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## Displaced civilizations: Memory, belonging, and cultural survival in migrant narratives from the Middle East and Africa

*Civilizaciones desplazadas: memoria, pertenencia y supervivencia cultural en las narrativas de migrantes de Oriente Medio y África*

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### Abstract

The paper is a critical examination of the literary figuration of displacement as an ontological civilizational disjunction in contemporary African and Middle Eastern diasporic literature. Going beyond prevailing paradigms of hybridity and identity negotiation, the paper contends that exile in these texts is not just spatial or psychological dislocation, but also the collapse of ancestral epistemologies, cosmologies, and long-term cultural continuities. Drawing on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that brings together postcolonial theory, trauma studies, and discourse on memory, the article suggests the concept of displaced civilizations to explain how migrant texts function as aesthetic archives of endangered cultural worlds. Through close comparative readings of a selection of the novels of Tayeb Salih, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Leila Aboulela, Dinaw Mengestu, Rawi Hage, and Hisham Matar, this study examines the central roles played by memory, language, religion, and storytelling as complex strategies of resistance, self-survival, and cultural reconstruction. Ultimately, it positions literature as a

crucial site wherein civilizational memory is not only mourned but actually reimaged and remade in the context of rupture and exile.

**Keywords:** Diasporic literature, trauma, identity, postcolonial theory, cultural survival

## Resumen

Este artículo examina críticamente la figuración literaria del desplazamiento como una disyunción ontológica entre civilizaciones en la literatura diaspórica contemporánea de África y Oriente Medio. Más allá de los paradigmas predominantes de hibridez y negociación identitaria, el artículo sostiene que el exilio en estos textos no es solo una dislocación espacial o psicológica, sino también el colapso de epistemologías ancestrales, cosmologías y continuidades culturales a largo plazo. A partir de un marco teórico interdisciplinario que integra la teoría poscolonial, los estudios del trauma y el discurso sobre la memoria, el artículo propone el concepto de civilizaciones desplazadas para explicar cómo los textos de los migrantes funcionan como archivos estéticos de mundos culturales en peligro. Mediante lecturas comparativas minuciosas de una selección de novelas de Tayeb Salih, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Leila Aboulela, Dinaw Mengestu, Rawi Hage e Hisham Matar, este estudio examina el papel central que desempeñan la memoria, el lenguaje, la religión y la narrativa como estrategias complejas de resistencia, autosupervivencia y reconstrucción cultural. En última instancia, posiciona a la literatura como un lugar crucial en el que la memoria civilizational no sólo se lamenta sino que en realidad se reimagina y se rehace en el contexto de la ruptura y el exilio.

**Palabras clave:** Literatura de la diáspora, trauma, identidad, teoría poscolonial, supervivencia cultural

## 1. Introduction

Migration narratives have hitherto been understood in terms of hybridity, identity negotiation, and cultural translation. Yet today's situation of forced migration, driven by war, collapse of authoritarianism, and economic devastation across the Middle East and Africa, makes necessary a more incisive analytic gaze that cuts beyond single or national contexts. This article proposes the theory of displaced civilizations to describe the cost of exile as greater than spatial displacement, but as the breakdown of whole worlds of culture-ancestral epistemes, cosmologies, and systems of

symbolism that form collective identity and consciousness of history. In this model, diasporic fiction seems not just as national or individual history but as a place of aesthetic and ontological survival, where worlds that have been lost are archived, mourned, and imaginatively re-created.

Even in much of the existing scholarship on migration and diaspora, hybridity and border-crossing are recognized, but the profound civilizational ruptures that follow from displacement are overlooked. Exile to most Middle Eastern and African writers does not simply imply losing home but a breaking of shared systems of knowledge and memory—those civilizational epistemes that support shared commonalities of identity across time and space. This study reorients the conversation on migration by reading specific African and Middle Eastern diasporic fictions as cultural texts signaling this civilizational trauma. These fictions project exile as a discontinuity in epistemic continuity, in which cultural idioms lose their points of reference, ancestral memory is weakened or challenged, and inherited metaphysics rendered unintelligible in host society contexts. By narrative strategies organizing memory, belief, language, and myth, protagonists attempt to reclaim their space again in interrupted civilizational lineages.

