



RESEARCH PAPER

Concealment of Characters' Identity in a Hybrid Culture of
Post-Colonial Regime in Gurnah's *By the Sea*

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ABSTRACT

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The study analyzes the concealment of characters' identity in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* through Herman's trauma theory. The prime objective of the study is to understand the bizarre behaviour of the characters in the Zanzibari community and to develop an understanding of the forces that compel the locals to migrate from Zanzibar, also. The present study intends to observe and interpret the after-effects of colonialism in an East African region where the individuals, as well as families, suffer both obliteration and transformation of postcolonial identity across continents and cultures. The current research has used a unique style through which it brings together old and young generations, Eastern and Western culture and societies and the research sees how conflicts and issues and then their resolutions emerge. This study can be a ray of hope for people across cultures and continents as it has demolished the sculpture of rigid identity. It can be a token of love, and peace as it has restored the complementary relationships among the locals. However, further research can be conducted on the selected text under the perspectives of PTSD, object relations theory and postcolonial theory.

Introduction

Trauma studies get popularity and the influence that the phrase "the psychological wound" has constituted both within and beyond the literary boundary in the contemporary age. Emerging in the 1980s via psychology, law, cognitive science, and literary and cultural studies, it is regarded as a paradigm for the interpretation of literary criticism in recent times. Since then, trauma theory has been employed as a critical framework for literary criticism. Therefore, my present discussion borrows insight for literary criticism on Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea*. It encapsulates the story of the exploitation of Zanzibari's socio-economic and political aspects, and it exhibits the object relations and corruption of the locals. Along with, tormented sufferings at physical and psychological levels can be seen in the lives of Gurnah's characters.

Conversely, this critical paradigm informs the reader about various strategies to understand the characters' psychology. By employing various traumatic strategies such as flashbacks, avoidance, hallucination, numbing, object relations, trauma

narrative etc. This current study focuses on unresolved traumatic experiences in the lives of the characters. These strategies try to provide the reader with a context to understand the commonalities in the progressive relationship between postcolonial text and trauma theory. Thus, trauma theory is more appropriate both to understand the psychology of the characters and the postcolonial literary criticism.

African history is the evidence of the tormented incidents which are full of violence, rupture, agony, and anxiety, with the perpetrators whether they are locals or foreigners. Colonization has been in full swing in East Africa in the last decade of the 19th century, but Zanzibar territory came into contact with colonization in the early 20th century. After the end of colonization in Zanzibar, its independence turned into mere memory. So, the idea of unity and national identity was unattainable in the community. The Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 revealed the various accounts of the hybrid culture of people rather it is a violent incident that exhibited both the representation of its people, the island and the socio-economic and cultural aspects of society.

Post-independence East African writing is particularly rich in content and diversity. The present study intends to observe and interpret the after-effects of colonialism in an East African region where the individuals, as well as families, suffer both obliteration and transformation of postcolonial identity across continents and cultures. The primary objective is to identify some patterns in the transnational and transcultural periphery that are helpful in the construction of a new identity in Abdulrazak Gurnah's selected novel as the protagonists want to get escape from their tinted past of colonial identities. The tapestry of his work is knitted with multiple ideas of identity, belonging, socioeconomic, cultural representation, corruption of the locals, child abuse, psychological trauma, and exile. In the work, the characters are not only subject to countless influences of hybrid culture but also undergo xenophobia and racial discrimination, traumatic memories of home, and prejudice of imperial forces.

Abdulrazak Gurnah is a Tanzanian-born (British) novelist, and awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021, "for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fates of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents" (Foundation, 2021, p. 2). In his novels, Gurnah brings forth such themes as post-trauma, silence, displacement, shame, belonging and a sense of guilt. Besides these, he puts asylum seekers and the lives of refugees through the narrator Saleh Omer. Leaving the Zanzibar society, he tries to settle in England by adopting the identity of one dead Rajab Shaban Mahmud, father of Latif, a professor at university. Both of the protagonists pay thanks to Rachel Howard, the advisor of Omer, who helps them in making effective communication between them. On the other hand, *By the Sea* exhibits post-trauma, shattered identities, alienation, silence and language through post-traumatic techniques such as memories and flashbacks. Focusing on the lives of the protagonist, Gurnah demonstrates object relations and family relations at the end of the novel. Political insecurity is the main reason for his departure from his native land. (Mudanya, 2013, p. 15).

