

**Psychological Scars of Exile in Diaspora: Investigating PTSD in the Protagonist Hassan in Abdulrazaq Gurnah's novel "Memories of Departure"**

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**Abstract**

This paper attempts to analyze the psychological scars of exile on the protagonist: Hassan, in Abdulrazaq Gurnah's masterpiece novel "Memories of Departure". The divergent manifestations of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the migrant experience is central to the investigation of this research endeavor. In the novel, the trauma of Hassan results from his forced displacement from Zanzibar. The perplexed and multifaceted trauma of the protagonist is analyzed through his dissociation, emotional numbness, and the recurring painful memories, which are emblematic of PTSD. The fragmented narrative structure and unreliable narration are the key literary techniques employed in the novel. They mirror the psychological fragmentation and the struggle of the protagonist to reconcile his traumatic past with his fragmented present existence in exile. The novel reflects the psychological effects of exile, where memory and identity become sources of constant conflict. This study positions Hassan's trauma within the broader context of diaspora literature. It highlights how Gurnah's portrayal of PTSD contributes to the understanding of the effects of exile and displacement on the individual psyche. This research emphasizes the challenges of the exiles in navigating their memories, identities, and sense of belonging in a foreign land. It is argued that Gurnah's work serves as a poignant reminder of the enduring psychological impact of exile. Exile, in this context, extends beyond the immediate experience of migration and shape one's identity and mental health.

**Keywords:** PTSD, Exile, Diaspora, Trauma, Identity, Memories of Departure.

**Introduction**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a psychological condition that typically arises after an individual has been exposed to a traumatic event(s). It leaves a person coping with intrusive memories, emotional fragmentation and other pressing symptoms. These include flashbacks, heightened arousal, emotional numbness and nightmares etc. These peculiar conditions often disrupt one's ability to process and oblivionate the traumatic experience. Recently, PTSD has become increasingly relevant to understand the experiences of exiles, refugees, and migrants. The trauma associated with forced migration and dislocation frequently leads to profound psychological wounds: a primary symptom of PTSD. Exiles face a dual trauma: the violent rupture from their familiar environments and the emotional scars left by their struggle to adopt alien language, identity and culture, (Silove, 2000).

The Nobel prizewinning Tanzanian writer Abdulrazak Gurnah wrote the novel "Memories of Departure" to explore PTSD in the context of migration and exile. The novel portrays Hassan, a young man who is forced to flee Zanzibar due to political unrest. As he journeys to an unknown land, his psychological state deteriorates. The pain of his exile is compounded by the memories of a lost home. Gurnah uses the trauma of Hassan to explore the broader implications of migration. The novel deals with the different causes and dimensions of PTSD. It, for instance, explores how exile is not only a physical displacement. It is also a psychological rupture which functions at the subconscious level. The memories of his lost home in Zanzibar affect the life of the protagonist in exile continually. This becomes a central mechanism through which his subconscious trauma comes to surface. His experience in the foreign land is marked by the sense of loss, alienation and grief. It highlights that the subconscious and often unconscious scars are not easily erased from the psyche. The emotional numbness and the continuous flashbacks of the protagonist indicate his trauma. Moreover, the intrusive memories and his inability to reconcile his past and present also point to the effects of PTSD of the protagonist. The paper will explore how Gurnah portrays PTSD in the character of Hassan. It will argue that through the lens of memory and narrative structure, the writer is able to vividly portray the characters of the protagonist. In the novel, the psychological condition of Hassan is examined through his fragmented sense of self. The use of non-linear storytelling techniques serves to show the chaotic nature of the unconscious trauma of Hassan. These techniques help to reflect the alienation and disorientation that come with PTSD. The significance of the present study is immense. This research particularly focuses on how the writer uses various narrative techniques to represent PTSD. This peculiar psychic condition is multifaceted and affects the mind and body of the people in diaspora. This study will examine the journey of the protagonist and his on-going struggles with memory. The paper will argue that Gurnah offers a critical perspective on diaspora, exile and the psychological cost of migration. Through an in-depth analysis of the character and psyche of Hassan, the paper aims to establish that trauma is both a personal as well as a collective experience. Trauma is a perpetual psychic condition which is often transmitted across generations and communities. The exploration of PTSD in the novel "Memories of Departure" will provide insights into the complex ways in which PTSD emerges and well as functions. The study will try to discover the ways in which identity, memory and displacement intersect in the lives of the people who are forced to leave their homes behind.

