

**LIMITS OF CATHARSIS IN AUTO/BIOGRAPHY: AN EXILED SON'S
WITNESSING/TELLING OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN
HISHAM MATAR'S *THE RETURN***

Praveen Mirdha

Associate Professor, Department of English, Government Girls' College, Ajmer, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT

Communicating traumatic experiences into a personal narrative is a double-edged torture for every writer and Hisham Matar is no exception in the sense that he struggles with the question, "What do you do when you cannot leave and cannot return?" (The Return, 2) Hisham Matar's autobiographical narrative 'The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between' (2016) – winner of the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Biography – emerges as a venue for an individual as well as collective representation of the history and politics of Libya as he actualizes the experiences and perceptions of storytellers including himself who have been witnesses to his father's 'disappearance' and human rights abuses in the country. The paper aims at an analyses of the intersecting study of the literary-cultural and political mapping of listening and telling stories of human rights violation exhumed from his/others' memories of sufferings, atrocities, and exiles imposed on the life of the author's family and countrymen simultaneously. The paper considers Matar's auto/biography as a human rights literary text that bears witness to the violations of his father's political-civil citizenship rights and subsequent denial of socio-cultural rights in his homeland affecting his son's victimized-traumatized experiences in relation to his erosion as a human being.

KEYWORDS: *Atrocity, Disappearance, Exile, Identity, Suffering, Survival, Trauma, Witnessing*

Article History

Received: 17 Jul 2018 | Revised: 27 Jul 2018 | Accepted: 07 Aug 2018
