



PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITION REFLECTED IN ADAM HASLETT'S SHORT STORY YOU ARE NOT STRANGER HERE (2002)

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Abstract

This study aimed to discuss the psychological problem condition in Short story You're Not Stranger Here by Adam Haslett (2002). This analysis elaborated about the psychological problem (trauma) and the negative impact of the psychological problem itself. This analysis described about "Psychological Condition Reflected in Adam Haslett's You're Not Stranger Here (2002). This research conducted using the descriptive qualitative approach. This data analysis was to analyze novel You're Not Stranger Here (2002) by Adam Haslett. The data was collected from the quotation in the novel. The data was in the form of sentences, words and phrases. The source of data in this research was a novel written by Adam Haslett entitled You Are Not Stranger Here. The result of analysis "You Are Not a Stranger Here" by Adam Haslett delves deeply into the complexities of human psychology and mental illness through interconnected short stories. It portrays a range of psychological problems, including depression, anxiety, and trauma, and highlights their profound impact on individuals' lives. Through the characters' experiences, the short story sheds light on the various ways in which these conditions manifest, intertwine, and challenge their ability to function in their daily lives.

Keyword; *Human Psychology, Trauma, Anxiety, Depression*

A. INTRODUCTION

Human beings are individual creatures who have personality and behavior within themselves. Human beings as individual creatures are characterized by some elements such as physical, spiritual, and psychological elements. Human beings are said to be an individual when these elements integrate within themselves. In this life, people are having their own problems. People have their own past. Even if it was the best or the worst. Sometimes, the past can affect the future. It depends how the person faces it. Problems come when people are in a

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process to achieve a goal. They need a mental process that involves discovering, analyzing and solving. A problem is an obstacle, impediment, difficulty or any situation that needs resolution. All of that are the various forms of matter which is likely to face. The problem needs to be overcome in order to find a solution that best resolves the issue.

This study aimed to explore the character in the novel named Lucas who is known as a therapist patient and he has mental illness. According to the American Psychiatric Association, a psychological disorder, or mental disorder, is “a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress in social, occupational, or other important activities” (2013). The people around him think that he cannot live as normally people live their life because he has a mental illness. Thus, through the analysis the character wants to show that he can control his mental illness and can live normally like a human did. According to Freud (1990) states that there are two types of human reactions in facing the problems in life, the first is pessimistic and the second one is optimistic. Pessimistic people when solving their problems are dominated by negative thoughts. For them, life is full of indecision and doubt. They are not confident of their abilities. People with a pessimistic attitude have poor mental status. As a result, they become depressed when bad events occur. Furthermore, it leads to bad health and shorter lives.

Individuals can express their feelings by distinctive activity. It makes positive and negative activities depending on their feeling. They construct relationship with others or indeed they crush it. They adore somebody or they slaughter the individual. Their behavior is based on a certain reason. They adore another individual since they have yearned for it in their life. They murder another since they don't like someone and it could be the as it were way to outlive in life. It is evident that they continuously have reasons for their life.

This analysis is analyzed based on literature and psychology theory by Sigmund Freud. The issue is going to be discuss in this Novel about someone who has mental issues or called mental health disorder. The fictional device which is used in this analysis is character. The character attempts to strengthen his life instinct to keep going in his life. Even though, he was abandoned by people around him because people think that he cannot socialize with others because he has a mental illness. This short story tells about some spectacular moments, and also several inexplicable miscalculations in this extremely uneven yet unquestionably promising debut collection of nine stories by Yale Law student Haslett. Most of Haslett's characters are silent sufferers or unrequited lovers who live out lives of silent desperation unrelieved by full connection with others or disclosure of their innermost secrets. This is particularly true of stories that focus on gay characters, such as an orphaned high school boy powerfully attracted to a surly, violence-prone classmate (“The Beginnings of Grief”); an unmarried brother and sister who have loved and lost the same man (“Devotion”); and a

terminal AIDS patient whose carefully planned withdrawal from job and relationships ends in (harrowingly described) surreal dementia (“Reunion”).

