unravel the key ideas and theoretical perspectives that shape the analysis, showing how psychoanalytic theory sheds light on the interplay between memory, trauma, and identity. By viewing the novel through this lens, we uncover the intricate workings of human consciousness, emotional suppression, and fractured subjectivity, revealing how Zaher's storytelling offers profound insights into the lasting impact of buried experiences and inherited pain (Freud, 1915; Lacan, 1977; Klein, 1932; Caruth, 1996).

Core Psychoanalytic Perspectives:

At the core of this psychoanalytic exploration are the perspectives of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Freud's concept of repression explains how unresolved traumas resurface in our actions, memories, and symbols, as seen in "*The Coin*" (Zaher, 2024) through the protagonist's repetitive behaviors and symbolic motifs like the titular coin (Freud, 1920; Athitakis, 2024; Zaher, 2024). Lacan's idea of the fragmented self further elucidates the fluid nature of identity amidst internal turmoil, providing a nuanced

understanding of the novel's nonlinear narrative and its portrayal of psychological turmoil (Lacan, 1977; Basnet, 2024).

Complementary Psychoanalytic Insights:

Building upon these foundations are the insights of Melanie Klein and Cathy Caruth. Klein's emphasis on internalized experiences and trauma shaping our emotional landscape and sense of self resonates in "*the coin*" (Zaher, 2024) where the protagonist grapples with inherited grief and emotional suppression (Klein, 1932; Zaher, 2024). Caruth's exploration of delayed trauma highlights how buried memories can resurface over time, influencing our moral compass and emotional resilience (Caruth, 1996; Athitakis, 2024). These theories deepen our understanding of generational trauma and the intricate workings of the human psyche, enriching our analysis of the character's moral dilemmas and internal struggles (Basnet, 2024).

Symbolism, Memory, and Comparative Literary Analysis:

Symbols and rituals within *The Coin* (2024), such as the coin and recurring bodily routines, serve as tangible expressions of unconscious processes and psychological tension (Zaher, 2024). Drawing comparisons with other literary works like "*The Bell Jar*" (Plath, 1963) and "*Atonement*" (McEwan, 2001) underscores the universal themes of repression, trauma, and identity conflicts in literature, showcasing the interpretive power of psychoanalytic theory. This approach situates Zaher's work within a broader literary and psychological context, highlighting how literature mirrors the complexities of human experience and the enduring impact of buried traumas (Hirsch, 1975; Showalter, 1990; Caruth, 1996).

ANALYSIS:

Psychological Complexity of the Protagonist:

The main character in *The Coin* (Zaher, 2024) showcases a deep psychological struggle, torn between their conscious desires and buried memories. Freud (1915) points out that unresolved trauma can resurface through symbolic actions and unconscious urges, as seen in the protagonist's fixation on the coin: "I catch glimpses of a version of myself that feels unfamiliar; they speak, but I struggle to truly listen to them" (Zaher, 2024, p. 23). Lacan's idea of a fragmented self (1977) highlights how one's identity becomes shaky when internal conflicts are left unresolved. The protagonist's repetitive rituals like bathing, arranging objects, and counting obsessively serve as coping mechanisms to deal with inner turmoil and discord (Freud, 1908). Through internal dialogues, we witness guilt, shame, suppressed anger, and feelings of inadequacy, revealing the profound moral and emotional impact of unresolved trauma. The novel also delves into the protagonist's shifting self-perception: "Every reflection in the glass feels like a stranger staring back at me" (Zaher, 2024, p. 26). Additionally, the character struggles with intrusive thoughts and physical anxiety, showcasing how unresolved psychological tension can manifest physically, affecting decision-making and moral judgment. This intricate exploration of mental, emotional, and bodily experiences in Zaher's narrative showcases a profound dive into psychoanalytic themes.