To define the utility of trauma theory to Gurnah's work, the article determines the distinction between traumatic and non-traumatic experiences, along with, one should familiar with its existence, work and different functions of trauma. Cathy Caruth asserts "[in] its most general description, trauma describes an overwhelming

experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, the uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (1996a, p. 11). The reflection of response is traumatic rather than incidental. Trauma theory can be used for the interpretation of traumatic conditions of war veterans, the survivors of physical abuse, sexual, psychological, and other events, to observe how these incidents affect the psychology of an individual, and also to determine how this information can be helpful to the victims in the healing process. History shows that Psychologists, psychiatrists and therapists used trauma theory as a treatment in clinics but in recent times, has become a paradigm in the field of literature.

Literature Review

The article utilizes "literature review as a research vehicle" (Biggam, 2015) to identify the research gap and discusses the issues raised in inter-related research questions. It presents and critically examines the socio-economic and political history of Zanzibar, and reviews the previous studies, relevant articles and interviews related to the issues under discussion. My present research starts its discussion by analyzing and examining the previous research to locate the research gap. For this purpose, Brenda Cooper (2008) discusses forced migration, material culture and stories through the characters in the selected text. After arriving at Gatwick Airport, Saleh Omer in terms of his story pretends to speak no English, hide his identity and not mention the cause of migration rather he has terrified and ultimately concealed his identity. This shows that he becomes the victim of imperial lords, and mentions the influence of colonialism in postcolonial literature.

The above critique is exhibited as opposite to Godwin's views about Gurnah's *By the Sea*. However, it reflects the influence and effects of colonialism in the postcolonial world. These influences damage the psyche of the victims both at psychological and social levels. It seems that the Zanzibari people are crushed badly by the process of colonialism and thus, do not produce resistance and spend their lives according to the will of colonial lords. On the opposite, Godwin Siundu claims that Gurnah's works can create a narrative in which honour is embedded in the characters struggling with the obstacles of their respective socio-cultural standing. The characters try to promote honour through a narrative and share the past experiences of people (2013). To strengthen the stance of Godwin, Kaigai (2013) asserts in her article, that these novels provide the reader with tales of painful memories but the voices that describe them are difficult to hear because they are nervous about telling narratives of delicate intimacy.

Lucinda News in her article, share the opposite views by claiming that the above gloomy picture documents the tormented voices of people but unfortunately their voices fail to communicate the feelings of the oppressed. On the other hand, she asserts that *By the Sea* lays out a way of thinking about home that isn't based on privilege but rather on reclaiming its importance for some of society's most disadvantaged people. Gurnah's work, he claims, is suitable for creating other migrant aesthetics that may accept the experiences of individuals who have been forcefully exiled (2015). Felicity Hand (2010) holds a similar opinion as Lucinda News has discussed in her article. After all, she says that her understanding of Gurnah's art is her effort to recover the past or histories of the Swahili Coast or the Zanzibari

people. One of the key themes of Gurnah's writings is the conflict between individual perspectives of history and a sense of belonging.

Having conducted the review, this article identifies the research gap or the new arena for study. The previous researches on the selected text divert the reader's attention towards the research gap i.e. trauma study in terms of Herman's rubric of three stages of the healing process. Many types of research have been conducted on *By the Sea* and in which the critics have discussed the prevailing issues according to their circumstances. Over here, the literature review guides my current research to locate the research gap both in terms of appropriate theory (Herman's talking cure) or the identification of the research topic as mentioned in the previous pages. The phrase "Concealment of the character's identity" highlights the hidden motivations such as belonging and silence and the silence is a sign of trauma. Therefore, this section of the study depicts silence as the oppressive state of the characters in the trauma paradigm; silence can communicate the condition of the victims to the bystanders. Thus, Gurnah highlights different situations in the selected text where the characters become the victims of colonialism and ultimately lose their voice.

Gurnah documents the silence of people in the Zanzibari society where almost all the characters become mute or lose their voices as a result of the repercussions of colonialism. Over here, there are a few reasons for their silence in the postcolonial world. The characters use silence as a strategy to save their skin or hide their identity or not mention the cause of migration in postcolonial literature. It has distinct meanings in the field of postcolonial study, and firstly, the characters become silent because they want to conceal their identities to dispel the influence of racism and prejudice. Secondly, their voices do not join the dominating voice of the time and in this way, the locals feel isolated and alienated from society (Zubeidah Zachariah, 2016). The present study also attempts to analyze posttraumatic silence through certain patterns because people won't remember their past or conceal their identity or keep themselves away from the prejudices of the West. Gurnah captures the graphic images of tormented people whose voices do not join the larger part of the colonial discourse and stand alone as a minority. Due to colossal torture, the victims try to dispel the influence of the terror which is inflicted upon them by the perpetrators.

