

Resistant Memories: Exile, Identity, and the Rewriting of Gaddafi's Libya in Hisham Matar's Texts.**¹Sandeep Tilak**Research Scholar, Department of Languages, SOE, Presidency University, Bangalore-,
Karnataka, India,**²Dr. Tychicus P David**Assistant Professor of English, Department of Languages, Presidency University,
Bangalore, Karnataka, India**Article Received:** 21/12/2025**Article Accepted:** 24/01/2026**Published Online:** 25/01/2026**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.8.01.369**Abstract**

Hisham Matar's writings explore how memory, exile, and identity are shaped by the violence of Gaddafi's Libya, showing that living in exile becomes a form of resistance rather than only a physical separation from home. His works present memory as a space of struggle, where personal stories challenge the silence forced by the state and help characters regain a sense of agency by protecting what the regime tried to erase. Using ideas from Memory Studies, Exile Studies, and Trauma Theory, this analysis shows how Matar turns personal pain, especially the repeated search for the missing father, into a shared call for truth and justice. Through his quiet and reflective style, he recreates Libya as a homeland kept alive through remembrance and emotional attachment despite loss and displacement. In the end, Matar's narratives show how remembering, telling stories, and reimagining the nation allow exiled individuals to protect their identity and resist political erasure, making his work a powerful statement about the strength of memory under oppression.

Keywords : Hisham Matar; Exile; Memory; Trauma; Identity; Resistance; Libyan Literature; Authoritarianism; Disappearance; Homeland.

Introduction

Libya was a tough place to live when Muammar Gaddafi was in charge. The government was always watching people. They did not want anyone to say what they really thought. They even made people disappear if they did not like what they were saying. This made it very hard for people to know what was true and what was not. People were afraid to remember things from the past because it could get them into trouble. Libya, under Muammar Gaddafi was a place where people were always looking over their shoulders. They could not be

themselves. The country was full of secrets and stories that people were too afraid to tell. Libya and its people suffered a lot during that time. Hisham Matar is a well known Libyan writer. He went through a lot of things because of politics.. He used these experiences to write stories about things that happened in the past about losing people and things and about how hard it is to live in a different country. The stories of Hisham Matar are about memory and loss and the emotional burdens of exile that Hisham Matar and other Libyan writers, like Hisham Matar face.

Matar was born in New York. His parents were from Libya. Matar spent his years in Tripoli. He also spent some time in Cairo. His father, Jaballa Matar was an important person who spoke out against the government. In 1990 some people from Libya took his father away. They put him in Abu Salim prison. The family never found out what really happened to his father. This was very hard for Matar. It is something that he still thinks about a lot. Matar wrote a book called *The Return*. He wrote this book in 2016. In the book Matar talks about what he did to try to find out what happened to his father. He did this after the government in Libya changed in 2011. *The Return* is about Matars search for answers, about his father.

Matars writing is about memory. What happens when people are forced to leave their homes. He also writes about the importance of telling the truth about what people see and experience. Matars books, like *In the Country of Men* and *Anatomy of a Disappearance* show how people feel when they are treated unfairly by their government. His writing style is simple and careful which is like how people behave when they are being watched all the time. Matars stories often include a father who has disappeared and this symbolises the hurt that Libya has experienced as a country. Matars novels, such, as *In the Country of Men* and *Anatomy of a Disappearance* are examples of this.

This paper says that the things Matar writes about take an experience of losing something and turn it into a shared memory that is important to a lot of people. The paper looks at Matars work in a few ways including how people remember things what it is like to be away from home and how bad experiences can affect people. It shows how the main characters in Matars stories fight against people in power who want to erase the past by remembering telling stories and rebuilding their country in their minds and hearts. Matars stories are, about the symbolic ways that people think about the place they call home.

Theoretical Framework

Memory Studies and the Politics of Remembering

Memory Studies says that memory is not something that happens on its own. It is actually shaped by the people around us and the rules of the place we live in. Maurice Halbwachs wrote in 1992 that memory is always something we share with others and it is formed by the groups we're part of. Pierre Nora said in 1989 that when the things we

remember from our lives are in danger of being forgotten people create special places to remember them so they are not lost.

