

**Freeing the Self from the Burden of a “Paralyzing Misery”:  
A Psychoanalytic Study of Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Gravel Heart*  
(2017)**

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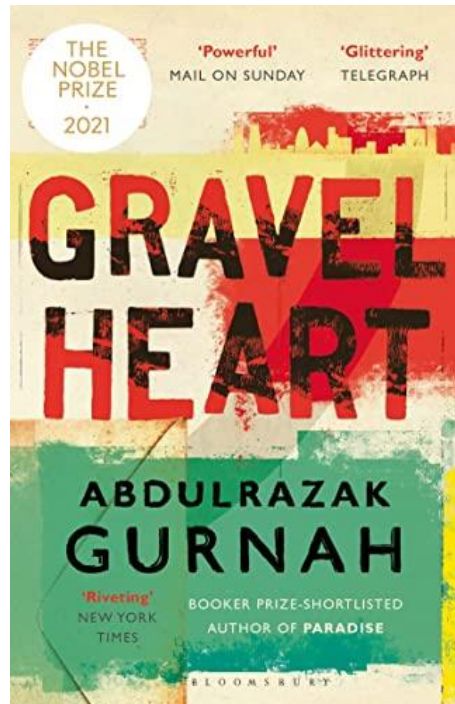
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## Abstract

This paper focuses on analyzing the development of the psychological status of the self under harsh, paralyzing, and hurtful incidents in one's familial relationship and life. Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel, *Gravel Heart* (2017), will be the main fictional work of this study. It will depict the life of Salim, the main protagonist, who has gone through many hardships that has primarily affected his psychological and mental development as a child, teenager, and an adult. This is due to many uncertainties that occurred between his parents while he was growing up either at home in Zanzibar, or abroad during his studies in England. The psychological status of Salim will be analyzed depending on Sigmund Freud's lectures on Psychoanalysis. It will be utilized to discuss the mental processes that Salim went through when he was exposed to painful situations in his life.

**Keywords:** Abdulrazak Gurnah; *Gravel Heart*; Psychoanalysis; Sigmund Freud; The Unconscious; Symptoms; Trauma.

## I. Introduction

Abdulrazak Gurnah, Tanzanian novelist, who has written many novels describing the diasporic lives of the immigrants and the displaced after the period of colonization. He is the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021. Some of Gurnah's fiction are *Memory of Departure* (1987), *Pilgrims Way* (1988), *Paradise* (1994), *The Last Gift* (2011), *Gravel Heart* (2017), and *Afterlives* (2020). Although he has left his homeland at an early age, it was a source of inspiration for him to talk about various themes related to alienation and displacement in his fiction. His homeland, culture, and memories have been present in all of his writings. In his essay, "Writing Place (2004)," Gurnah expresses that "I was writing from memory, and how vivid and overwhelming that memory was...That strangeness intensified the sense of a life left behind, of people casually and thoughtlessly abandoned, a place and a way of being lost to me forever, as it seemed at the time. When I began to write, it was that lost life that I wrote about, the lost place and what I remembered of it" (26, 2004).

*Gravel Heart* (2017), Gurnah's ninth novel, will be the main novel to be discussed in this paper. This novel revolves around the life of Salim. Gurnah includes many incidents that has affected the psyche of Salim beginning from the familial problems between his parents to the dramatic changes that occurred in Zanzibar. He shows us how all of these hardships in Salim's life have affected his well-being and his connectedness to this world. The feeling of estrangement and displacement is accompanying him wherever he goes or settles. This is apparent in the protagonist's life either in Zanzibar or later in England. This novel reflects the human weakness in front of harsh and uncontrollable circumstances. As Gurnah puts it in a conversation about the theme he implies in his novel *Gravel Heart*: "I would have said that

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*Gravel Heart* was also, and in an important way, about power and its capacity to distort the intimate reaches of relationships” (Mohani 4, 2019). Gurnah transforms various historical and real incidents from Zanzibar into his fiction presenting to his reader a representation of the lives of the displaced and the alienated. Gurnah’s systematic way of writing fiction, where he includes the historical alongside with the fictional to introduce a representation of a dilemma, compels well with Stephen Greenblatt’s idea on the production of the aesthetic. Greenblatt, in his essay “Towards a Poetics of Culture,” intensifies on the idea that the “aesthetic is not an alternative realm but a way of intensifying the single realm we all inhabit” (6-7). Therefore, fiction is a vital tool in the representation of reality.