## **Literature Review**

### **Understanding PTSD in the Context of Fiction**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a complex psychological condition. It arises due to various factors such as the prolonged exposure to the traumatic events such as war, violence (physical, psychological or epistemic) or natural disasters. PTSD, due to its psychological insight, has become an important theme in literature. It particularly resonates in the works that deal with memory, trauma or identity at any level. In literary works, PTSD is frequently represented through the emotional dislocation, fragmentation of narrative structure. It can also be realized through the inability of character(s) to fully engage with their present lives due to past trauma. One of the central manifestations of PTSD in literature is what is commonly perceived as "emotional fragmentation". "Characters who suffer from PTSD often experience an awkward breakdown of their emotional responses. Past traumas interrupt their ability to fully experience the present. This fragmentation is seen in their inability to form stable and coherent relationships or sustain meaningful connections to the surrounding world" (Caruth, 1996). In "Memories of Departure",

the emotional fragmentation of Hassan is a direct result of the dislocation from his homeland and the trauma of his forced migration. The novel's fragmented narrative shows Hassan's struggle to reconcile his past with his present. Another key representation of PTSD in literature is "flashbacks". Characters who suffer from PTSD are often haunted by intrusive memories of the past traumatic event. These flashbacks are not merely recollections but are experienced as vivid events that intrude into the present consciousness of characters. As Caruth (1996) suggests, trauma in literature is not only the representation of pain but its recurrence in a manner that disrupts the present. In "Memories of Departure", Hassan's memories of Zanzibar frequently invade his consciousness which destabilize his sense of self in the course of novel. "Identity loss" is an integral part of PTSD in literature. For characters like Hassan, displacement does not merely involve a physical journey but a psychological rupture as well. Studies of PTSD often emphasize the loss of coherence in self-identity, where individuals struggle to locate themselves within the fabric of their former lives" (Herman, 1992). In the novel titled "Memories of Departure", the identity of Hassan is in constant flux. It is disrupted by the perplexed trauma of his exile and the seeming impossibility of returning home.

### **The Link Between PTSD and Diaspora**

The experience of PTSD in the diaspora is linked to the complex dynamics. In diaspora, PTSD is commonly a pernicious result of loss of home, alienation or displacement. For the protagonist of the novel, the trauma of exile is deepened by the indifference and alienation that he experienced in a foreign land. Seminal post-colonial theorist Homi k. Bhabha (1994) suggests that exile represents both a "rupture and an opening". The dislocation of an individual leads to a profound realization of his profound sense of self. The loss of home becomes not only an existential displacement more than a physical displacement. The trauma experienced in forced migration and exile is often more acute. The displaced and exiled individual is forced to live in a context that is cruelly indifferent, foreign and alien. This condition enhances the feeling of isolation and psychological distress (Said, 1993). The experience of exile often involves "chronic uncertainty". The individuals in the condition of exile are not only physically displaced but also psychologically adrift. Studies on forced migration and PTSD point to the "intergenerational transmission of trauma". The trauma of violence and displacement can be passed down through communities and generations (Suleiman, 2006). In the novel "Memories of Departure", this generational trauma is evident. It manifests itself in the experiences of other characters who, like Hassan, are caught between two worlds. They can live neither as one is lost and the other is not identifiable.

### **Trauma, Memory, and the Unhealed Wounds**

The relationship between trauma, memory, and the inability to heal is central to the experience of PTSD in the state of diaspora. Trauma should be approached as a multifaceted psychic disorder. It is frequently understood as not just a psychological wound but as something that can disrupt the memory itself. Trauma, whether visible or unconscious, creates a deep rift between the present and the past. "The characters are often haunted by painful memories that they cannot fully process or understand" (Laub, 1992). As famously noted by Herman (1992), "trauma is often a direct result of the fragmentation of memory. In the state of trauma, the past is not easily reconciled with the present". Hassan's inability to heal from his trauma is due to the persistent return of his memories. This inability of the protagonist hinders his ability to move forward in life. Trauma in the diaspora can possibly create what is commonly described as a "sense of collective unhealed wounds". The individuals as well as the communities which are displaced by war or violence share common

experiences of loss and dislocation. In the novel “Memories of Departure”, the complex trauma of the protagonist is not solely his own. It relates to a collective experience of all people who have been affected by political violence and exile. As asserted by Silove, “This novel suggests that the psychological scars of exile extend beyond the individual experience. They shape the broader diasporic experience where the trauma of dislocation is shared and passed on through communities” (Silove, 2000).

### **Theoretical Framework**

For the understand the psychological condition of Hassan in the novel “Memories of Departure”, it is essential to explore PTSD. It is equally important to understand how Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder applies to individuals in exile. PTSD is a complex psychological response to trauma. PTSD is frequently understood as deeply tied to loss, dislocation, and alienation experienced by exiles. This section will examine the trauma theory associated with PTSD. It will provide a theoretical foundation for the analysis of psychological scars of exile in the psyche of Hassan.