Memory is a deal, in places where the government has a lot of control. In these places Memory becomes something that a lot of people argue about. Aleida Assmann from the year 2010 says that there are two types of forgetting. One is when the government makes people forget things on purpose. The other is when people remember things on purpose. This happens when individuals and communities try to find out the truth and get justice.

Matars books are special because they are like places where people can remember things that happened in Libya when Gaddafi was in charge. These are things that people were not supposed to talk about. The characters in Matars books really want to remember these things even if they are scared or have to leave their homes. This is a way for them to fight against the government trying to erase the past. Matars works are, about remembering Libya. This is very important.

Exile Studies: Identity, Displacement, and Belonging

Exile Studies is about how people feel when they have to leave their homes. It looks at how this affects their minds and their culture. Exile Studies explores how people feel when they are forced to move from their homes and how this changes who they are and where they feel like they belong. Edward Said said that when people are exiled it is like a tear between them and the place they came from. Exile creates a problem for people because they feel like they do not fully belong in their new home or their old home. People who are exiled often feel sad. Miss their old homes a lot. They think about their homes and the new places they live in and they notice the differences. Exile Studies is really, about people who are forced to move from their homes and how this affects their memories and their sense of identity. Exile is not about moving from one country to another. It is a big change that affects people deeply. This change is not about where they live it is about how they feel and think. Exile changes how people see themselves and the world, around them. It is a disruption that affects people emotionally and intellectually. Exile makes people think about who they're how they fit into the world in a completely new way.

Hisham Matar writes about exile in a way that feels real. He shows how it affects people deeply. His characters have to leave the places they know and love. They have to live somewhere new, where everything is different. They do not hear the language or see the same things they saw at home. This makes them feel sad and lost. Hisham Matars characters also feel torn inside. They remember their home and the life they had.. They have to deal with their new life now. The memories of home and the reality of their life do not match. This causes a lot of pain, for Hisham Matars characters. Exile is a part of their lives. People in this situation have to keep figuring out who they are. They have a time knowing where they fit in and how they should see themselves when they do not have a home that is always there for them. This makes them feel like something is missing all the time. It affects their

emotions. The way they think about things. The condition of not having a homeland is what causes this feeling of incompleteness, in their emotional and psychological lives.

Matars narrators live in a kind of ground they are not really in Libya but they still think about it a lot. They feel a connection to Libya even when they are far away from it. This makes them want to remember what Libya was like and tell stories about it. They want to remember Libya the way it was and imagine what it could be like again. By doing this they are resisting people who want to change or hide the truth about Libyas past. So even though they are not in Libya they are still fighting against people who want to control everything. Matars narrators are using their memories and stories to keep their identity and to challenge people who want to be in charge of everything. Libya is still important, to them. They want to keep it alive through their stories.

Trauma Theory: Absence, Silence, and Repetition

Trauma Theory, which was developed by people like Cathy Caruth and Dominick LaCapra says that bad things that happen to us can be really hard to deal with. These things like experiences are not like normal memories. They are too much for our minds to handle. We cannot easily put them in order. Make sense of them like we do with other things that happen to us. Trauma Theory is about how traumatic experiences affect us. Traumatic experiences are different, from memories because they overwhelm our minds. We have a hard time understanding and organizing what happened in a way that makes sense. So trauma is something that people often cannot get over. It comes back to them in ways like bad thoughts that will not go away pictures in their mind that they wish they could forget, bad dreams and memories that are hard to piece together. People who have been through trauma often feel numb and very sad. They do not always know how to say what they are feeling. Trauma is not something that you can just remember and then be done with. It is something that you keep feeling over again even if you cannot really explain it in words. The thing about trauma is that it does not really go away and it is hard to understand or make sense of it. Trauma is something that keeps coming and people who have been, through it often feel like they are reliving it even when they wish they could just forget about it and move on.