In this paper, the psychological development of the main protagonist, Salim, will be analyzed, taking into consideration the circumstances that he has faced in his childhood. This early period of his life is very important because it shaped his personality afterwards. His anxieties, fears, and worries made a neurotic person out of him; a person who is afraid and ashamed to face people, situations, life, etc. Sigmund Freud’s theories on symptoms and the fixations to a past trauma will be utilized to discuss the main argument. Salim will be treated as a neurotic patient who will slowly discover by time his psychological problems when he discovers the truth about hidden issues in his life. These hidden secrets were intentionally kept away from him by the members of his family. Sigmund Freud’s two lectures, “The Path to the Formation of Symptoms,” and “Fixation to Traumas – The Unconscious,” will be used as the main theoretical background. His theories on the formation of symptoms and its relation to the unconscious is the main domain of discussion. Therefore, this study will only present a psychological analysis to the novel apart from the postcolonial background or themes that might be included in it.

## **II. Salim’s Childhood: Memories as the Source of Sufferings**

In his lecture, “The Path to the Formation of Symptoms,” Freud discussed the main points that lead to any formation of neurotic problems in the human psyche. In any human case, it is obvious that we may face various dilemmas that affect us emotionally and eventually might leave some residues in our psychology. As a result, this may affect our whole lives and decisions. But, it most important here to mention that familial problems will have huge effect on the psychological development of a child; the lack of something in a child’s life, especially if it is connected to one of the parents. Therefore, any parental conflict will, for sure, affect the development of their children’s psychological well-being.

To Freud, childhood is an important phase in the mental and psychological development of human beings because it is the period where he/she, the infantile, is exposed to new accidents and incidents in his life. Therefore, it must have an impact on shaping how they view the world.

Freud emphasizes this: “The significance of this period of childhood is twofold: on the one hand, during it the instinctual trends which the child has inherited with his innate disposition first become manifest, and secondly, others of his instincts are for the first time awakened and made active by external impressions and accidental experiences” (407, 1999). Moreover, if a child goes through a very painful incident that really affects his psychological development, he will start developing symptoms for neurosis. Freud mentions the negative effect of conflicts and their contribution in forming the symptoms to a neurotic being. Freud informs us that: “the significance of infantile experiences should not be totally neglected, as people like doing, in comparison with the experiences of the subject’s ancestors and of his own maturity; on the contrary, they call for particular consideration. They are all the more momentous because they occur in times of incomplete development and are for that very reason liable to have traumatic effects” (407-408, 1999).

In the novel, *Gravel Heart* (2017), Gurnah introduces Salim from the beginning as a tormented being who is suffering from something that happened in his childhood. As a consequence, it continues to unsteady the rest of his life after that. This incident is related to one of his parents as Masud, Salim’s father, left their house and abandoned them suddenly. At first, Salim could not understand why his father left because it was kept as a secret away from him by his mother and his uncle. Salim describes his inner feelings the day his father left as “turmoil”: “the moment of his leaving passed without my noticing at first. The everyday turmoil in my seven-year-old mind must have been absorbing and profound because it took me some time to understand that something important had happened to our lives” (33, 2017). Salim sensed that something was wrong in their life which has, for sure, affected his psyche. His mother, Saida, and his uncle, Amir, were hiding something very serious about his father. As he puts it: “It was the beginning of a series of important lies which my mother would tell me for the next many years, but when I was seven I had no reason to disbelieve her. It would have seemed to me like the usual comings and goings of the grown-ups, whose affairs were never completely comprehensible to me” (34, 2017).

It is after this incident that Salim starts to form his worries and anxieties about life. Throughout the novel, we can notice that Salim is either afraid of relationships, or ashamed of something related to his parents, or we see him in solitude. These symptoms are signs of becoming a neurotic patient who is lacking something and repressing his suffering deep in his unconscious. Therefore, the feeling of dissatisfaction that Salim forms later about everything related to his parents or life will become the source of his turmoil. Freud explains that: “Neurotic symptoms are the outcomes of a conflict which arouses over a new method of satisfying the libido” (404-405).

Salim justifies his disability in trying to understand what is going on in his family's life through his question to his mother. His feeling of dissatisfaction is apparent when he declares that: "But she would not say more about Baba and her and it went on for years like that. If I gave her direct factual questions, sometimes she answered those but not if I wanted details of how it was with them" (32, 2017).