Mental disorder also called mental illness is a behavioral or mental problem that causes significant distress or impairment of personal functioning. Such features maybe persistent, relapsing and remitting, or occur as a single episode. Many disorders have been described, with signs and symptoms that vary widely between specific disorders. Such disorders may be diagnosed by a mental health professional. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day (Goodman, 2011:32). Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis. Recovery, including meaningful roles in social life, school and work, is possible, especially when you start treatment early and play a strong role in your own recovery process.

Psychological condition problem seen in this novel is to see different cases of trauma which the character experienced in the novel. Different cases of trauma were caused by awful encounters, one of which can be demonstrated in Adam Haslett novel *You Are Not a Stranger Here* (2002). Trauma can also be called as PTSD (Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder). PTSD, it is now listed among a group called Trauma-and-Stressor-Related Disorders. For a person to be diagnosed with PTSD, they must be exposed to, witness, or experience the details of a traumatic experience (e.g., a first responder), one that involves “actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence” (APA, 2013, p. 271). These experiences can include such events as combat, threatened or actual physical attack, sexual assault, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, and automobile accidents. This criterion makes PTSD the only disorder listed in the DSM in which a cause (extreme trauma) is explicitly specified.

Defense mechanism is a mechanism that humans use to protect themselves from things they do not want or avoid. Defense mechanism can be seen as something positive if person are able to divert their energy to something positive. However, defense mechanism can also lead a person to unhealthy psychological conditions. The defense mechanism does make a person forget the unpleasant feeling, but actually the effect of this feeling of comfort is only temporary. Mehta (2021:1) explains that excessive use of defense mechanism or for a continuous period of time can be very dangerous. Defense mechanism is human habits that occur under the control of the human unconscious. In fact, most people are not aware of the defense mechanism strategies they use.

“Defense mechanisms are unconscious or subconscious behaviors so that individuals feel they are getting something they need even though in reality there is none. Another meaning of defense mechanism is a person's desire not to accept something he doesn't want even though the reality is there.” (Sanyata 2009:36).

Leo Bailey is a complicated character. In this drama, he is described as an old man who is very cynical about his life. He really hated himself. He could not come to terms with the facts he had to face. He eventually became a drinker to release his anxiety. In this drama, alcohol is poison to him. Alcohol only relieves his anxiety in the short term. This finally makes Leo unable to escape from alcohol. He could no longer fight his addiction to alcohol. Alcohol changes a person's personality to be out of control. He becomes a rude person. He could not trust another. He became emotional. He hurt himself as well as those around him, both physically and mentally. He always feels anxious. According to Andrews at all (2018:110) Anxiety refers to a sensation of fear and concern manifested by an individual regarding an on-going issue, leading to discomfort and impairment.

The defense mechanism used by the character in this drama shows a negative defense mechanism. The lack of precise use of the defense mechanism used makes the main character's relationship with the second character not improved. This can be seen through the relationship between the first character as the antagonist character and the second character Margo as the protagonist character. The second character has carried women named Therese. She pays her to taking care of her father. She does not want to taking care her father by herself. Leo has alcohol related dementia that makes his condition become so bad. The first character does not like to see his daughter. His attitude toward her was very rude. Margo is patient enough to face Leo's rant. He always feels threatened by Margo. He thinks that she will take the property from him. He thinks that she has stolen his paintings. He does not trust his daughter. He uses defense mechanism as proof that it was his family who did not treat him well and only wanted his wealth. He uses denial defense mechanism to deny the fact that he is the one who disappointed his family.

This analysis is based on the psychological aspect of the main character in drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder* by Debra Oswald (2005) by using psychoanalysis theory by Sigmund Freud, to find out inappropriate defense mechanism used by the main character. One of the reasons defense mechanism are chosen as a topic to be discussed in this thesis is because the researcher interested in discussing defense mechanism that will be related to the life and personality of the individual. In this drama, the main character is a perfect example of a human who is trying to deny the fact that he did things that hurt his wife and children. His hard to come to deal with himself makes him try to ignore, hide and deny facts by using defense mechanism. In this issue of the drama, the main character shows the continuous use of defense mechanism in a negative way. Through a deep understanding of reading the drama *Mr. Bailey's Minder* (2005), the researcher wants to reveal how inappropriate defense mechanism are depicted in Oswald's *Mr. Bailey's Minder*.