Hisham Matars writing is really good at showing us what Trauma Theory is about. The thing that causes a lot of trauma, in his stories is what happened to his father. His father just. Nobody knows what happened to him. There is no body. Nobody knows if he is really dead or not. This makes it very hard for people to deal with their feelings because they do not know what to do. Scholars call this kind of situation " loss". It is a situation where people cannot properly grieve because they are always waiting to find out what really happened to the person they lost. Hisham Matars writing often talks about Trauma Theory. How it affects people. Trauma Theory is a part of his work. In Matars novels and memoir the fathers disappearance is a big deal. It is not something that happened in the past. The fathers disappearance is what shapes how the characters in Matars novels and memoir think, feel and see the world. Their lives are about waiting for the father to come back searching for the

father remembering the father and imagining what the father would be like if he was still with them. They do not really move on with their lives in a way. The pain of not knowing what happened to the father is always there like a hurt that never heals. This hurt from the fathers disappearance is what makes the characters, in Matars novels and memoir who they're and it affects how they feel about things.

Matars way of telling stories really shows how people feel when they have been through something bad. He writes in a way without using a lot of words and he does not get too emotional. Matar often. Starts his stories and he leaves some things unsaid, rather than telling us exactly how someone feels. This is like what happens in our minds when we have been through something. Some things are just too hard to talk about they are too painful so they come out in ways like in little signs that something is not right. Matars writing is, like that it is quiet. It makes you think about what is really going on. The silences, in his stories are not empty they mean something. They show what happens when language is not enough to deal with a big loss. Matars work does not just talk about trauma it actually makes you feel it. You experience the confusion the feeling of being held and the emotional heaviness that comes with remembering something traumatic. Matars work is special because it does this it makes you feel the trauma not just read about it.

3. Memory as Resistance in Matar's Texts

3.1 Personal Memory Against Political Erasure

In *The Return* Matar writes, "For years I tried to stop time from carrying my father (Matar, 2016 p. 32). This line really gets at *The Return*. What *The Return* is about. *The Return* is about memory and how it works when people are living under a government that does not want them to remember things. People have to fight to keep their memories safe, from the government. Remembering things is not something that happens. It is something people do on purpose. People remember things as a way to resist the government and the systems that try to keep them from telling the truth and speaking out. *The Return* shows how remembering is a way to push back against these systems. Matars characters really hold on to things from their past like old photographs, the way someone used to gesture smells that remind them of something and stories that they shared with each other. They do this because these little things help them remember what really happened and that is important because the state is trying to make people forget. When Matars characters remember these things it is like they are fighting against the story that the state wants everyone to believe. Matars characters are saying that they do not accept the regimes version of the truth and history and that is a brave thing to do.

In the Country of Men is a story that takes place in Tripoli in 1979. *The Country of Men* is told by Suleiman, a nine year boy. Suleimans father is secretly involved in opposition in the *Country of Men*. The story shows what life is like for Suleiman in the *Country of Men*, through the eyes of a child. *The Country of Men* is a place where people're afraid and everyone is watching each other. The story shows what happens when adults vanish all of a

sudden without any reason. Schools make kids show a lot of loyalty to the people in charge. These people can go into your home. Listen to what you are saying at any time. Kids get very confused and upset when they see violence and secrets around them. Suleiman remembers things. Not always clearly. These memories show what life is like when you live under a dictatorship. Suleiman does not know everything that is going on because the people in charge do not want him to know. They control what people can say and do. They want everyone to be quiet. The dictatorship is a secretive place and Suleimans memories are a good example of what it is like to live there, under a dictatorship. The novel tells us what Suleiman remembers and this helps to create a story about Libya. This story is not about what the government says or what people are told to believe. It is about what happens to people in their daily lives like being scared losing things that matter and holding on to a little bit of hope. The novel is about the Libya that Suleiman knows and it shows us what life is like for people who live there, with all the fear, loss and fragile hope that Libya has.