According to Salim, the most significant period of his life was when he was still three years old when he still had his father living with them as a natural family. We discover this in the first chapter of the novel titled "A Stick of Candy Floss." Salim recalls some of his memories he had about his father which made him feel happy at that time. For example, he tells us about his memories of this incident: "On hot days when the door was left open, the slight breeze lifted the door-curtain in a lazy billow into the room. Sitting in the sun on that doorstep with my stick of candy floss meant my father and I would have had our feet on the road, assuming my legs were long enough to reach the ground, and we would have seen life trickling by" (13, 2017). He remembers how his father "was laughing in that breathless way of his as he looked at [him]" (10, 2017). It is to these memories that Salim goes back to recall happy moments with his father which he suddenly loses and lives in turmoil as consequence to it. Salim becomes depressed later on his life due to the loss of the figure of the father in his life.

Throughout the novel, his childhood memories that he shared with his father is the only source of happiness and satisfaction to him. Freud elaborates on how neurotic patients are fixed to some moments in their past because it gives them some kind of relief. He elaborates on this: "neurotics are anchored somewhere in their past we know now that it is at a period of their past in which their libido did not lack satisfaction, in which they were happy. They search about in the history of their life till they find a period of that sort, even if they have to go back as far as the time when they were infants in arms - as they remember it or as they imagine it from later hints" (412, 1999). Salim explains through his memories that he looks backwards to that time when he spent time with his father eating candy floss. He expresses his feeling: "So it was certain that I was about four when I sat there in the sun with my father Masud while he fed me candy floss. For years I felt in my flesh the fondness of that moment" (12, 2017). Salim returns back to these memories because it might give him some kind of satisfaction to what he has lost later in his life. Salim expresses this loss through his words: "That was the doorstep of the house I was born in, the house I spent all of my childhood in, the house I abandoned because I was left with little choice. In later years, in my banishment, I pictured the house inch by inch. I don't know if it was lying nostalgia or painful proper longing, but I paced its rooms and breathed its smells for years after I left" (12, 2017).

### **III. Salim's Repression: Acknowledgment of His Misery**

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It is since the day that his father left them suddenly that his misery and grief controlled every part of his life. Although he kept asking his mother about the reason but he could not get any answers. The only thing he realized was his mother taking a basket of food every day to his father where he rented a room for his own. Salim describes that day as frightening: “In that confusion I did not realize the meaning of my father’s absence, until finally I began to understand that he was not living with us anymore. For several days the idea frightened me in a physical, heart-racing way, as if I had lost my grip on my father’s hand in a huge crowd of strange people some distance from home” (34, 2017). His fears and anxieties began to take over his thoughts; he cannot find satisfying answers to what was going on, or at least to be told by the grown-ups about the reason behind the absence of his father. He explains: “I was literal in my anxieties at that age and those were my recurring images of abandonment” (34, 2017).

This incident has enhanced feelings of anxiety, shame, and detachment in Salim’s psyche. All of these symptoms are directly related to neurosis. In his lecture, “From Fixation to Trauma – The Unconscious,” Freud explains that neurotics and traumatic illness are both related to “inability to deal with an experience whose affective coloring was excessively powerful” (315, 1999). His father’s absence and mother’s unhappiness were too heavy and powerful on him to take and deal with at his age. His life would stop at this moment where everything will be related to it afterwards. Even when he leaves Zanzibar to England, every detail of his life would be fixated to this painful incident related to his parents. As Freud puts it, “It may happen, too, that a person is brought so completely to a stop by a traumatic event which shatters the foundations of his life that he abandons all interest in the present and future and remains permanently absorbed in mental concentration upon the past” (316).

Salim, who may now be called a traumatic and a neurotic person, starts to repress this incident deep into his unconscious. He tries to live normally and adapt to the life of his single mother and his lonely father. He starts living up to complete his studies and taking the food basket every day to his father where he lives. Freud defines repression in the neurotic patient as “any powerful impulse or instinct which was embarrassing continued to operate in the realm of the unconscious where it retained its full “cathexis” or investment of energy. This instinct began to seek substitutive satisfaction by circuitous routes and would produce neurotic symptoms” (Rafey 574, 2005). Neurotic symptoms such as fear, shame and defeat were expressed by Salim whenever he met or encountered his father in the street. Shame was also apparent whenever he faced someone in his society. At the beginning, when he could not comprehend his father’s absence, he used to blame him for his misery.