### **Psychological Framework of PTSD: Trauma Theory and Exile**

PTSD, according to the American Psychiatric Association (2013), is a psychic condition that mostly arises after an individual witnesses a traumatic event. Traumatic event is often characterized by flashbacks, intrusive memories, and heightened arousal. Trauma theory, proposed and developed by Cathy Caruth (1996), asserts that trauma is not merely a memory of past. It is a painful experience that disrupts the ability of the victim to form a coherent narrative of the self. Caruth argues that trauma cannot be fully processed or understood at the time it occurs. It mostly “re-emerges” in the disjointed and fragmented memories. This theory is essential to understand the psychological scars that exile inflicts on the protagonist of the novel. Hassan’s memories of Zanzibar frequently surface in fragmented flashbacks. They prevent him from constructing a meaningful sense of belonging. These fragmented memories often emerge as flashbacks. They are subconsciously connected to the trauma of displacement and loss: a key feature of PTSD.

Trauma theory emphasizes “dissociation” as a coping mechanism. Dissociation is a common defense mechanism that the individuals in exile use when they are facing overwhelming stress. In the case of exiles, dissociation may become emotional numbness or an inability to engage with the present world. For Hassan, the trauma of leaving Zanzibar is so profound that he dissociates from his current life. He often feels disconnected from his environment and alienated from others both physically and psychologically. As Laub (1992) notes, the inability to integrate traumatic experiences leads to an emotional disconnect from the present.

### **Identity Fragmentation and PTSD in Exile**

Another key element of PTSD in the context of exile is “identity fragmentation”. Judith Herman’s trauma theory (1992) asserts that PTSD often leads to a fragmentation of the self. The traumatized individuals are unable to reconcile the traumatic event with their ongoing life. In the case of exile, this fragmentation deepens because the individuals are not only displaced from their physical home but also from the structures that shaped their real identity. Exile poses an existential question which the exiles no longer feel answerable. In “Memories of Departure”, the identity of Hassan is clearly fragmented. The loss of his homeland and the traumatic memories of departure leave him unable to function as an integrated self. His internal conflict between the past (his homeland) and the present (his life in exile) creates a psychological rift. This acute and disrupted selfhood is a hallmark of PTSD in the diaspora.

## **Trauma and Memory**

The re-emergence of traumatic memories is central to the experience of PTSD. They intrude upon the present life of an individual in the form of “flashbacks” or intrusive thoughts. In the case of Hassan, his memories of Zanzibar resurface as disturbing flashbacks that disrupt his ability to engage with the present. These flashbacks are not cognitive recollections but are emotionally and physically overwhelming. In “Memories of Departure”, Hassan is haunted by memories of his homeland. The flashbacks prevent him from achieving psychological closure. The trauma persists in his present life.

## **The Inability to Heal in Exile**

In the context of exile, the most distressing aspects of PTSD is the “perpetuation of trauma”. According to Caruth (1996), “Exiles often find that the trauma they experienced does not end with physical displacement. It, instead continues to affect their psychological state. It prevents healing and recovery”. As Silove (2000) suggests, the trauma of exile can become a chronic condition. For Hassan, the trauma is not confined to a single event but is constant in life. This ongoing trauma, combined with the alienation, leaves him unable to move forward in life. The generational transmission of trauma also complicates healing for exiles. As Suleiman (2006) notes, trauma often extends beyond the individual. It affects entire communities. Shared experiences of suffering and loss are passed down through generations. In “Memories of Departure, Hassan’s PTSD is the trauma which is not only his personal suffering but also the ongoing pain of the diasporic community.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Statement of the Problem**

Exile and displacement often result in profound psychological effects. Prominent among these psychological effects is PTSD as individuals are forced to leave their homelands, often under traumatic circumstances. In Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel titled "Memories of Departure" the protagonist's trauma resulting from his displacement from Zanzibar is a central theme. The psychological scars of Hassan create the essence of this novel. Hassan’s trauma is manifested in the form of dissociation, flashbacks, and emotional numbness. These are some of the key symptoms of PTSD. The present study aims to analyze how these manifestations of trauma shape the emotional well-being of Hassan. It also interests in studying the identity crisis of the protagonist in the context of his new life in exile. This research examines the psychological effects of exile. It will explore how trauma disrupts both the personal and collective sense of self. This study will contribute to a broader understanding of trauma, PTSD, and identity formation in diaspora literature. It illustrates how the experience of displacement can have lasting and dire psychological consequences. This study offers innovative and inclusive approach and a broader perspective for investigating complex psychological issues. It will offer a valuable insight into the intersection of identity, trauma and memory in the context of post-colonialist and diaspora.