3.3 Fragmented Memory in Anatomy of a Disappearance

In Anatomy of a Disappearance Hisham Matar writes about the disappearance of Nuris father. This happens when the family is living in Cairo away, from their home. The book shows that when someone disappears it is not something that happens one time. It is something that keeps affecting the people who are left behind.

The story makes it hard to know what is real and what is just imagined. It shows how hard it is to deal with the loss of someone you love. When something bad happens it can be difficult to remember what really happened and what you just think happened. Anatomy of a Disappearance is a book that explores this idea. The story does not go forward in a line. It keeps going to the moment when something bad happened. This is like what happens to people who have been through something sad or scary. They think about it over and over because they are not sure what happened and they really want to know. The story is showing how this can get stuck, in your mind. You keep thinking about it. The moment of disappearance is what the story keeps coming to because that is what is causing all the uncertainty and longing.

The father is not there. You can still feel him all around in the novel. Even though he is not physically present he is still much in control of the emotions and thoughts of the people in the story. He keeps coming in Nuris dreams and in little flashes of memory that do not make sense. Nuri just cannot stop thinking about what happened to his father.

This is very sad. It does not let people move on. It just keeps them in a state of sadness all the time. Nuri wants to know what happened to his father in the days of his life. This is like what happened to families, in Libya. They looked everywhere for their relatives who were taken away by the government. They never found them. These efforts are not about finding out the truth they are about dealing with the emotional mess that happens when we do not have answers to our questions. The efforts are really about facing the chaos that the

unanswered questions leave behind. This is what the efforts are about they are, about the emotional chaos of the unanswered questions.

Memory is really important in two ways. For Nuri memory is like a way to deal with things that helps him feel connected to his father so he does not forget about him completely. Memory also helps people remember what happened to them like when they lost someone or something bad happened because of politics so these things are not forgotten and people can still talk about them. Memory is, like a way to tell people what really happened. It is not just forgotten and hidden. This book does two things at the same time. It shows that remembering is a way to survive and it is also our duty to remember the people who were treated unfairly and not allowed to speak. Remembering is very important, for the novel because the novel wants to honour the people who were silenced by oppression and remembering is a part of that. The novel really wants to show that remembering the people who were silenced is something we have to do it is our responsibility to remember them.

3.4 Memory as Testimony in The Return

The Return is a book that has a bit of everything. It is about the authors life and also about what happened in his country. Matar goes back to Libya after the Arab Spring. He wants to find out what happened to his father who disappeared. This trip is hard for Matar. It is not about traveling to a place. It is also about how he feels. He is trying to figure out what is right and wrong. The book is like a testimony. It talks about things that happened because of politics. It talks about how sad people're. It talks about what many families went. Matar writes about the pain of losing someone. He writes about the pain that many people in Libya felt. The Return is about Matars journey to find out about his father. It is also, about the journey of a country. Matar is using his writing to talk about what he has been through. He wants people to know what happened when he was living under a bad government. Matar thinks that remembering things is important even if it hurts. He said "I knew that memory even when it is painful is a form of justice". Matar said this in his book in 2016 on page 84. This is a part of why Matar wrote his book. He wants to help people who were treated unfairly. He wants to make sure that the government cannot just forget about what they did, to these people. Matar wants to give dignity to the people who were silenced. He wants to challenge the government and make them remember what they did. When he does this his story becomes a part of what a lot of Libyans remember. For a time Libyans were not allowed to talk about things or say what they really thought. Now they can finally. Try to find out what is true. The Libyans are able to speak. They are looking for the truth.

In Matars writing exile is not about living outside of your own country. It is about how this experience of exile affects people in different ways. The characters in Matars writing go through exile when they have to leave their homes and move to a place. This means they are separated from the people and places they know and love.