Feeling ashamed due to the status of his father being lonely was apparent whenever he saw him in the street. Salim expresses his contempt deliberately: “He did not speak willingly and

walked through crowds with his head lowered and his eyes deliberately vacant, not wishing to see. I was ashamed of his abjectness and lethargy because even at the age of seven I knew how to be ashamed. I could not bear the way people looked at him” (35). At other times, his feelings towards his father were mixed between shame and fear. He told this to his mother when she asked him to deliver the food basket to him. He was afraid of his father because to him, an eleven-year-old boy, his father represented “detachment and defeat” (40). Salim recites this incident as follows:

So when my mother asked me if I would take the basket of food to him, I could not restrain my shameful tears and said that I did not want to because I was afraid of him. I expected my mother to get angry, to yelp at me with the unexpected fury that occasionally overcame her, but she did not. I saw that she was making an effort to control herself. She made me sit with her and she explained that I should never fear my Baba, because he was the only Baba I would ever have, and that when I had finished crying I was to dry my face and take the food to him and wish him good health. I did not really see how thinking that he was the only Baba I would ever have would make me less afraid but I appreciated the effort she was making and did my best to suppress my anxiety. (40, 2017).

His feeling of shame from his society was expressed by him when he realized that his mother is pregnant, and it could not be hidden from anybody. He came to a conclusion to what he calls “something shameful” (43, 2017). At that time of his age, he began to have a clear understanding of this family’s situation. He anxieties extended to his being in school even. He “expected to be mocked” (45, 2017) there by his fellow colleagues. Even in his neighborhood, a boy “made fun of a pair of shoes [his] mother had given [him], whisperingly asking if they were a gift from [his] mama’s friend.” (45, 2017) He continues to talk about this shameful incident which caused him pain and fear of facing anybody in his society. He says: “It had never occurred to me that the gift was from this man. The boy who said this was very big, almost an adult, and he said those words to me with a taunting grin, looking to goad me into a reaction so he could beat me up” (45, 2017). Salim’s situation is best elaborated in Freud’s explanation of neurotic patients who are “‘fixated’ to a particular portion of their past, as though they could not manage to free themselves from it” (314, 1999).

#### **IV. Salim’s Escape from his Misery: The Journey to Discover the Truth**

Salim was offered an escape from the painful situation that controls his life. His uncle, Amir, offered to take him to London to complete his studies there. Amir worked as a diplomat in London. Therefore, this journey will offer Salim the chance to discover hidden secrets about his parents. It will offer him an escape from his sorrows and shame which controlled his life back in

Zanzibar. Most important, he will discover the dark side related to his uncle and mother. He will understand why his father decided to leave them later; why he chose to live alone in silence.

This part of his life abroad begins with the chapter titled “I Will Write to You Every Day.” When he arrives to London, he lives with his uncle’s family in their home. His uncle wants him to study Business because it would make him a lot of money. But Salim was not interested in studying Business, he liked Literature. His interest in Literature came to him from his father, Masud. Back when he was a teenager, years before his coming to study in London, his father left some books at home that afterwards Salim became interested in reading all of them. His interest in reading literature is embodied as his longing for his father. These books were a substitute for his father’s absence back then. He was unconsciously driven into this because it represented the last remembrance of his absent father. Consequently, Salim is unconsciously driven to specialize in Literature. Unfortunately, he cannot express this to his uncle because he sponsored him at the time, and he had to agree with what he chose for him. He says, “It would have sounded cowardly to tell him that I should have preferred to study literature, and perhaps I did not know how much I did at the time. By the time I left for London, I had worked my way through most of my father’s books, had made good progress through the school library shelves, had borrowed and exchanged books with friends, and I thought of myself as someone with proven credentials as a future student of literature” (58-59, 2017). According to Freud, in his lecture “From Fixation to Trauma – The Unconscious,” when the neurotic patient is directly attached to something in the past either to a person or thing, in this case it becomes an obsessional action. The obsessional action, according to Freud is “the intention of correcting a distressing portion of the past” (317, 1999). Obsessional actions are symptoms which are related to the patient’s memory directly and are done sometimes unconsciously, or as Freud calls “senseless obsessional action” (317, 1999).