This study advances the theory of displaced civilizations as an emerging analytical framework, placing migrant literature no longer as personal or national narrative but as intensely personal landscapes of civilizational loss and cultural survival. By theorizing exile as dispersal of entire cultural epistemes instead of spatial displacement alone, this study challenges prevailing paradigms that focus primarily on hybridity or identity negotiation. Through a transregional comparative approach that brings African and Middle Eastern diasporic literatures into fruitful dialogue, this project offers new critical insights into both shared and divergent kinds of cultural survival in related but varied post-imperial situations. In doing so, this approach also expands the literary canon by making centrally located texts heretofore isolated by national or linguistic silos the focus for positioning themselves in a globalized world of civilizational trauma and resistance.

This research adopts a comparative and transregional approach, situating African and Middle Eastern diasporic literatures in dialogue to illuminate

both convergences and divergences in their responses to displacement. Despite differing historical trajectories, linguistic traditions, and political realities, these literatures share a profound preoccupation with the endurance of civilizational knowledge amid profound dislocation. By moving beyond national and linguistic borders, this question draws attention to how such stories meet a common state of cultural and epistemic division, providing new axes of thought for making sense of the stakes of migration beyond identity politics.

Methodologically, the study combines literary critique with transdisciplinary memory, trauma, and migration theory. It is informed by postcolonial theory, cultural anthropology, and memory studies and examines how literary texts articulate the shattering of worlds throughout history while also committed acts of cultural survival and resistance. Narrative, myth, language, and ritual transform into aesthetic forms in which displaced people assert continuity, recast belonging, and reaffirm endangered worldviews in the context of exile and globalization.

The article proceeds to position such intervention within existing scholarship in the areas of migration, memory, and postcolonial critique, before setting up an interdisciplinary theoretical framework. Through close reading of some of the most important works by Tayeb Salih, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Rawi Hage, Dinaw Mengestu, Hisham Matar, and Leila Aboulela, it maps narrative strategies through which memory, language, and belief systems are mobilized to combat erasure and reorder identity. By so doing, the study brings to the fore literature as a space of survival of civilizations, where world loss of histories is not only mourned but envisioned.

## **2. Literature review**

Diasporic and postcolonial scholarship has extensively dealt with terms of identity, hybridity, and cultural negotiation. Pioneering theoreticians such as Edward Said (2000a), Homi Bhabha (1994), and Stuart Hall (1990) have immensely impacted our understanding of exile as a paradoxical site and cultural hybridity as a creative, transformative process. These frameworks have opened up migrant subjectivity as split, in-between, and generative of

fresh cultural formations. But while these models insist on putting negotiation and transformation in the foreground, they tend to play down more underlying existential violence and civilizational loss that are implicit in enforced displacement.

Postcolonial African and Middle Eastern literatures □pioneered by work from scholars such as Elleke Boehmer (2005), Ato Quayson (2000), and Joseph Massad (2007) have shown how the colonial past is still formative of diasporic selves. Yet most such work remains rooted in national or linguistic framings, comprehending displacement as local or identity-based condition rather than an extensive civilizational disjuncture. Scholars of migration studies like Hamid Naficy (2001), Khachig Tölölyan (2007), and Robin Cohen (2008) have recently extended the view to focus on transnational, networked, and multicultural dimensions of diaspora. But their discussions tend to prioritize social networks and mobility above ontological dislocation resulting from epistemic loss and fragmentation of culture.

At the same time, trauma studies and memory studies offer useful conceptual tools for examining how displacement refashions historical consciousness. Marianne Hirsch's (2012) postmemory theory captures the transmission of trauma between generations without undergoing it directly, and Michael Rothberg's (2009) theory of multidirectional memory captures the intersecting and co-constitutive nature of memory narratives among groups. While useful, both models have been utilized mostly to explain Holocaust and European instances, leaving African and Middle Eastern diasporic literatures less well theorized in relation to collective trauma. Andreas Huyssen's (2003) reflections on the instability of memory within global modernity gesture toward the vulnerabilities of historical consciousness but do not grasp the civilizational dimensions of memory loss endured by cultures previously colonized.