Exile also affects them inside. It makes them feel unsure of who they're where they belong. The characters in Matars writing feel like they do not fully belong in their home but they also do not fully belong in their old home. This makes them feel divided and unsure of their place in the world. Exile, in Matars writing is a complex thing that changes peoples lives and identities in many ways. The situation gets even tougher when people have to deal with language problems. This happens when characters move to a place and have to speak a new language. They really struggle to say what they mean in this language. When people are away from home they often feel very sad. Miss their old life. They remember their home. It feels perfect but they know they cannot go back. This makes them very unhappy. Matar talks about this feeling when he says that exile is "the country we carry within ourselves" (Matar, 2016 p. 17). What he means is that exile is not about being in a new place it is also about how you feel inside. Exile is something that people carry with them all the time it is like a part of them. Matar is saying that exile is a state it is something that happens inside of you not just something that happens because you are, in a new place. The people in his stories have two identities that're often at odds with each other. This is because they are pulled between loving their homeland and trying to fit in where they're now living. Exile for these characters is not about losing something. It is, about finding a way to resist the people who are trying to make them forget who they are. By remembering where they come from and staying true to themselves they are fighting back against those who want to erase their memories and identities. This is what exile means for these characters a way to resist and defy the forces that're against them exile is a way for them to keep their memories and identities alive.

Exile as Emotional and Political Resistance

Matars writings show that exile is not about moving to a new place. It is a lot more complicated than that. Exile is when you have to leave your home and that can be very hard. You have to deal with the fact that you're not in the place you are used to. This can be very difficult for your mind and heart. You also have to learn languages and ways of talking. Matars writings talk about exile. How it affects people deeply. Exile is not about being in a new place it is also about feeling homesick and missing the place you left behind. Matars writings say that exile can make you feel like you do not know who you are anymore. Exile is, about the pain of leaving your home and the struggle of starting a life in a new place. Matar talks about what it's like to feel displaced and not at home. He says that exile is like a country that we have inside of us. What he means by this is that exile is not a place we are in but it is also a feeling that we have inside of us. This feeling affects how we think about ourselves and who we are. Because of this the people in his stories have identities that are mixed up and always changing. They are always trying to figure out who they are and where they fit in. This is because they are stuck between the memories of their home and the reality of their new life in a different place. Matars idea of exile, as "the country we carry within ourselves" really shows how complicated this feeling can be.

Exile is a part of Matars work. It helps him create some space between himself and the things he is talking about. He uses something called the " perspective" that Edward Said talked about in 2000. This means Matars characters can look at things from angles. They can see their country and the country they are living in now with fresh eyes.

When Matars characters are in exile they can think clearly about what is going on. They have the room to feel and think about the things that are happening in their homeland but they still care about it deeply. Exile gives Matars characters the chance to really look at the government in their country and say what they think is wrong, with it. The situation of being in exile and having a perspective transforms the experience of exile from just being a victim into a political standpoint. When you are away from a place like Libya it becomes possible to say things that're true things that you could not say safely if you were still, inside Libya. This is how exile becomes not something that you lose but also a place where you can think and act in a way that resists what is wrong. Exile is a place where you can resist in an moral way.

Exile is really tough on Matars narrators at first. It makes them feel very alone and sad. They miss their life and the people they used to know. They even feel like they have lost their language and culture. This makes them feel very isolated. As time goes on something changes. Exile becomes a place where people can start to talk about things they never talked about before. In *The Return* Matar says that talking about things that happened can be very difficult for people in exile. This is because it can make them feel like their whole sense of self is being shaken. Matars narrators have already been, through a lot. Have lost so much so talking about trauma can be very destabilising as Matar writes on page 56 of his book, which was published in 2016. The thing is writing is what helps him and the people telling his stories to feel like they're in control again. Writing is a way for them to take their pain and put it into words to talk about the things that were never spoken about and to make people who are not there feel like they are still with them, through the stories that are told.