Salim resembles the situation of a female patient who had sudden psychological problems due to her unhappy wedding night. Due to this trauma, she became psychologically ill. Therefore, in her psychological rehabilitation, she carried senseless obsessional actions which were derived from the experience she had at her wedding night. These obsessional actions were not understood to her at that time. Freud discovered from her that they were related to her memory. Therefore, Freud reports that her intention was to put “her beloved husband in a better light. It took a fairly long time and called for much labour before she understood and admitted to me that such a motive alone could have been the driving force of her obsessional action” (317, 1999). In the same context, Salim’s wish to study Literature is seen as a senseless obsessional action done by him to do something good for his father because literature reminds him of Masud. It is a remembrance of something forgotten or lost. Later on, after two year of studying Business, Salim fails to get enough grades to continue his studies in Business. He tells his uncle that he



does not want to live with him anymore, and he will go and find what suits him better. It is proven after that, when Salim manages to get good grades to study literature, that he enrolls at the university to study this major. He started his own life where he found his solitude away from his uncle and his interference.

Studying Business and living with his uncle has obliged Salim to repress more and more of his suffering because he cannot express his inner thoughts deliberately. Therefore, we notice that he still suffers from symptoms of anxiety and fear. Salim begins to discover some bits of truth behind his uncle and his wife, Asha, which is for sure related to his family's misery. Freud approves on the idea that a neurotic patient begins to discover his inner pains when he/she is confronted by them in reality. He states that: "Symptoms are never constructed from conscious processes; as soon as the unconscious processes concerned have become conscious, the symptom must disappear" (320, 1999). For the first time, Salim discovers some parts of the truth which was hidden from him. It happened when he once had a chat with Asha, his uncle's wife, in the kitchen. She told him that his uncle is doing a favor for his mother and him in some way by bringing him to London and sponsoring him.

It was like an invitation and I could not resist. 'But you don't owe her anything,' I said. I expected her to see through my probing ruse and change the subject, but after a long considering silence, she made a decision. She came over to the table and said, 'Well, in a way, your uncle does owe her, I suppose. Do you remember, I told you about that time when we were almost in trouble, when we first got together?' 'Yes, I remember,' I said. 'Well, I don't think I told you that your uncle was detained for several days, did I?' 'No! You mean detained in jail? I've never heard that,' I said with overstated horror, although I really did not know that Uncle Amir had been detained. But this was the story coming, I thought. 'Yes, in jail,' Auntie Asha said. 'Your mother helped him then when he was in trouble. Do you know why he was held? It was to do with us, the two of us. We had just met then, and my brother Hakim, your uncle Hakim, did not approve of us being together.' She paused there and looked at me in a teasingly tantalising way, as if she was considering withholding the rest of her story after all. (73, 2017).

Asha continues to tell him afterwards that her brother, Hakim, fell in love with his mother and after that his uncle was released from jail. It is for this reason that his uncle owes his mother. This truth made Salim realize why his family has gone through their misery and pains in life, and which has resulted in his father's departure. Salim's realization of this truth for the first time changes his point of view towards his mother and uncle. He also comes to realize that his uncle despises his father; and this was the real unspoken truth. Salim's changing view towards his uncle is expressed in his letter to his mother when he writes: "I have now left Uncle Amir and Auntie Asha's home. They have asked me to leave, which was also what I wished. I could not be as they wanted me to be. I could not bear them in the end, and they could not bear me. Uncle

Amir expelled me with unnecessary hard-heartedness but it did not come as a complete surprise” (80, 2017).

Freud intensifies on the idea that a neurotic patient’s suffering and his symptoms may end when he discovers that truth behind them. He explains that: “Our therapy works by transforming what is unconscious into what is conscious, and it works only in so far as it is in a position to effect that transformation” (321,1999). He also discussed the importance of inquiry about the patient’s traumatic experience from his/her relatives. Freud continues: “One can make inquiries about these experiences from the patient’s relatives and they will often be able to recognize, which of them had a traumatic effect, and they can even sometimes report experiences of which the patient himself knows nothing because they occurred at a very early period of his life.” (321, 1999). Similarly, in Salim’s Traumatic experience, he discovers the truth through his relatives. He discovers the lies that were kept away from him when he was still a little boy back in Zanzibar.

It is only when leaves his uncle’s home, Salim finds some inner peace although he still suffers from anxiety, shame, and fear. His psychological rehabilitation begins when he starts expressing his inner feelings to his mother through a notebook that contains unsent letters to her. At this point, Salim begins a series of confessions about his life expressing sometimes anger, disgust, nostalgia, and melancholia. Joe Gill defines confessions as “not a means of expressing the irrepressible truth of prior lived experience, but a ritualized technique for producing truth” (4, 2006). Salim begins to write about all the hidden secrets in his life. Most of his unsent letters were repressed feelings related to his mother and father. Salim’s thoughts are released into the notebook of unsent letters; an example of it was when his mother wrote to him telling him that his uncle has told her that he said unkind things about her. He wrote: “Dear Mama, he lied. I did not say anything unkind about you. I asked if that man forced you. I left that page in my notebook” (82, 2017).