Finally, diaspora thinkers Avtar Brah (1996), Paul Gilroy (1993), and Édouard Glissant (1997) offer relational, obscure models of identity constituted in process and historical intertwining. Glissant's poetics of relation and Gilroy's Black Atlantic conceptualize cultural identity as an ongoing process rooted in memory and cross-cultural affiliation. These theories offer invaluable building blocks for conceiving of belonging in displacement. Their

geographical scope-primarily the Atlantic world-however, implies that Middle Eastern and wider African diasporas are relatively less theorized in relation to civilizational continuity and epistemic resilience.

This study intervenes at the intersection of postcolonial, memory, and diaspora scholarship by putting the epistemic and civilizational investment of dislocation front and center. This project seeks to transcend analyses that dwell on identity negotiation or internalized psychological wounding to examine how diasporic literatures enact a politics of cultural survival. The project centers on such questions as: What does it mean to lose not only one's homeland but an entire worldview? What aesthetic and narrative strategies do authors employ to salvage imperiled epistemologies? How does literature constitute a site of lamentation and a symbolic repository for dislocated civilizations simultaneously? Through an intersection of postcolonial, memory, and diaspora studies, this research draws upon a broad array of disciplines from literary theory to cultural anthropology and trauma studies to discover how diasporic narratives write and subvert civilizational loss.

This interdisciplinarity enables more nuanced understanding of displacement as epistemic and ontological fracture. In addition, by placing African and Middle Eastern diasporic literature in a transregional dialogue, the research transcends hegemonic national or linguistic forms, enabling comparative depth that reorients migrant literature theory and enhances greatly critical exchange with post-imperial memory and cultural survival.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

This research employs a transhistorical and transdisciplinary theory of interpretation, which draws on postcolonial theory, trauma studies, and diaspora epistemology to analyze the literary representation of civilizational disjunction within diasporic literature. Edward Said (2000) characterizes exile as an epistemic dislocation phenomenon where displacement disrupts tradition-based systems of knowledge and belonging. On this basis, Homi Bhabha (1994) theorizes the third space and cultural hybridity as a zone of creative instability in identities between histories and geographies. Achille Mbembe (2001) then locates the

postcolony as a zone of rupture of ontological and historical continuity, where colonial heritage generates fractured memory and dislocation.

Theories of memory and trauma further inscribe this reading. Marianne Hirsch's (2012) theory of postmemory describes how traumatic loss is transmitted intergenerationally, organizing diasporic subjectivities through inherited memory. Michael Rothberg (2009) theorizes multidirectional memory, situating memory as a functioning and relational field in which various histories intersect, thereby fracturing competitive narratives. Andreas Huyssen (2003) decries the amnesiac tendencies of global modernity, underlining the importance of memory in the preservation of cultural identity through erasure.

Theory of diaspora contributes to the understanding of belonging as fluid and complex. Avtar Brah (1996) theorizes diaspora as an intersectional space with concomitant identities and histories, and Paul Gilroy's (1993) transnational memory and cultural transmission work—although on the Black Atlantic—is insightful to the negotiation of trauma and identity across borders. Édouard Glissant's (1997) poetics of relational identity and opacity addresses creolization and the politics of cultural difference critically, while affirming the complexity of diasporic belonging beyond the paradigms of assimilation.

These postcolonial, memory, and diaspora theories work together to constitute an interdisciplinary paradigm that enables a close reading of diasporic literary works as sites of mourning, survival, and civilization imagination. The transhistorical and transdisciplinary nature of the model enables dialogue with literary studies in conjunction with cultural anthropology and memory politics to better understand displacement as an epistemic crisis. This comprehensive framework enables an exploration of how disunified worlds of civilization are both lamented and imaginatively remade through memory, identity, and art production as measures of coping and epistemic modes of resistance.

#### **4. Methodology**

This study adopts a comparative literary analysis approach, focusing on close readings of selected diasporic novels to uncover the narrative

strategies, symbolic orders, and memory arts through which the experience of civilizational disarticulation is conveyed (Bhabha, 1994; Hirsch, 2012). Through examining deeply the form, language, and issues of theme in such works, the research aims to find out how displacement is not only presented as trauma but as a process of working towards cultural survival and resistance (Mbembe, 2001; Rothberg, 2009).