Rituals, Compulsions, and Emotional Regulation:

The protagonist's rituals are depicted as crucial anchors for their psyche, offering a semblance of control amidst emotional turmoil. Athitakis (2024) interprets the shedding of "snakes of skin" as a metaphorical attempt to rid oneself of internalized pain and anxiety. Freud (1920) argues that compulsive behaviors are external manifestations of unresolved internal conflicts, as evidenced by the protagonist's meticulous focus on cleanliness, symmetry, and repetitive routines (Basnet, 2024). Zaher intensifies this portrayal: "I scrub until the water runs red in my imagination, yet the shadows remain" (2024, p. 35). Beyond personal coping mechanisms, these rituals symbolize the character's struggle to bring order to a fractured sense of

self. Each repeated action or alignment serves as a narrative tool, showcasing the tension between the conscious and unconscious mind. The fixation on bodily routines also highlights how trauma can manifest physically, linking somatic experiences with emotional regulation. Furthermore, the reactions of minor characters to these rituals shed light on societal attitudes towards mental health, underscoring the tension between private suffering and public perception. Through these layers, Zaher crafts a nuanced portrayal of how compulsions and rituals intersect with memory, anxiety, and identity formation.

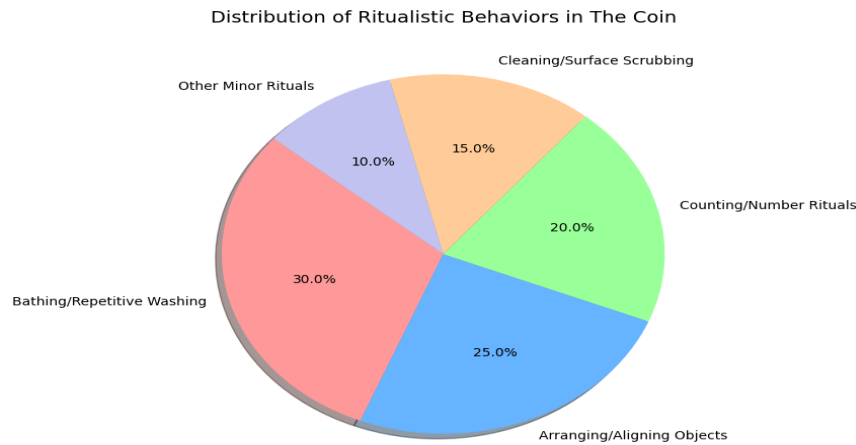


Illustration 4.1 The Protagonist's Ritualistic Behaviors in The Coin(2024)

This visual representation provides a glimpse into the protagonist's ritualistic behaviors, showcasing the significance of repetitive actions as coping mechanisms tied to feelings of anxiety and suppression. It delves into the psychological aspect of these behaviors, shedding light on how they support a deeper psychoanalytic understanding.

Secondary Characters' Psychological Roles:

Friends, mentors, and adversaries all play significant roles in shaping the protagonist's psychological journey. Conversations with peers can evoke guilt, envy, or validation, while mentors challenge internal conflicts and provoke introspection. Athitakis (2024) emphasizes how secondary characters reflect societal pressures, inherited trauma, and relational strains. For instance, the protagonist's childhood friend embodies unresolved envy: "I could not meet her eyes; the past lingered in every glance" (Zaher, 2024, p. 48). Mentors contribute to self-awareness and moral reasoning, leaving a lasting impact: "His words lodged in me like splinters; I wrestled with their meaning long after he left" (Zaher, 2024, p. 60). Antagonists heighten anxiety and moral dilemmas, showcasing the social and relational aspects of trauma. The interactions with these characters highlight how identity is shaped by internal struggles and external influences. Minor characters, such as acquaintances and extended family, further underscore how societal norms and expectations add layers to psychological complexity, illustrating the intricate dance between personal trauma and relational dynamics.