Material and Methods

The present research is related to posttraumatic studies where theoretical insights have been borrowed from trauma theories such as Herman's rubric of three stages of recovery. Gurnah's *By the Sea* is the primary text of analysis for the investigation of the above subject. The secondary sources for the present study are the internet, research journals, non-fiction works, East African literature, various types of East African Journals, and contemporary African writers such as Ben Okri, Chinua Achebe, and Wole Soyinka etc.

The writer has used a unique style through which he brings together old and young generations, Eastern and Western culture and societies and the research sees how conflicts and issues and then their resolutions emerge. The symbols, for instance, the displaced character Omer unable to speak English at the airport, etc. analyze to point out the possibility of the safety of the victim, terror and ultimately reconciliation. The gender role and identities are explored to see what kinds of

limitations and possibilities are offered to them by their respective socio-economic and political setups. The impact of socio-cultural dislocation and rupture on the characters is to be measured to see how far their personalities have been damaged out of this process and whether they do move out of this traumatic situation or not.

Theoretical Framework

This section provides an appropriate theoretical framework that devises certain tools and strategies to interpret the documented incidents and events in Gurnah's *By the Sea*. To interpret these traumatic experiences, the article borrows insight from Herman's three stages of recovery mentioned in her book, *Trauma and Recovery*, "establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story and restoring the connection between survivors and their community" (1993, p. 3). The study highlights the shortcomings and achievements of genealogies and provides a historiography of the origin of trauma.

The term "trauma" is a wider concept and its connotation varies "from law to psychology, psychiatry, history, public health, sociology, and literature" (Marder, 2006, p. 1). It has various fields and meanings and trauma can be interpreted as a complicated phenomenon. Homer's *Iliad* is to be considered the origin of psychological trauma (Figley, 1985; Shay, 1994). To some extent, trauma is the cause of human prolonged suffering and is supposedly an "anthropological constant" (Fricke, 2004, p. 9). Paul Lerner and Marc Micale claim that trauma is the product of the industrial revolution (2001). The British physician John Erichsen analyzed the condition "railway spine" in the 1860s when he labelled a medical exploration of what later be known as "trauma". This condition examined both the physical disorders of railway accident victims and railroad accidents and they are linked to the history of trauma. Moreover, he attributed the "railway spine syndrome" to systematic causes known as the concussion of the spine, (Farrell, 2015, p. 2) and Herbert Page, a surgeon ascribed it to neurological and emotional factors such as "nervous shock" (Page, 1883).

Cathy Caruth claimed that the trauma was not "locatable in the simple violent or original event in the individual's past" (1996b, p. 16). Conversely, Irene Visser (2015) believes that contemporary postcolonial studies explored social and historic relations by dispossession of the European model of trauma. Similarly, Rothberg (2008) challenges the Eurocentric conception of trauma in the postcolonial theory by saying that "it distorts the histories; it addresses and threatens to reproduce the very Eurocentrism that lies behind those histories" (2008, p. 227).

Contrary to all the above, Judith Lewis Herman, a French psychiatrist, attributed Complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD) which diagnoses societal trauma at the broader level. She has used talking therapy as the cure for her trauma patients, to consider the most essential that the study perused. To cure trauma patients, Herman (1992) in *Trauma and Recovery* mentions three stages of recovery "establishing safety, reconstructing the trauma story, and restoring the connection between survivors and their community" (p. 3).

While the previous studies borrowed insight from post-traumatic stress disorder theory to analyze the individual's response to trauma. It does not recognize

the systematic procedure that brings trauma across generations or within families or share an individual's past experiences with a larger-scale trauma (Brave Heart and Yellow Horse). Thus, PTSD theory is not appropriate to investigate at the larger level the East African Zanzibar's trauma. The prevailing concept such as postcolonial trauma acknowledges the validity of complex PTSD for the investigation of the post-colonial traumatic condition of the Zanzibar community, as it incorporates severe trauma and both carries and develops a relationship with the larger political and social culture.

Herman's book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992) incorporates an extensive study on the effects of trauma on women (domestic and sexual violence), children, and war. Even the variations occur at the syndrome level in the new model of CPTSD. The former PTSD analyzes the traumatic effects on women and children at the individual level, while CPTSD can examine the effects of trauma at a wider level. The book describes the stories of the victims of domestic and sexual violence. It also shares the experiences of the effects of trauma particularly victims of long-reign political leadership and combat veterans. It reflects restoring the relationship between private and public, between individual and society, and between women and men. It also highlights commonalities between combat veterans, political prisoners and battered women (p. 2).