The corpus of texts comprises six African and Middle Eastern diasporic classic novels: *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih (2009), *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2013), *Cockroach* by Rawi Hage (2008), *The Translator* by Leila Aboulela (2005), *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* by Dinaw Mengestu (2007), and *In the Country of Men* by Hisham Matar (2006). These novels were selected for their intense thematization of memory, myth, exile, language, and loss, each representing various aspects of displacement as an interference with civilizational continuity and epistemic ordering (Said, 2000; Brah, 1996).

The corpus selected illustrates not only the scale of displacement at the civilizational level but also seeks to enlarge the postcolonial literary canon through the investigation of voices from various linguistic, cultural, and geopolitical positions. Comparative literary analysis purposefully crosses regional boundaries between the Middle East and Africa in an effort to locate shared cultural fault lines and survival strategies that transcend national literatures. This dedication to methodology allows for an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural examination of how memory, language, and aesthetics function as archives of endangered civilizations.

The analysis will be structured around four axes. It will first examine narrative forms addressing rupture and return, examining how narratives represent exile and the complexities of the idea of return (Boehmer, 2005). It will also examine memory as a insurgent archive and practice of cultural heritage, emphasizing how such narratives reverse historical erasure and transmit endangered knowledge across generations (Hirsch, 2012; Huyssen, 2003). Third, the study will investigate multilingualism, silence, and epistemic translation, considering how linguistic diversity and untranslatability shape diasporic identity and knowledge-making (Bhabha, 1994; Glissant, 1997). Finally, it will explore aesthetic modes of survival, such as myth, spirituality, nostalgia, and orality, to consider how these



cultural practices function as ways of preserving cultural identity and constructing belonging in conditions of displacement (Gilroy, 1993; Rothberg, 2009).

## **5. Resisting erasure: Memory as archive and act of defiance**

In literary analysis of displacement in African and Middle Eastern diasporic writing, memory is not merely a repository of personal or collective past but an active holding of civilizational heritage. This location shifts beyond the stereotypical convention of memory as nostalgia or personal trauma to render memory a practice of epistemic resistance and survival of culture. Marianne Hirsch's (2012) postmemory theory is most useful in this case, as it describes how trauma children do not so much remember as inherit experience that shapes their sense of history and self, but generally in the absence of personal experience. In displaced civilizations, postmemory exceeds family trauma and encompasses the scattered passage of whole cultural epistemologies, ancestral cosmologies, and shared worldviews shattered by colonialism, war, and violence-induced migration.

Such memory, in this sense, is not a passive remnant but an active locus of contestation and construction. It is a counter-narrative that subverts hegemonic accounts coerced by colonial and imperial powers-accounts which have historically sought to erase or marginalize the cultural knowledge systems of colonized societies. This subversive component of memory is necessary to understanding how diasporic writing works as a form of cultural archive, an archive that preserves vulnerable forms of historical knowledge and ontological guidance. In narrative, myth, ritual, and symbol, these texts create a form of epistemic survival that resists erasure of collective memory and demands the continuation of displaced civilizations.

Michael Rothberg's (2009) idea of multidirectional memory builds on this view further by drawing attention to the interdependence and mutual constitution of various memory accounts. Memories of various traumatic events do not vie with each other for political or cultural legitimacy, but instead live alongside one another in a fruitful relationship, enabling diaspora communities to locate their histories in a larger grid of global

histories of suffering and displacement. This multidirectionality counteracts the monovictimhood that is typically ascribed to migrant identities and provides space for perceiving common patterns of colonial and postcolonial disruption across the Middle East and Africa. Thus, memory becomes a common good for conversation and opposition through which diasporic authors can write both particular and transregional in scope.

Andreas Huyssen's (2003) observations on memory as resistance in a globalized culture of our times plagued by amnesia and speedy forgetfulness resonate strongly with this analysis. He is sounding the warning against the dangers of homogenization of cultures and forgetting of histories in our contemporary global modernity, where shared memory is weak and vulnerable to commodification or forgetting. Such diasporic literary texts can therefore be read as deliberate acts of mnemonic intervention. They re-inscribe and revitalize forgotten cultural forms, spirituality, and legacies of ancestors, announcing their continued relevance in the face of dislocating processes of exile and diaspora.