Salim discovers afterwards that his mother has sent him abroad in order to feel free to get married to Hakim, Asha’s bother. He expresses his true feelings about his mother. His changing point of view is seen when he calls his mother a “betrayer.” He wrote: “I know there is a thought I have been keeping at bay, which is that you are a betrayer, that you sent me here to be with Uncle Amir to get me out of your way, that you could think of no further use for me. I started again.” (89, 2017). Moreover, Salim even wrote imaginary letters to his father whom he starts to miss badly after discovering his father’s silence and pain. In one of the letters, he wrote about how he himself has chosen to become a silent being the same as his father, Masud. He wrote:

I live with a sense of dissembling. I do not know how to speak about the things that sadden me, about the feeling of loss that is with me at all times, the sense of wrong-doing. And perhaps no

one knows how to ask. Even those who might have done, don't know how to enquire into what troubles someone like me. Is that how it was for you? Perhaps no one knows another well enough to care, or does not want to presume, or cannot see any troubling thing to ask about. In any case, if anyone does ask I would not know where to begin: with my mother and what befell her, with you, with Uncle Amir, with my journey into this wilderness, with how much I loathe this life, this place, this cringing? (115, 2017).

It is through these unsent letters that Salim confesses about everything that tormented his life. Also, he mourned his past life which contained images of his lonely father. He once wrote: "I thought it would be something you would know about, how it feels to be silent and alone. Perhaps you don't have time for that any more in Kuala Lumpur with all your family around you" (100, 2017). Freud elaborates on the idea of mourning the past as a symptom of traumatic patients. He heavily intensifies that the patients mourn the past because they are fixated to it. Freud explains: "A perfect model of an affective fixation to something that is past is provided by mourning, which actually involves the most complete alienation from the present and the future" (316, 1999). All of Salim's concentration was on the past events of his life. He was restrained to it in which it affected even his relationships with others while he was in London.

## **V. Conclusion: Salim's Return**

It was only when Salim knew that his mother passed away, and his father came back to live in Zanzibar that he decided to go back to his home. He went back to revisit his father because he sensed that his father still holds some love inside him. This is seen in the last unsent letter to his mother when he wrote "Dear Mama, He's come back for you. I don't know why he would do that after such unhappiness. If I ask him, do you think he'll tell me? He was not much of a talker when I knew him. You saw to that" (155, 2017). He went back to reconcile with his misery because it has been a long while since he went back to Zanzibar.

After he arrived, he wanted to see his father again and hear from him the whole hidden secret which he was not able to comprehend throughout his life. He wants to face the ugly truth to be able to release himself from this pain. Salim wants to know about all the small details that made his family's life miserable. It was through his father's retelling the story again to him which will heal him internally. The action of reconstructing what happened to Salim applies to what Freud calls the act to "fill up all the gaps in die patient's memory, to remove his amnesias" (323, 1999). This act of retelling the hidden or forgotten incidents will help Salim release what he has suffered from his whole life so far. This is what Masud describes as the action to "liberate" the self from a "paralysing misery" (233, 2017) which has taken over their family's life. Salim was told that his mother had to compensate with what Hakim want from her in order to free her brother from prison; which is to make herself available sexually for Hakim at his order. The process of gap filling is expressed in Salim's words: "When I heard the news of

Mama's passing away and that you were back, it made me want to come back too. I came to hear from you what Mama would never have been able to tell me. Once you left us, I don't suppose she had any choice but to see through what she had brought about, to wear that garment as if it was one she had chosen for herself" (237, 2017)

At the end of the novel, Masud tells Salim about him and his mother, their life back then, what really happened, and how he ended up living alone because his heart was broken by the woman he really loved. Salim knew all about his mother's unwilling choice to compensate with Hakim in order to release her brother from prison. His father could not live with that burden; as a consequence, he left them. This would be the completion to the story that Asha told Salim about back in London years before his return. He also knows that his mother married Hakim afterwards and divorced his father when he left for London to study. Finally, Salim manages to spend some good moments with his father in Zanzibar before Masud passed away immediately after Salim's departure to England again. Although Salim discovered the secrets that put his family apart, he could never come in good terms with his unconscious in order to have peace in his life or to start over with his father in the place they both had memories in. He chose to go back to London to preferring his solitude over the place that caused him psychological turmoil.

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