Matars characters have to rebuild who they are because they are in exile. They do this by holding on to their memories and changing them a little. They tell stories, follow traditions and hold on to their feelings to stay connected, to their past. This is not always easy. It does not always work.. They have to do it to survive. If Matars characters forget about their past they will lose themselves.. If they remember they can fight back against what has happened to them. Matars characters use memory to stay strong. When Matars characters think about their home and tell stories, about it they show that they are still human beings. They do this to fight against the people who wanted to make them forget where they came from. Matars characters remember their homeland. This helps them to feel like they still belong. They do not want to be forgotten so they talk about their homeland and the things that happened to them. This is how Matars characters say that they are not going to let the

people who want to erase them win. Matars characters are holding on to their homeland by remembering it and talking about it.

5. Trauma, Testimony, and the Voices of the Disappeared.

Trauma is something that people often do not remember in an straightforward way. It is like a memory that is broken and not fully formed. The way Hisham Matar writes is a lot like this. He uses a style that's not straightforward but rather jumps around and leaves some things out. He does not use a lot of words. He does not express his emotions in a strong way. Hisham Matars writing is quiet and simple. He does not try to be dramatic or over the top. Instead he uses silence and pause to get his point across. This is similar, to how people remember things. It is not always clear or direct but rather something that is felt deeply inside. Trauma and the way Hisham Matar writes about it is much connected. Cathy Caruths idea of trauma, which she talked about in 1996 is really helpful in understanding this story. She said that trauma is like an experience that we do not really have control over. It can come back, to us when we least expect it and we cannot fully make sense of it or deal with it. In the stories written by Matar trauma keeps coming up in ways. We see it in the dreams that keep happening over in the pictures that keep appearing like the fact that the father is never there. We also see it when the story suddenly jumps from one time to another when the characters do not show their emotions and when there are questions that are never answered. Trauma is something that keeps happening in Matars texts. It is always there even if we do not always notice it. These literary devices do not just show what trauma is like they actually make you feel the weight of loss. They do this by replicating the reality of grief that has not been resolved. Literary devices like these let readers feel the disorientation and sadness that comes with losing someone. This is what literary devices do they make you feel the weight of loss and the disorientation that comes with literary devices, like these.

Matars work shows the importance of doing the thing when it comes to talking about what people have seen and experienced. Dominick LaCapra said in 2001 that there are two ways people deal with things that have happened to them. They are either stuck in the past. Keep reliving the bad memories or they try to make sense of what happened and move on. Matars characters often get stuck in the past. They keep thinking about the things that happened to them. They keep going to the bad times like when someone they loved disappeared and they cannot seem to move on from that. Matars writing is an example of this. His characters do not get closure. They just keep reliving the trauma. Matars work is, about trauma and how people deal with it. People try to deal with trauma by talking about it and giving it a story. They share what happened to them so they can understand it better and feel like they are in control again. When people write about their experiences it is like they are saying what really happened. Matars stories remember the people who were taken away by force. He makes sure everyone knows about their lives again. He does not want people to forget about them. He does not want the people, in charge to be able to silence them or make them disappear from peoples memories. Matars writing is a way to talk about the trauma and the people who were affected by it.

The way trauma affects people in Matars work is really important. It gets passed down from one generation to the next. The kids in his stories do not just see bad things happening from away. They feel it inside and it changes how they think and feel. People, like Suleiman and Nuri and also the person telling the story who's a lot like Matar himself grow up in places where they are always scared, quiet and not really sure what is going on. When they do not really get what is happening around them they can feel the heavy atmosphere of being controlled and it affects them. This process shows how trauma can affect families for a long time. It changes who people are, how they behave and how they feel. This happens to kids who are too young to really understand what is going on. Trauma has an impact, on peoples emotional life. It can shape the way people think and feel about things for a long time. The trauma people experience can influence their behaviour and identity. This can be passed down to younger people, like their children or grandchildren.

Matar uses stories to think of Libya as than just a country with a government or a place where people are treated unfairly. Even though he is not there in person Libya is still very real to him because he remembers what it looks like and how it feels. He talks about the beaches the way the wind blows in the desert things his family used to do and important cultural signs to make Libya feel like a real home, not just a place ruled by a strict government. These stories are like maps of his feelings. They help him keep a picture of Libya in his mind that is not controlled by the governments point of view. Libya is still much alive in his imagination, through these memories. Literature is really good at helping us rebuild things. It helps Matar make Libya a place where he can remember things feel close, to people and connect with others in a human way. Literature does this for Matar. It is very powerful.