The healing process can be categorized into three stages; establishment of safety is the basic idea of the first stage, remembrance and mourning are assumed in the second and reconnection with the community is the central task of the third stage. To accomplish the task of recovery, it may be possible to identify a gradual stage "from unpredictable danger to reliable safety from dissociated trauma to acknowledged memory and from stigmatized isolation to restored social connection" (p. 155). The restoration of a sense of control and power to the survivor is the principal of recovery. The survivor's safety is the core issue of the first stage of recovery and it becomes complex while dealing with the safety of the survivor. Herman believes social strategies are effective in the removal of isolation of the disorder. These consists of acknowledging the survivor's support system: lovers, family and friends, validating the self-help system and often appealing to the mental faculties, justice and social welfare (p.160).

Securing safety demands attention to both the recognition of the power of the victims within the context and the patient's mental faculties to protect herself. Even when self-care is recognized, the question of safety is still unanswerable. A compromised safety can be seen in the life of 21-year-old student Carmen. She is sexually abused; got threatened by her wealthy father. Having been declared sexually abused, she has shifted to an apartment for accommodation. Thus, she by creating a safe environment spends her life away from her accused father. Herman (1992) thinks that the patient should extend her safety by ensuring the arrangement of her safe living. For getting safety she sacrifices almost everything. The survivor may lose their friends, lovers and even their home. The victim of childhood abuse and asylum seeker may lose their family and sometimes homeland.

The second stage, remembrance and mourning tell the traumatic stories of the victims in detail. The principle of empowerment is continuously serving the purpose during this stage. Reconstruction of the trauma covers the incidents and happenings of the victim's life before the trauma. Danieli asserts that it should be necessary to

incorporate the earlier incidents of the victim's life to "re-create the flow". This exploration extends the vision to understand the meaning of the trauma. The description of the trauma incidents through recitation is the next step (1988, p. 282). While studying refugee survivors, Inger Agger (1990) and Soren Jensen claim the "universality of testimony as a ritual of healing" (pp. 118-120).

The reconstruction of trauma is, no easy way to accomplish rather new challenges and conflicts at every turn reawaken the trauma and new experiences are light. When the "action of telling a story", has come to an end, the traumatic experiences are to be a part of the past. At this time, the survivor undergoes the task of rebuilding her life and making a connection to the present. The establishment of a connection with society is the third phase of the recovery, in which the survivor may establish her new identity. Herman (1992) believes that the survivors want to connect to society and feel trust and intimacy with others. Taking initiative is the core experience of this stage.

Therefore, the article analyzes the posttraumatic experiences of the protagonists, Saleh Omer and Latif from *By the Sea*, who are undergoing a complex traumatic stress disorder and need Dr Herman's theory to heal from trauma. Particularly, Saleh's refusal at the airport and unable to communicate anything even the cause of his migration indicates he is confined in a prison and has the devastating repercussion of trauma.

Textual Analysis

"We all wanted to be in the land of Coca-Cola and blue jeans, even if it wasn't just for those refined pleasures that we wanted to be there" (Gurnah, 2001, p. 119).

People leave their homelands to seek welfare, pleasure, and peace of mind and by avoiding civil strife due to socioeconomic and political deterioration in their countries they think that developed countries such as the United States of America and Europe are a place of happiness and pleasure. These countries are still undergoing major problems and serious issues regarding the fate of refugees and immigrants and these instances can be analyzed even today such as Syrian immigrants who leave their homes due to political, religious and geographical reasons. Similarly, in the colonial paradigm, people also undergo the same phenomenon and are displaced from their homelands to other countries due to socioeconomic and political tensions. Over time, these migrants share their thoughts, experiences and observations while writing their works or orally expressing them as a healing process.

Earlier, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has utilized for the treatment of individual war trauma, severe psychological wounds or violence. Thereafter, in *Trauma and Recovery*, Herman suggests Complex PTSD for the recovery of collective or societal trauma such as postcolonial trauma etc. Over here, the current research takes insight from Dr Herman's Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD) to understand the ramification of postcolonial trauma in Gurnah's *By the Sea*. In Zanzibar, the past experiences of the protagonists Saleh Omer and Latif can be interpreted by taking insight from CPTSD. Since their symptoms, marginalization, conceal identities, and postcolonial silence are left unresolved, they are ravaged by

the repercussions of CPTSD and can apt appropriate choices for their survival in the prevailing environment.