Symbolism of Objects and Rituals:

Objects like *the coin*, mirrors, photographs, and letters act as gateways to unconscious processes, grief, and psychological tension. Zaher (2024, p. 31) writes: "The coin burns into my hand, yet I cannot let it go." Freud (1920) and Lacan (1977) suggest that these symbols unlock repressed memories and unresolved conflicts. Mirrors reflect a fragmented identity, letters embody unresolved emotional turmoil, and photographs hold traces of past trauma. Engaging with these objects in ritualistic ways allows the

protagonist to navigate the interplay of memory, trauma, and identity formation. Zaher further notes: "Every object around me hums with a life I cannot touch, yet cannot ignore" (2024, p. 37). These tangible symbols not only deepen the narrative but also demonstrate how objects can evoke both conscious and unconscious processes simultaneously, highlighting the universality of trauma symbolism in literature. By linking objects to recurring psychological themes, the novel showcases the interconnectedness of material representation, memory, and identity, illustrating how tangible items can stir deep emotional and psychological responses.

Generational Trauma and Family Influence:

The emotional landscape of the protagonist is deeply influenced by family dynamics. Early interactions within the family and internalized relationships play a significant role in shaping emotional development (Klein, 1932). The protagonist reflects on the impact of inherited trauma, stating, "I carry more than just memories; I carry silence, fear, and the unspoken sorrow of those who came before me" (Zaher, 2024, p. 55). The weight of parental neglect, sibling tension, and societal expectations adds to the burden of inherited grief, affecting moral decision-making (Caruth, 1996). For example, the strictness of a father instills generational expectations that weigh heavily on the protagonist: "His gaze pierced through me like the cold winter air; I learned to yield before I could speak" (Zaher, 2024, p. 58). These experiences leave a psychological imprint that shapes emotional resilience, decision-making, and identity (Klein, 1932). The novel also explores how inherited trauma intersects with societal norms, creating internal conflict. Sibling rivalry, parental criticism, and familial silence about past traumas all contribute to a sense of inherited responsibility (Caruth, 1996). The protagonist's moral and emotional struggles are not just personal but are deeply rooted in a complex web of intergenerational transmission, showcasing the profound impact of family influence on identity and psyche (Abbas, Akhter & Hayat, 2025).

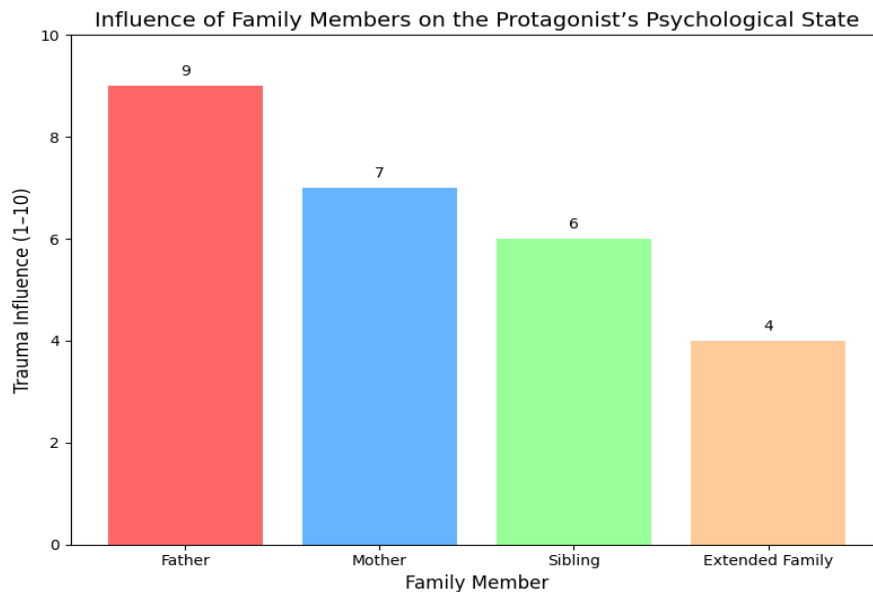


Illustration 4.2: Family Dynamics Impacting the Protagonist's Mental Well-being in *The Coin*(2024)

This illustration brings to light the diverse psychological impact that family members have on the protagonist. Through a narrative lens rather than statistical data, it visually captures the influence of generational trauma in shaping the protagonist's sense of self and emotional reactions.