### **Research Objectives**

- 1) To examine the symptoms PTSD in the protagonist, including flashbacks, emotional numbness, and dissociation.
- 2) To analyze how exile affects the sense of identity and psychological fragmentation of Hassan.
- 3) To explore narrative techniques employed by Gurnah such as unreliable narration in the novel “Memories of Departure”.

## **Research Questions**

- 1) What PTSD symptoms does Hassan experience, and how do they shape his sense of self and his relationships?
- 2) How do narrative techniques used by Gurnah mirror Hassan's trauma experience and his psychological fragmentation?
- 3) How do Hassan's memories of Zanzibar affect his identity and contribute to his ongoing psychological distress?

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Approach**

This study adopts qualitative approach to explore the psychological scars of exile, particularly the manifestation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the protagonist of Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel "Memories of Departure". The research focuses on the literary depiction of trauma. It examines the interplay between narrative form, psychological theory, and the experience of exile.

### **Research Design**

The research design used in this study is interpretive and analytical. It utilizes thematic analysis to explore the emotional and psychological effects of trauma and exile on Hassan. The study integrates diaspora studies, trauma theory, and literary techniques to offer a multidimensional understanding of Hassan's identity crisis and psychological scars. This comparative approach will reveal how trauma, exile, and mental health intersect in the experiences of the protagonist.

### **Data Collection**

Data will be gathered through close reading of the novel "Memories of Departure". The analysis of the themes related to PTSD such as flashbacks, emotional numbness, dissociation, and identity loss. Textual evidence will be decoded to identify PTSD symptoms and narrative strategies that depict trauma. Secondary sources such as scholarly articles, critical commentaries and research on diaspora and PTSD will support the analysis. They will provide theoretical and contextual insight into trauma in the novel.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study will draw on "trauma theory" and "diaspora studies". Trauma theory, as articulated by scholars like Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman, and Bessel van der Kolk, will guide the analysis of PTSD symptoms in the text. "Diaspora studies" will provide a framework for understanding how Hassan's trauma is shaped by his displacement and explore the nuances of identity formation in exile.

### **Data Analysis Technique(s)**

The research will employ coding techniques to analyze PTSD symptoms in Hassan's character. It will prominently focus on flashbacks, intrusive thoughts and dissociation. Flashbacks and fragmented timelines in the novel will be examined as narrative tools that reflect the non-linear and disorienting nature of trauma. These techniques will be applied to the psychological development of the character to trace his psychological fragmentation. One of the key aspects of this research is the integration of "literary techniques" with "psychological concepts of PTSD".

Narrative techniques such as unreliable narration and fragmented timelines will be analyzed for their role in conveying the dissociative experiences of the protagonist.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study is limited in its focus on a single protagonist, Hassan. It may not represent the full spectrum of trauma experiences in exile. The subjective nature of literary interpretation may lead to varying readings of the text. Additionally, the reliance on textual evidence may overlook other factors influencing trauma outside the scope of the narrative. The study is also confined to the novel "Memories of Departure". It limits its applicability to other texts in the genre of diaspora.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The research will approach the depiction of trauma with sensitivity and will avoid sensationalization or trivialization. Ethical guidelines will be followed to ensure that trauma is handled with respect and academic rigor. Special attention will be given to the portrayal of marginalized identities and the psychological and cultural nuances of exile.

### **Expected Outcomes**

The study is expected to offer a deeper understanding of the psychological scars of exile as portrayed in the novel "Memories of Departure". It will reveal how PTSD affects the individual psychology and narrative structure of the fiction work with a particular focus on Gurnah's use of unreliable narration and fragmented timelines. This research will contribute to trauma studies, diaspora literature, and psychological analysis. It will offer new insights into the relationship between trauma, exile, and identity. Literature will be explored as a medium for processing trauma and understanding identity in displacement.

### **Significance of the Present Study**

This study will contribute to the understanding PTSD in the context of exile. It focuses on the seminal work of Abdulrazak Gurnah, "Memories of Departure", to examine the emotional and psychological effects of trauma on dislocated individuals. This study attempts to analyze the experiences of the protagonist: Hassan. It will deepen our understanding of how forced migration can affect the identity, mental health, and sense of self in the state of diaspora. This research will enhance our comprehension of the impact of trauma. It will, additionally, illustrate the complex processes of memory and recovery that the displaced often face. This study offers valuable insights into the unique challenges of identity reconstruction in exile and forced migration. It is expected to make an important contribution to diaspora literature and trauma studies by examining the enduring psychological scars of displacement. Practically, this research has implications for mental health professionals who are working with refugees and the communities which are affected by exile. This study provides a systematic literary perspective on trauma. By understanding the long-lasting psychological effects of exile and migration, practitioners can better address the mental health needs of displaced populations. They can also offer more empathetic and contextually informed care to the victimized and affected individuals and the communities.