There are numerous researchers who have conducted literary research on modern play or drama text and the issue of defense mechanism on literary text. To illustrate, the literary studies on modern drama have been done recently by Paradila & Marlina (2019), Mahardika, Susanto & Siti (2023). Meanwhile the

study the issue of defense mechanism and anxiety in literary work such as novel and short story has been studied by Pradana (2018); and Tenrisanna (2018), Zulfaisya and Hasra (2020); Sinaga (2020), Viona & Wahyuni (2022), Arifin (2023).

Zulfaisya and Hasra (2020), have studied anxiety and defense mechanism in novel. The writer analyze the defense mechanism of the main character in Laurie Halse Anderson's novel entitle *Speak*. This study reveals that the main character experiencing psychological conflicts as a victim of verbal, physical and psychological bullying she got at school. The character use defense mechanism as strategies in overcoming her anxiety as the impact of the bullying. Pradhana (2018), have studied anxiety and defense mechanism in novels. The writer reveals that the first character experience anxiety of the dead body. The defense mechanism character use succeeded to reduce her anxiety and bring into fully functioning her conscious and conscience. Tenrisanna (2018), have studied anxiety and defense mechanism in short stories. The writer reveals that characters used defense mechanism to against anxiety and suspense. The characters use defense mechanism as strategies to avoid the conflict. They tend to solve the conflict by means of defense mechanism rather that discussing the problems.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research conducted using the descriptive qualitative approach. According to Igwenagu (2016), descriptive research is a type of research that focuses on a particular phenomenon or a situation using a theory. This data analysis was to analyze novel *You're Not Stranger Here* (2002) by Adam Haslett. The data was collected from the quotation in the novel. The data was in the form of sentences, words and phrases. The source of data in this research was a novel written by Adam Haslett entitled *You Are Not Stranger Here*.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This "*You Are Not a Stranger Here*" by Adam Haslett is a collection of nine short stories that explore various aspects of human psychology and mental illness. The stories are interconnected and offer a nuanced and compassionate look at the challenges that people face in dealing with mental health conditions. The impact of psychological problems can vary significantly depending on the specific diagnosis, severity, duration, and individual factors. Seeking professional help, such as therapy or counseling, can greatly assist in managing and alleviating these impacts. Psychological problems can disrupt everyday activities such as self-care, household tasks, and maintaining routines. Simple tasks may become overwhelming, and individuals may struggle with basic responsibilities, which can further contribute to a sense of frustration, guilt, or worthlessness. There are some of the psychological problems and conditions reflected in the book such as depression, bipolar disorder, Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and anxiety. Here is the result of the impact of psychological problems experienced by the character;

1. Depression

The psychological problems reflected in this novel such as depression: this mental illness experienced by some of the characters. For example, Several characters in the book struggle with depression, including the protagonist in the first story, "Notes to My Biographer." The story follows a man who is hospitalized for severe depression and suicidal thoughts, and his attempts to reconnect with his estranged wife and son. The story highlights the difficulties of living with depression and the toll it can take on one's relationships and sense of self. Depression: The protagonist struggles with severe depression. He experiences feelings of hopelessness, emptiness, and despair, and has thoughts of suicide. It can be seen in the following sentences;

"Depression is a thief. It steals into people's lives quietly, without much fanfare, and before you know it, it's taken everything." (You Are Not Stranger Here, P. 32)

This sentences explains how the protagonist feeling empty without even have hope for something great in his life. Depression is a mental health disorder characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest or pleasure in activities that a person used to enjoy. It can affect how a person thinks, feels, and behaves, and it can also cause physical symptoms. These quotations demonstrate the character struggles with his mental health conditions and the impact it has on his lives. They also show the author's sensitivity and empathy towards these conditions and the stigma surrounding mental illness. It also can be seen from other quotations below.