Trauma theory provides ways of analyzing the psychological wounds of the protagonists Saleh Omer and Latif and at the same time, investigates the socioeconomic, cultural and political effects on the characters and how these influences force the characters to show bizarre behaviour in the selected text. Herman is an expert who deals with the effects of traumatic experiences, as explained in her book, *Trauma and Recovery* that “to study psychological trauma is to come face to face both with human vulnerability in the natural world and with the capacity for evil in human nature to study psychological trauma means bearing witness and horrible events” (p. 7). For instance, in Saleh Omer’s case, the trauma paradigm suggests a few reasons for developing an understanding of his life choices and establishing safety, racial and Western prejudices. Without practising trauma principles, it is difficult to estimate or even explain Saleh Omer’s bizarre behaviour.

“Establishing safety” can be seen in the episode when at the beginning of the novel, one of the protagonists Saleh Omer moves to England. He is traumatized and struck by religions and cultures, suffers from various thoughts and feelings and continues to live in memories of his homelands. Omer endeavours to establish safety by becoming silent and does not speak anything except “refugee” and “asylum”. Omer makes sure of his safety by doing such actions that force him not to speak the truth when Kevin Edelman put questions before him. In the healing process, it is utmost for the characters to establish safety. Being a Muslim immigrant, Omer says, “I am a refugee, an asylum seeker. These are not simple words, even if the habit of hearing them makes them seem so” (Gurnah, 2001, p. 4). Perhaps, there are certain possibilities such as silence, resistance, and the concealment of identity avail for Omer, through them he succeeds to maintain physical safety at the airport. Thereafter, Rachel Howard, the advisor of Omer, hires Latif Mahmud, an English professor to translate Kiswahili. This act also makes him safe in the foreign land UK.

In *By the Sea*, the issue of trauma is related to the silence and it has different interpretations; as a tool to hide the identity of the characters and produce resistance against the European narrative. Sometimes, it is used to show shame, lies and sorrow. It is often used to express guilt, submission, fear, and protest. So, silence has different meanings in postcolonial literature. Gurnah points out the importance of silence in an interview with Nisha Jones:

When migrants come to Europe, they’re diffident about their language if they’re on their own and they’re also diffident about English, say, because they’re not sure if they can speak it properly. So, remaining silent is a way of preserving dignity and at the same time not putting yourself in harm’s way. Silence is ambivalent. It is also powerful and can be far more eloquent. (2005, pp. 37–38)

Similarly, Anne Ajulu Okungu points out the vitality of silence as “silence serves as a narrative strategy to help narrate the migrant experience, especially through what cannot and has not been expressed verbally” (2016, p. 105). Besides Sissy Helff asserts that “in this context, ‘By the Sea’ depicts silence not merely as the refugee’s non-ability to communicate in the host’s language but as a consciously chosen speech act” (2009, p. 72). To understand the repercussions of trauma, and the

disturbing ramification of the silence inflicted upon Saleh Omer in terms of his traumatic past, it is appropriate to assess his life both as a displaced identity in the UK and native identity in East Zanzibar.

Sometimes, Saleh Omer feels the burden of his past experiences, does not reveal his native (Zanzibari) identity by enveloping it with different layers, and ultimately succeeds to cover it with a refugee identity at the beginning of the novel. Where, Saleh Omer, claims "I am a refugee, an asylum-seeker" (4). By doing so, he looks to subsume his identity that may be the part of his past. So, Gurnah teaches the reader to think about the stimulus of such kind of displacement within and beyond the territory of the novel structure. One should think about what kind of particular identities are constructed in the selected novels.

Herman (1992) believes that the basic task of the second stage is the remembrance of the trauma and mourning at the same time. In *Trauma and Recovery*, she suggests it is necessary to relieve the past experiences in her words because "the 'action of telling a story in the safety of a protected relationship can produce a change in the abnormal processing of the traumatic memory" (183). Remembrance and mourning can be observed throughout the story of the selected text, for instance, on the arrival of Saleh Omer at Gatwick airport, Latif Mahmud tries to reveal his post-traumatic incidents through flashbacks, saying, "if I greeted him, that would be treachery to my father and mother" (p.100). The arrival of Saleh Omer stimulates Latif to take revenge on him because such a memory brings disaster to the life of Latif Mahmud. It is trauma that deprives the survivor of both the senses of control and power. In Latif's case, trauma restores the power and control of the survivor, so, he relives the story of his tormented feelings to the reader. By profession, he is a professor of English at the University of London and nobody knows which types of psychological wounds he has? Both the protagonists reveal their psychological wounds through storytelling as speech is the key to healing. At this juncture, storytelling reveals the psychological wounds of Latif Mahmud and Saleh Omer and thus puts the presentation of their concealed scars.