### **Data analysis & Discussion**

#### **Symptoms of PTSD in Hassan's Character**

In the seminal novel titled "Memories of Departure" by Abdulrazak Gurnah, Hassan: the protagonist, exhibits several symptoms of PTSD. Notably among his symptoms of unconscious

trauma are flashbacks, emotional numbness, and dissociation. These psychological manifestations of trauma are central for the understanding of his character. They also reflect the broader and on-going effects of exile and displacement on individuals. Through the emotional responses, behavior and interpersonal relationships in the novel, Gurnah shows how deeply the scars of exile have penetrated in the psyche of Hassan.

### **Emotional Numbness and Detachment**

Emotional numbness is one of the most prominent symptoms of PTSD. It often detaches the affected individual from his immediate surroundings. It also makes the victims incapable of engaging emotionally with the surrounding people. The protagonist's emotional numbness is evident in his inability to form meaningful and coherent relationships. His sense of detachment from the world around also shows his peculiar emotional response. Gurnah writes:

“I felt as though I was a ghost walking among the living, drifting through the world without any real connection to anything or anyone” (Gurnah, 1996, p. 72). This passage illustrates the profound sense of alienation and emotional detachment experienced by Hassan. This echoes the numbing effects of PTSD. His inability to establish bonds with others shows how exile has stripped him of the emotional connections. Otherwise, this might have helped him regain a sense of purpose and self-worth.

### **Flashbacks and Intrusive Memories**

One of the prominent symptoms of PTSD is the recurrence of flashbacks and intrusive memories. They force the individual to relive traumatic experiences intensely. Memories of his home: Zanzibar and the violence he witnessed often overwhelm Hassan. These memories are not just recollections but are vivid and intrusive experiences that disrupt his sense of time and reality. In one moment, Hassan reflects:

“I had to stop myself from walking into the streets of Zanzibar... the images were becoming too real, I was no longer sure if I was here or there” (Gurnah, 1996, p. 145).

This passage shows the intensity of Hassan's flashbacks. These flashbacks often blur the line between past and present. It emphasizes his psychological fragmentation and inability to reconcile his traumatic memories with his present life. The disorientation exemplifies the hallmark features of PTSD outlined in trauma theory where the present is continuously invaded by the past.

### **Dissociation**

Dissociation is another symptom of PTSD. The individual victim to dissociation mentally disconnects from reality in an attempt to cope with overwhelming trauma. In the course of novel, Hassan often dissociates from his current life. He withdraws emotionally as well as physically from his immediate surroundings. In one reflective moment, he states:

“I have often thought I was dreaming. Perhaps it is not real. But if it is a dream, it is a dream that has gone on too long” (Gurnah, 1996, p. 110). This expression captures dissociative state of Hassan. Here the line between reality and fantasy becomes increasingly blurred. His feelings of unreality and disconnection from his current life indicates the deep psychological scars of his displacement. Hassan's dissociation also shows how trauma disrupts a sense of self of an individual and how it affects their connection to the surrounding world.



## **Narrative Techniques and the Portrayal of PTSD**

Abdulrazak Gurnah employs distinct narrative techniques in his novel “Memories of Departure”. These techniques both reflect and amplify the emotional dislocation and psychological fragmentation that Hassan experiences as a result of PTSD. The narrative structure, characterized by unreliable narration and fragmented timeline, shows internal chaos of Hassan. It also highlights his struggle to integrate his traumatic memories with his present reality. By employed these narrative techniques, Gurnah conveys the disorienting effects of PTSD. It shows how it is manifested in the perceptions and recollections of Hassan.

### **Fragmented Timeline**

The non-linear and fragmented timeline the novel “Memories of Departure” mirrors Hassan’s experience of trauma. It disrupts his ability to make a coherent sense of time. The disjointed flow of events reflects the psychological state of Hassan, where past and present are in constant conflict. Additionally, the memories of his homeland actively intrude into his current life in exile. In one passage, Hassan reflects:

“I could not tell where the present ended and the past began, each one bleeding into the other until I was left suspended in a place that was neither here nor there” (Gurnah, 1996, p. 112).

This disorientation shows the effect of trauma on the passage of time. The traumatized individuals are unable to process their memories coherently. The fragmented structure of the narrative replicates Hassan’s fragmented sense of self. It also shows his inability to achieve integration of his past experiences.

### **Unreliable Narration**

The unreliable narration of Hassan in the novel further shows the psychological dislocation caused by PTSD. His narrative is often uncertain. It shifts between reflections, memories, and the present moment and create a sense of instability and ambiguity. His perceptions of the surrounding world are distorted by the trauma he carries. It makes it difficult for both Hassan himself and the reader to trust the accuracy of his experiences. At one point, Hassan contemplates:

“I sometimes wondered if I was living or dreaming. How could I be sure what was real anymore, when nothing seemed to stay still?” (Gurnah, 1996, p. 143).