Matars work is really important because it tells a story. This story is different from the one the people in power want us to believe. Matars stories help us remember the people who were taken away and never seen again. He makes sure we hear the voices of those who were not allowed to speak. Matars work also helps us see these people as humans again not as numbers or problems. His stories create a kind of record of what happened where the personal stories of people are what matter. Matars work is like a counter-history. It challenges the stories that the regime tells. Through his stories Matar gives dignity back, to those who were disappeared. He makes sure we can hear the voices that were silenced. Matars work is very powerful because it makes us see people as people not as files or statistics. Literature is like a box where we keep all the real feelings and stories that people in power tried to make us forget. It helps us remember the things that happened and how people survived them. Literature is very important because it saves the truth, about what people felt and what they went through. This way the memories of times and how people got through them stay with us. Literature is a way to remember the suffering and the survival.

Hisham Matars writings are really important and they stay with you they help people in Libya remember their past. He creates a space where people can talk about things that happened. Were not allowed to be discussed. Hisham Matar combines his personal experiences of loss the violence he saw and his skill as a writer to show that remembering is a strong way to fight against people who want to erase the past.

Hisham Matar writes a lot about what it's like to be away, from home to not know who you are anymore and to still be hurting from things that happened a long time ago. He shows that when there is a dictator it is not the physical harm that is the problem but also the emotional pain it causes people. His work shows that memory is really powerful. It helps us remember the truth be proud of who we're hold on to things that people, in power try to get rid of. Memory does a job of keeping these things alive. His work proves that memory has this capacity to do all these things. Memory preserves the truth it helps us sustain our dignity. It keeps alive the things that power seeks to destroy.

Matar writes in an thoughtful way. He creates a story that brings together the pain of individuals and the bigger picture of what happened to a group of people. Matars writing gives a voice to people who were made to disappear and helps people who were forced to leave their homes and be quiet. He turns what is missing into something that's present and what is quiet into a statement. This way Matar makes sure that the bad things that happened in the past are not forgotten and do not seem like they were okay. Matar does this through his writing which's, like a way of saying what really happened. The writing of Matar is very important because it talks about the pain of people and the history of a group of people. Memory is really important. It is the stories we tell that make memory come alive. These stories make memory a thing that does not let bad things be forgotten. Memory helps us remember what is right and wrong. It makes sure that people are responsible for what they have done. Memory through the stories we tell is what keeps people accountable, for their actions. It helps us learn from the past.

When you think about it Matars writing is not about the hard times and the people he lost. It is about trying to make things better in his culture and politics. The way Matar tells stories shows that you can talk about the things that happen without making them sound bad all over again. His stories show respect for people who have died without making them seem like victims forever. Matars writing also thinks about ways for people to come together as a country even when the government is being very controlling. Matars literature is really, about trying to make a future. Libya is a tough place but Matar is showing us Libya in a different way by talking about the memories people have of Libya the language they use to describe Libya and how people in Libya connect with each other. Matar is reminding us that even when things are really bad in Libya like when people're being treated very unfairly telling stories about Libya can be a powerful way for people in Libya to fight back to feel better and to have hope, for what is going to happen in Libya in the future.

References:

- Assmann, A. (2010). *The Cultural Memory: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fitzgerald, M. (2011). Libya's Abu Salim Prison Massacre: Human Rights and Collective Memory. *Middle East Report*, 258(2), 14–19.
- Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory*. University of Chicago Press.
- LaCapra, D. (2001). *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Matar, H. (2006). *In the Country of Men*. Viking.
- Matar, H. (2011). *Anatomy of a Disappearance*. Viking.
- Matar, H. (2016). *The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between*. Random House.
- Nora, P. (1989). Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*. *Representations*, 26, 7–24.
- Said, E. W. (2000). *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Harvard University Press.