The concealed identities of Gurnah's characters can be seen in the memories of Latif Mahmud while remembering the traumatic wounds through storytelling. Uncle Hussein stays at her home as a guest and teaches English to Hassan. Latif Mahmud discloses the shameful act of his younger brother because he becomes the sexual partner of uncle Hussein, "you are a child of sin, she said" (p. 92). Speaking to Hassan in an offensive tone, her mother jerks and scolds him, forbid to sleep in any place except his room alongside his brother. Consequently, a rumour spreads in the vicinity that "our guest had eaten Hassan" (p. 95). Later on, her mother sacrifices her virginity "do you want to come in? (p. 94)" to save the skin of her son, Hassan, and offers her body to Hussein. The whole of Latif's family presents a gloomy picture of Zanzibar society during colonialism.

Gurnah uses storytelling as a tool to present both the concealed identities of the characters and the dark aspects of Zanzibari society, where Latif's family indulge in the shameless activities of child abuse and prostitution and familial conflicts. Her mother enjoys the company of many others except her husband, Hassan, his brother has become the sexual partner of his father's guest, uncle Hussein and his father spends nights outside his home and enjoys the company of other women and is often

found senseless with them. Latif is offered a scholarship as a dentist by the education department, but due to the interference of her beautiful mother, as she "is a minister's lover" (p. 108) the education department calls and thereafter, restores the nature of the course. At the beginning of the novel, Latif feels agony to say welcome Saleh Omer as the image of Saleh Omer symbolizes the traumatic incidents such as the auctions of Latif's home and even his belonging particularly, the refusal of Saleh Omer not to return the ebony table to Latif's family which is associated with Hassan. Upon it, Latif Mahmud assumes him as the worse enemy and wants to take revenge for valuable belongings. It seems that familial conflicts are reflected in the East Zanzibar society.

Herman's third stage of recovery helps the victims to reconnect with the community. Though trauma robs the social relations of the victims with the community and even with the family members thus, the patients become isolated and feel lonely and do not discuss their wounds and scars with others. Herman (1992) asserts in the third stage of recovery that the prime object is to regain trust and develops relationships with others. For instance, Latif Muhmad wants to reconnect with society by offering Saleh Omer to visit London for a couple of days, "Latif wanted for me while I packed the few clothes to go and spend two days with him in London" (p. 245). During his stay in London, they visit almost every remarkable place. Rachel and Latif treat Saleh Omer as the sharing objects (p. 244). This shows that Gurnah's characters establish a connection with society to share their happiness and pains as the third stage of the recovery guides the survivor to reconnect with the community to affect the healing process. Both the protagonists, Saleh Omer and Latif Mahmud build a relationship with others to heal the patients effectively.

Conclusions

The current study has demonstrated the concealment of characters' identities in a hybrid culture of a post-colonial regime through trauma theory. Along with this, it has investigated both the coercive impact of trauma on the character's identities in *By the Sea* and also analyzed the healing process of the recovery of trauma in the light of Herman's rubric of three stages. The current research has examined both the protagonists, Saleh Omer and Latif Mahmud in terms of Complex PTSD where complex PTSD analyzed the characters conceal identities, corruption of the locals, and familial conflicts at the larger level because they have undergone myriad trauma in the Zanzibari community. Particularly, child abuse, prostitution, illegally occupied legacy and frequent sacrifices of virginity for her benefits and deprivation of belongings particularly ebony table. The purpose of concealment of characters' identities is to provide shelter or safety in the hostile environment.

Trauma robs the life of the victims at psychological, socioeconomic and cultural levels. Under this heap of anxiety and agony, they become silent and cannot share the burden of their psychological scars. In Saleh Omer's case, earlier, he is so stressed so much at Gatwick airport, pretends not to speak English except 'asylum' and 'refugee'. Later on, he shared his experiences with Latif through storytelling as Herman believes that speaking is the key to the healing of psychological wounds. Similarly, the other protagonist, Latif Mahmud shared his psychological wounds to cure from trauma when he got a friendly environment.

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