This passage shows the unreliable nature of Hassan’s perspective. In his perception the boundaries between reality and illusion blur, and the present is consistently intimidated by the past. The internal confusion of the protagonist and lack of a coherent narrative structure is suggestive in nature. It shows how PTSD can make it challenging for an individual to trust even their own perceptions. By the use of a unreliable narration and fragmented timeline, Gurnah implicitly conveys the psychic fragmentation of Hassan. These narrative techniques are not simply stylistic choices. On the broader and subconscious level, they serve to mirror the disintegration of the psyche of Hassan. It also illustrates the struggle of the protagonist to reconcile the traumatic past with his dislocated present. The narrative is as fractured as the protagonist’s sense of self. It indicates the lasting impact of trauma and the difficulty of healing in exile.

### **Memory and Identity in Hassan’s Trauma**

Memory plays an integral role in shaping the identity of the protagonist in Gurnah’s seminal novel “Memories of Departure”. In the novel, the trauma of the protagonist is deeply rooted in the physical displacement from his homeland. His trauma is also caused by the memories of a past that he couldn’t fully reconcile with his present self in exile. The struggle of the protagonist to

integrate his past identity with his present existence is central to understand his psychological scars. Gurnah's portrayal of the fragmented memories of Hassan as well as his ongoing struggle with identity. It shows the profound impact of trauma on selfhood. It also reflects on the challenges of rebuilding a sense of self in a foreign land.

### **Memory as a Source of Trauma**

Hassan's memories of Zanzibar, particularly of his displacement and the violence he experienced, become a continuous source of trauma. These memories intrude into his present life and prevent him from achieving peace. The following passage illustrates how his memories haunt him persistently: "Every moment I have spent here has been a constant battle to keep the memories of Zanzibar at bay, but they break through, unbidden, filling my mind and choking my thoughts" (Gurnah, 1996, p. 159). The line quoted above reveals the intrusive nature of Hassan's memories which disrupt his current existence. It reflects that how trauma continues to invade the consciousness of the survivor. It underscores the idea that the past cannot be easily buried or forgotten. The protagonist's ongoing battle with his memories indicates the severity of his PTSD.

### **The Struggle with Identity and Dislocation**

Hassan's memories of Zanzibar are not merely recollections of the past but they represent a crucial part of his identity. His inability to reconcile his past with his present further deepens his psychological fragmentation. Exile has caused him to lose the coherence of self and left him suspended between two worlds. Gurnah writes:

"I had been cut off from the world I once knew, from the person I had been, and I did not know who I was now or who I was meant to be" (Gurnah, 1996, p. 184).

This passage exemplifies crisis of identity in Hassan's character. He feels lost in the indifferent and alien world. He disconnected from his past self in Zanzibar as well as from his current self in exile. The dislocation of his identity is a direct result of his trauma. His inability to rebuild a coherent sense of self in the absence of his homeland deepens his PTSD.

### **Memory and the Inability to Reconcile Past and Present**

Hassan's trauma lies in the events he lived through and his inability to reconcile those events with the person he has become. His memories of Zanzibar continuously conflict with his present. This queer coalition creates a sense of psychological dissonance. Gurnah poignantly illustrates this struggle by asserting: "I do not know who I am now. The person I was is no longer here, and the person I am meant to be does not fit into this new world" (Gurnah, 1996, p. 167).

This internal dissonance shows the challenges of the individuals in the diaspora. Their memories of a lost homeland create an insurmountable gap between their present and past selves. Hassan's inability to reconcile these two identities deepens his sense of dislocation and alienation. These factors contribute to the persistence of his PTSD.

### **Development of Discussion**

#### **Interpretation of The Symptoms of PTSD in Hassan's Character: Revisited**

The data analysis tried to establish that in the novel *Memories of Departure*, Hassan the protagonist exhibits a range of PTSD symptoms. He demonstrated the profound and complex psychological cost of trauma and exile. Hassan often experiences emotional numbness which is reflected in his perception of being a "ghost walking among the living" (Gurnah, 1996, p. 72). It is indicative of the dissociation which is typical of PTSD. This peculiar detachment is the result of two stabbing