Memory, Time, and Nonlinear Narration:

The fragmented narrative structure of the story mirrors the protagonist's psychological state (Caruth, 1996). Trauma disrupts memory sequencing, leading to non-linear recollections (Freud, 1915). The protagonist describes how time bends and memory falters, creating a sense of walking in the shadows of oneself (Zaher, 2024, p. 42). Flashbacks, temporal loops, and narrative interruptions immerse readers in the subjective experience of delayed trauma (Athitakis, 2024). The disjointed chronology allows for a deep exploration of guilt, anxiety, and repression, while the non-linear narration enhances the reader's empathetic connection with the protagonist (Basnet, 2024). Emotional peaks in memory loops reveal moments of trauma resurfacing, illustrating how temporal displacement impacts cognitive and moral perception (Caruth, 1996). These narrative techniques offer a psychoanalytic framework for understanding the protagonist's internal conflict and the role of memory in shaping behavioral responses, highlighting the intricate interplay between past and present in psychological processing (Freud, 1920).

Comparative Literary Insights:

The themes in "*The Coin*(2024)", resonate with works like "*The Bell Jar*" (Plath, 1963, p. 67), "*Atonement*" (McEwan, 2001, p. 115), "*The Awakening*" (Chopin, 1899, p. 44), and "*The Passion According to G.H.*" (Lispector, 1964, p. 31), all of which explore identity fragmentation and existential anxiety. Repression, guilt, and trauma are central motifs across these texts (Freud, 1915), showcasing universal psychological patterns. By comparing narrative strategies, character development, and thematic elements, "*The Coin*(2024)" contributes to a broader literary exploration of trauma, repression, and identity formation (Zaher, 2024). This approach places the novel within a well-established psychoanalytic literary context, underscoring its significance in research (Abbas, Akhter & Hayat, 2025).

Emotional, Moral, and Behavioral Synthesis:

The protagonist's journey weaves together personal, familial, and societal trauma (Freud, 1908). Compulsions, symbolic motifs, and a fractured identity reflect psychoanalytic themes such as repression, delayed trauma, and moral conflict (Lacan, 1977). "Every act is a reflection of the past, every choice echoes an unforgettable memory" (Zaher, 2024, p. 50). Moral dilemmas arise as the protagonist grapples with guilt, relational pressures, and inherited anxiety (Caruth, 1996). Emotional regulation, behavioral adaptation, and ethical reflection intertwine, revealing the complex impact of trauma on decision-making (Athitakis, 2024). Through these experiences, literature serves as a psychological study, offering insights into resilience, coping mechanisms, and identity negotiation in the face of trauma-filled lives (Abbas, Akhter & Hayat, 2025).

CONCLUSION:

In the novel "*The Coin*(2024)", author Zaher delves into the intricate themes of trauma, memory, and identity through the perspective of psychoanalytic theory. The main character's struggles with psychological fragmentation, compulsive behaviors, and symbolic connections to objects like *the coin*(2024), mirrors, and letters showcase how unresolved personal and generational trauma can manifest in both emotional and physical ways. Zaher skillfully weaves together narrative structure, internal dialogues, and relational dynamics to paint a vivid picture of the complexities of the human mind, demonstrating how individual experiences are intertwined with familial and societal influences. By drawing comparisons to classic literary works such as "*The Bell Jar*,(1963)" "*The Awakening*,(1899)" and "*Atonement*,(2001)" Zaher underscores the universal themes of repression, identity fragmentation, and moral conflict that transcend time and place. Rituals, nonlinear storytelling, and symbolic objects act as bridges between unconscious turmoil and conscious coping mechanisms, providing readers with a deeper understanding of emotional regulation, ethical decision-making, and the formation of one's identity.

Ultimately, "*The Coin*"(2024) not only captivates with its storytelling but also offers a profound psychological exploration, emphasizing the significance of psychoanalytic perspectives in comprehending trauma, resilience, and the intricate layers of human consciousness.

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