Consistently, then, memory in these fictions is not merely confined to the personal or affective register; it is politicized action, insurgent knowledge that reappropriates the symbolic terrain of civilizational identity and resists effacement. The gesture toward remembering, narration, and rehearsing cultural rites by protagonists is an all-encompassing communal practice of maintaining a sense of homecoming and historical continuity in situations of fragmentation. So, memory serves both archival and resistant functions, keeping displaced civilizations in existence and imagining their futures in the face of perpetual marginalization.

## **6. Reweaving belonging: The role of language, faith, and kinship in diasporic continuity**

In African and Middle Eastern diasporic writing, belonging is remade not just as political or geographical identification but as a complex, transhistorical process negotiated around language, religion, and descent. All three serve as essential mediators for cultural survival, preserving ways of identification that transcend the disruptions occasioned by exile, displacement, and the disintegration of rigid civilizational forms (Brah,

1996; Glissant, 1997). This chapter analyzes how these intersectional spaces operate as survival and reconstitution tactics, which enable displaced communities to make claims to belonging in situations where dislocation both physically and epistemically threatens to sever ancestral ties.

Language occupies a uniquely ambivalent and effective position in the articulation of belonging amidst rupture. Diasporic subjects' multilingual lives, transiting between indigenous languages, colonial language, and global lingua francas, testify both to the discontinuities and continuities of their worlds. As metaphor, translation doesn't only talk about the mediation of language but also epistemic negotiation (Bhabha, 1994). It is in acts of translation that diaspora writers undertake the delicate task of preserving and remaking ancient systems of knowledge in the face of new worlds, assuring their continuation as current referents fade or change hands. This is a project of epistemic translation-transmitting embodied knowledge, oral culture, and spiritual idioms across languages and cultures—which resists reductionist assimilation and produces creative hybridity (Aboulela, 2005; Said, 2000a).

Spirit and religion further deepen the dimensions of belonging by situating diasporic identities in metaphysical constructs that ensure ontological security amidst vagaries (Mbembe, 2001). Religious tropes as well as practices, either Islamic, Christian, or indigenous, provide affective and symbolic grounds through which displaced subjects reclaim earlier histories as well as communal worlds. These religious discourses are not static objects but living practices that shift during exile, as ways of keeping at bay cultural erasure (Hirsch, 2012). Religious belief, for instance, in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* or Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men*, is a source of moral anchoring and narrative integrity, mediating loss encounters while offering opportunities for re-examining belonging outside territorial or national concerns (Matar, 2006; Aboulela, 2005).

Kinship groups and ritual practice also constitute survival axes of civilizational belonging in diasporic narratives. Kinship exceeds biological or genealogical connection to encompass wider webs of social and symbolic attachment that bind individuals into collective histories and cooperative obligations (Gilroy, 1993; Brah, 1996). Rituals of mourning, remembrance, and celebration realize these connections, a sense of belonging that

transcends temporal and spatial dislocation. These acts affirm a genealogical identity—a continuity that connects past, present, and future generations—thus countering the forces of disconnection that characterize exile and diaspora (Rothberg, 2009). The performance of kinship and ritual in literature illustrates how cultural memory gets embodied and transferred, enabling displaced civilizations to live and adapt under conditions of fragmentation.

They and language and religion together create interlocking modalities of belonging that interpose between loss and survival in diasporic existence. They are a form of civilizational memory that is not attached to inherited heritage but is negotiated, performed, and reimagined anew across ruptures (Glissant, 1997; Mbembe, 2001). Through such a prioritization of these aspects, diasporic fiction does more than simply reflect alienation or hybridity; it actively creates spaces of cultural survival and imaginative resurrection. Through such aesthetic and symbolic action, dislocated civilizations gain windows through which to proclaim their existence and maintain their inheritances within worldwide flows of migration and memory.

## **7. Aesthetic resistance: Storytelling, myth, and the politics of cultural survival**

Under conditions of displacement and dissolution of civilizations, diasporic literature has a recourse to myth and narrative as necessary modes of epistemic reinvention. These strategies of the aesthetic are not merely narrative devices but acts of cultural survival that revivify broken histories and cosmologies. Storytelling is a living archive in which imperiled knowledge systems—oral cultures, cosmogonic myths, and ancient wisdom—are stored, transmitted, and reinterpreted through new horizons of diaspora (Glissant, 1997; Brah, 1996). Myths, unlike static objects, are modern constructs that encode shared memory and identity, enabling displaced groups to reclaim a sense of meaning amidst epistemic dislocation (Mbembe, 2001; Bhabha, 1994).