factors: His personal loss and the traumatic experiences in Zanzibar. These triggered and overwhelming emotions sometimes functions as a defense mechanism as well. His emotional numbness shows deeper psychological dislocation because Hassan is unable to form meaningful connections with others or his environment. It demonstrates how exile in the physical dislocation as well as psychological detachment, can strip individuals of their sense of belonging and emotional ties. The flashbacks of Hassan, where he is “no longer sure if I was here or there” (Gurnah, 1996, p. 145), further reinforce the persistence of trauma. These intrusive memories which blur the boundaries between past and present, shows the disorienting and the queer nature of PTSD. The continuous intrusion of memories from Zanzibar prevents Hassan from living in the present. It is a psychological weight of his traumatic past that indulge him into a state of constant mental conflict. This arbitrary interruption of the present by the past is a hallmark of PTSD. It suggests that Hassan’s trauma is not resultant from a distant memory but it is an ongoing and living force in his mind. The dissociative experiences of Hassan, shown in his reflections on feelings as if he were “dreaming” (Gurnah, 1996, p. 110), highlight the psychological fragmentation induced by trauma. This sense of unreality signals Hassan’s inability to ground himself in his current reality. His trauma distorts his perception of the world around him. Dissociation is often used by trauma survivors as a coping mechanism. It helps them to distance themselves from unbearable emotional pain. However, this disconnection from the present also brings alienation for Hassan and makes it harder for him to integrate his past trauma into his identity.

### **Contextualizing the Results of the Present Research: Trauma and Exile as a Catalyst for PTSD**

The findings of the above analysis can be contextualized in the broader context of understanding exile as a traumatic experience. As s portrayed in the novel, forced displacement is not just a geographical relocation but a profound psychological rupture. Exile disrupts sense of self and place of individuals’, and can cause a breakdown in their emotional, cultural, and social connections (Said, 2000; Al-Hardan, 2009). In the case of protagonist, exile is not simply a loss of home but is the dismantling of an entire identity. The trauma he experiences which is rooted in the violence he witnessed in Zanzibar is compounded by his inability to find a stable sense of belonging in the new world. Psychological research on the effects of exile and displacement highlights the long-term emotional and mental health challenges that the refugees, displaced and exiles face. These individuals often struggle with identity loss, disenfranchised grief and persistent trauma (Kirmayer, 2001). All of these are evident in the experience of Hassan. His inability to reconcile his traumatic past with his present life in exile shows a broader pattern. These patterns are observed among displaced individuals who find themselves suspended between two worlds and are unable to fully belong to either of them. This persistent state of psychological liminality deepens the ongoing trauma that manifests in symptoms such as intrusive memories, emotional numbness and dissociation.

The exploration of trauma in the novel shows the complexity of identity formation in exile. For Hassan, the process of rebuilding a sense of self becomes a painful journey. The memories of Zanzibar, particularly the violence and upheaval, are not simply memories but a constant and disruptive force. They prevent him from creating a stable identity in his new life. This is one of a critical aspects of the trauma experienced by displaced individuals. Their identity becomes fragmented. It is torn between the past they can never return to and the present that feels unwelcoming and exotically foreign.

### **Synthesizing the viewpoints used: PTSD, Memory, and Narrative Techniques**

A deeper analysis of Hassan's trauma requires the integration of memory studies, psychological theory, and literary analysis used in this research. The fragmented structure of the novel and Gurnah's use of unreliable narration mirror the psychological fragmentation of the protagonist. As trauma theory suggests, survivors of trauma often experience a rupture in their ability to narrate their own stories. Their past and present overlaps in disorienting ways (Freeman, 2011). The fragmented timeline in "Memories of Departure" is not only a stylistic choice. It reflects the loss of temporal continuity and the disruption of memory that trauma survivors endure. The protagonist's perception of time is obviously warped. The traumatic memories of Zanzibar frequently intrudes into his present and leaves him suspended between two queer and disjointed realities. The disorientation of this temporal conflict is evident when Hassan says: "I could not tell where the present ended and the past began" (Gurnah, 1996, p. 112).

Similarly, the unreliable narration in the novel shows the struggle of Hassan to trust his own perceptions. As Caruth argues "PTSD often leads to epistemic uncertainty, where trauma survivors doubt their own senses and experiences" (Caruth, 1996). The constant questioning of the protagonist of what is real highlights the instability of his perception and mental state. This unreliability in narration allows readers to experience the cognitive dissonance that Hassan faces. There, the boundaries between reality and illusion are blurred. This narrative technique serves to externalize the internal confusion that comes with PTSD. This makes it a powerful tool for conveying the disintegration of the self which is caused by trauma.

It can safely be asserted that Gurnah's choice of narrative structure is not just a reflection of Hassan's psychological state but also a way to draw readers into the experience of trauma itself. Through the fragmented timeline and unreliable narration, Gurnah portrays the psychic fragmentation of a character who are caught between the trauma of his past and the dislocation of his present. It further underscores the and perpetuation and inescapability of trauma for those who have been displaced.

### **Implications of the Present Research: Trauma and Exile in Literature and Psychology**

The findings from this analysis are largely based on the study of PTSD in the of the protagonist of novel. This study is expected to have significant implications for the understanding of trauma and the psychology of exile. This study also tried to establish how complex and often elusive psychological conditions are portrayed in literature. The portrayal of Hassan's trauma in the novel invites the readers to reconsider the psychological cost of exile. Gurnah's narrative highlights how forced migration can have long-term emotional effects on the exiled individuals. These contiguous effects are in the form of displacement, emotional disintegration and loss of self. The novel shows that exile is not a temporary condition but a profound and enduring transformation. It frequently affects the relationships, identity as well as the mental health of an individual.

From a psychological perspective, the findings highlight the importance of trauma-informed care for those who have been displaced or exiled. This displacement can be either physical or emotional. Hassan's struggle to cope with his memories and the emotional weight of exile illustrates the need for mental health support. This support is aimed to address the unique challenges of trauma survivors particularly those who have been in long-term exile. Trauma-focused interventions, such as community reintegration programs and narrative therapy are essential to help the individuals like Hassan. In exiled and displaced individuals, it can rebuild the sense of self and regain a sense of agency in their new lives. The depiction of PTSD in the novel suggests that trauma, memory and exile cannot and should not be treated as isolated phenomena. Instead, they must be understood

as part of a broader continuum of psychosocial struggles resultant from displacement. The persistence of traumatic memories in the life of protagonist serves as a reminder that the psychological scars of exile are not easily healed. In order to erase these traumatic memories, sustained intervention and deep attention is required.

### **Acknowledging the Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

This analysis has primarily focused on the portrayal of PTSD in character of the protagonist. At the outset, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The analysis has primarily focused on Hassan, which limits our understanding of how other characters in the novel experience trauma. Further research could engage in examining the "collective trauma" experienced by other exiled characters in the fiction of Gurnah. They can also take into account the intergenerational and cultural effects of displacement and exile on the formation of identity.

Additionally, this study has taken avocation from the narrative and psychological theory, postcolonial perspectives on identity and exile could provide further depth. The areas such as impact of the cultural loss and colonial histories experienced by exiled characters could benefit from more focused research. The sustained investigation of how trauma intersects with postcolonial identity in Gurnah's work would add another layer of understand the complexities of psychological trauma and displacement. Further research in the topics such as memory, trauma, and exile in Gurnah's work could expand the discussion of the long-term effects of exile, narrative therapy, and the psychological impacts of forced migration. By exploring these areas, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the costs of displacement. We can also identify the necessary pathways of healing and recovery from exile and trauma.

### **Conclusion**

In his seminal novel "Memories of Departure", the Nobel prized Tanzanian writer Abdulrazaq Gurnah illustrates the psychological impacts of exile. Central to the novelist oeuvre is the portrayal of PTSD in the character of the protagonist. The use of narrative techniques in the novel such as fragmented timeline and unreliable narration effectively show the psychological dislocation of Hassan. His PTSD manifests itself in different ways. Some of the prominent manifestations of his PTSD are the fractured sense of identity and emotional numbness etc. Through these techniques, Gurnah conveys the psychological disintegration of Hassan: the protagonist. The novel also shows the broader consequences of displacement, particularly in the context of diaspora.

Key findings from the data analysis shows how Hassan's trauma is inextricably tied to his memories of Zanzibar. They frequently intrude into his present life and often cause emotional paralysis and a sense of alienation. The fragmentation of narrative parallels the fragmentation of the psyche of the protagonist. It reflects his inability to reconcile his traumatic past with his present identity in exile. The portrayal of Hassan's internal struggle, his dissociation and his sense of identity loss depicts the psychological scars that persist long after the physical journey of migration ends. The implications of Gurnah's depiction of PTSD extend beyond the individual experience of Hassan. They broadly contribute to the discourse on trauma in diaspora literature. The novel illustrates how displacement not merely involve the loss of a physical homeland but also the disintegration of a psychological and cultural self. Gurnah's work highlights the psychological cost of migration. It challenges the reader to consider the long-term consequences of displacement on mental health. In the context of forced exile and cultural dislocation these concerns become increasingly essential. The novel "Memories of Departure" by Abdulrazaq Gurah provides a poignant exploration of the psychological effects of exile. It emphasizes how memory, trauma,

and identity loss are interwoven in the experience of diaspora. Gurnah's portrayal of Hassan's PTSD offers valuable insight into the emotional and psychological cost of displacement. By delving into the fractured psyche of a migrant, Gurnah offers a compelling narrative. It enhances our understanding of the trauma that shapes the diasporic experience. It emphasizes the need for recognition and empathy of these struggles in literature as well as in society.

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