Mythic and narrative function operate on a number of levels: as a mnemonic device for cultural inheritance, symbolic mode for coding

historical trauma, and as a space for generating new meaning. Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* employs mythic modes in order to subvert the consequences of colonialism and to mediate postcolonial identity between fractured epistemologies (Salih, 2009). Similarly, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* invokes narrative strategies that interweave personal histories with larger civilizational myths, thus situating individual displacement within larger civilizational continuities (Adichie, 2013).

Melancholia and nostalgia are consequently equally compelling aesthetic and political moves in these literary works. Instead of being recognized as symptoms of loss or alienation, melancholia and nostalgia here are redesigned as counterresponses to history and memory. Both perform the dual task of mourning what is irretrievably lost while also stirring a political consciousness attuned to erasure and resilience (Hirsch, 2012; Rothberg, 2009). Diasporic literature is usually saturated with ambivalence-filled nostalgia—both wanting lost beginnings and striving for cultural renaissance (Boym, 2001). This ambivalence resists easy romance, rather revealing the depth of displacement as a location of trauma and artistic possibility.

The aesthetic representation of melancholia and nostalgia then becomes an act of resistance against the homogenizing drive of globalization and cultural amnesia (Huyssen, 2003). It allows displaced subjects to negotiate their scattered identities not through assimilation but by reclaiming affective and symbolic realms of their civilizational patrimony. By employing narrative strategies that hint at loss, memory, and myth, diasporic literature enacts a politics of cultural survival that sustains endangered epistemologies even as it fosters imaginative renewal in the face of rupture.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper advances a reconceptualization of migration and displacement through the emphasis on civilizational loss as a fundamental dimension of diasporic experience. Going beyond existing frameworks that center mostly on hybridity, identity negotiation, and spatial dislocation, it points to how enforced exile holds within itself the fracturing of shared epistemologies, cosmologies, and cultural continuities that define whole civilizations. By placing African and Middle Eastern diasporic literatures in comparative,

transregional perspective, the article has shed light on how such texts operate as aesthetic archives-spaces wherein civilizational memory is lamented, disputed, and reimaged.

Theoretically, this approach invites a critical expansion of postcolonial studies and diaspora theory. It challenges scholars to attend not only to individual and national identities but also to the ontological and epistemic stakes involved in cultural survival amid displacement. This reorientation underscores the importance of integrating trauma and memory studies with literary analysis to apprehend the multi-layered impacts of civilizational rupture. Furthermore, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of world literature as a field shaped by the uneven legacies of empire, migration, and globalization-where narratives of loss and renewal intersect across geopolitical and cultural divides.

Looking ahead, future research might further explore displaced civilizations across additional geographic and linguistic contexts, thereby enriching transregional dialogues. There is also fertile ground for interdisciplinary collaborations that link literary studies with anthropology, history, and digital humanities to map how cultural memory is preserved and transformed in contemporary diasporas. Finally, this framework holds potential for rethinking cultural policy and pedagogy by foregrounding the preservation of endangered epistemologies and aesthetic practices within global migratory flows.

Through introducing the notion of displaced civilizations, this study offers a conceptual innovation that repositions migrant literature as an active space of civilizational mourning and resilience rather than only a site of identity negotiation or hybridity. The comparative transregional analysis linking African and Middle Eastern diasporic texts provides a unique contribution, shedding light on the shared yet diverse strategies these literatures employ to resist cultural erasure. Moreover, it is through an interdisciplinary approach-engaging postcolonial theory, memory studies, and diaspora epistemologies-that the research deepens our understanding of how literary aesthetics work as survival mechanisms of culture. Lastly, by broadening the literary canon to embrace compositions typically bracketed within regional or linguistic silos, the study reconfigures critical debate

regarding post-imperial memory, exile, and cultural continuity in global migration narratives.

In the end, this essay argues for a wider, more expansive conception of migration—one that sees displacement not just as a spatial movement but as a deep tear in the communal tissue of civilizational knowing. From this vantage point, our understanding of the cultural politics of exile is enriched and our critical lexicon expanded in order to take on the long-lasting effects of forced migration in an ever more connected yet fractured world.

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