"I'm not sure when it started, this thing that's eating me from the inside out. It feels like it's always been there, lurking beneath the surface, waiting for me to let my guard down." - Peter, reflecting on his depression. (You Are Not Stranger Here, P. 37)

The depression also can be seen in others following sentences;

"Jack spent his days taking people's homes and property their families had owned for decades. So it didn't worry me at first, I figured the man deserved a drink or two when he came home. That was before the bank went under. And as for symptoms, yes, to tel you the truth, I was depressed. I was. Things hadn't gone like we'd planned. I kept thinking about the girls I'd roomed with, visiting Europe, standing in front of those pictures. I shouldn't have done that—let myself look back that way. It's the sort of thing kids notice, the way you're not real y there in the room with them." (You Are Not Stranger Here, P. 37)

Depression can manifest in a variety of ways, and the experience of depression can differ from person to person. The character in this chapter experienced this kind of symptoms such as persistent sadness or low mood, loss of interest or

pleasure in activities that were once enjoyable, feelings of worthlessness, guilt, hopelessness, or helplessness and difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.

The character have a significant impact on a his daily life, including their ability to work, study, or maintain relationships. Depression can be caused by a variety of factors, including genetics, brain chemistry, life events, and other medical conditions. Treatment for depression often includes therapy, medication, or a combination of both. It's important to seek help from a mental health professional if you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of depression, as early intervention can improve outcomes and prevent the condition from becoming more severe. It can be seen through following sentences;

"It wasn't that I was sad, exactly. It was more like I was empty. Like there was nothing inside me except a vast, echoing void." (You Are Not Stranger Here. P.42)

This sentences explains that the character is a successful psychiatrist who has built a successful career helping others with mental health issues, but he is struggling with his own depression. He feels a deep sense of emptiness and despair, and he has lost interest in his work, his hobbies, and his relationships with others. He becomes increasingly isolated, withdrawing from the world and avoiding social interactions. It can be seen in the quotation below;

"Every morning felt like a battle, trying to summon the energy and motivation to face the day." (You Are Not Stranger Here. P.60)

This sentence gives illustration how the character feelings about his own life. The character also shows how depression is exacerbated by his past experiences, including the death of his mother and his difficult relationship with his father. He also struggles with guilt and shame related to his sexuality, which he feels he cannot fully express or accept. It can be seen in the following sentences.

"It was hard to explain to people who didn't know what it was like, how it felt to be consumed by something you couldn't control. To be drowning in a sea of darkness with no way out." (You Are Not Stranger Here. P.72)

Throughout the story, the character's depression is depicted as a complex and multifaceted condition that affects every aspect of his life. He experiences a range of symptoms, including low mood, loss of interest, feelings of worthlessness, and difficulty concentrating. Despite his training and experience as a psychiatrist, the character is unable to "cure" himself of his depression and ultimately finds solace in writing and in connecting with others who have had similar experiences.

2. Anxiety

In this chapter discusses about anxiety experienced by the character. The story in chapter "Divination" features a man who is plagued by anxiety and fears of the future, leading him to seek out various vindicator practices in order to find some sense of control. The story explores the role of belief systems in coping with anxiety and the ways in which we try to make sense of the uncertain and unpredictable aspects of life. The main character Peter experiences anxiety in several ways. It can be seen in the following sentences.

"The problem with mental illness is that it's invisible. You can't see it, you can't measure it, and you can't fix it with a Band-Aid or a cast." (You Are Not Stranger Here. P. 54)

The character is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome. It is a normal human emotion that can be triggered by various events or situations, such as work pressure, financial problems, social situations, or personal relationships.

For instance is when the main character has a panic attack during a public speech. This experience leads him to avoid future public speaking engagements. This is a common symptom of anxiety disorders, where people may avoid situations that they perceive as threatening or uncomfortable. The main character also experiences obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), which is a type of anxiety disorder. OCD is characterized by intrusive, unwanted, and often distressing thoughts and repetitive behaviors or mental acts that a person feels driven to perform. For example, Peter repeatedly checks his door locks and stove knobs to make sure they are secure, which is a common OCD behavior. It can be seen in the following sentences.

"My brain won't let me rest until everything is just so. And even then, it's not enough. There's always something else to worry about."
(You Are Not Stranger Here. P. 102)

This is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome. It is a normal human emotion that can be triggered by various events or situations, such as work pressure, financial problems, social situations, or personal relationships. As stated Jeffrey M. Schwartz (1995:654) "Obsessive-compulsive disorder is a biochemical problem in which the brain locks and starts sending false signals that something is vitally wrong and needs fixing. The brain sends the signal again and again, creating a vicious cycle of anxiety, obsession, and compulsion."

3. Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The character Catherine has PTSD after being sexually assaulted. She experiences flashbacks and nightmares, and struggles to form intimate relationships. It can be seen from the following quotation.

"The voice seemed to be coming from everywhere and nowhere at once, and it said things like 'You are the chosen one' and 'The end is near'." (You Are Not Stranger Here. P. 132)

This sentences explains how the character is having Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which is a mental health condition that can occur after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Traumatic events can such a things like physical or sexual assault. She experienced sexual assault. It can be seen in the following sentences.

"I try to forget, but the memories keep coming back. They're like ghosts that haunt me, even in my sleep." (You Are Not Stranger Here. P. 150)

She hard to forget what is already happened to her in the past. It is impacting her daily life and activities. These symptoms can significantly impact a person's daily life and relationships. PTSD is a serious condition, but it is treatable with therapy, medication, or a combination of both. The character feels about herself like intrusive thoughts or memories of the traumatic event. She is also avoiding of anything that reminds her of the traumatic event. Sometimes, she is hyper-vigilance or feeling constantly on edge. She is feeling numb or disconnected from others.

4.4 The Negative Impact of Psychological Condition

In the short story "You Are Not a Stranger Here" by Adam Haslett, published in 2002, mental problems are explored in depth, and their negative impacts on the characters' lives are vividly portrayed. The novel delves into the emotional, psychological, and relational toll that mental health issues can exact. Here are some of the negative impacts depicted in the novel along with corresponding quotations:

1. Isolation and Alienation

Mental health problems often lead to feelings of isolation and alienation from others. Characters in the novel grapple with the sense of being disconnected from those around them. Isolation refers to a state of being physically or emotionally separated from others. Alienation, on the other hand, refers to a feeling of being estranged or disconnected from one's surroundings or from other people. In the context of mental health problems, individuals often experience isolation and alienation due to the nature of their conditions, which can make it difficult for them to connect with others or engage in social interactions.

In the short story "You Are Not a Stranger Here," the characters grapple with feelings of isolation and alienation as a result of their mental health problems. They experience a sense of disconnection from the people around them and the world in general. These feelings are often intensified by the challenges posed by their conditions, which can make it hard for them to engage in social activities, communicate their struggles, or maintain meaningful relationships. It can be seen in the following sentences;

"Every morning felt like a battle, trying to summon the energy and motivation to face the day" (You Are Not Stranger Here, P. 60).

It reflects the experience of isolation and alienation. This sentence illustrates the character's internal struggle with their mental health. The mention of "trying to summon the energy and motivation" suggests the difficulty they face in interacting with the outside world. This battle each morning highlights the emotional toll of their condition, making even simple daily tasks feel like insurmountable challenges. The quotation encapsulates the isolation that mental health problems can create. The feeling of battling to face the day implies that the character's internal struggles have become barriers that isolate them from the routine and connections they once had. It also hints at the sense of alienation, as

the character's perception of the world seems to have shifted, making it difficult for them to connect with others in a meaningful way.

Another quotation from the novel that illustrates the theme of isolation and alienation:

"I'm not sure when it started, this thing that's eating me from the inside out. It feels like it's always been there, lurking beneath the surface, waiting for me to let my guard down." - Peter, reflecting on his depression. (*You Are Not Stranger Here*, P. 37)

This quotation conveys a sense of isolation and alienation through the character's reflection on his experience with depression. The phrase "eating me from the inside out" metaphorically captures the way his mental health condition consumes him emotionally, creating a barrier between him and the external world. The use of "lurking beneath the surface" suggests that these feelings are hidden beneath a façade he presents to others, emphasizing the sense of disconnection between his inner struggles and his outward interactions.

The quotation's portrayal of character's depression as something that has "always been there" and "waiting for me to let my guard down" underscores the idea of isolation. He feels that his mental health issue has been a constant companion, contributing to his sense of being alone in his struggles. Additionally, the concept of having to "let my guard down" suggests that he has to hide his true feelings from others, deepening his feelings of alienation. Through this quotation, the novel captures the internal battle and emotional distance that mental health issues can create, highlighting the character's isolation from the world around him and the internal struggle he faces in trying to connect with others.

2. Loss of Identity

Loss of identity refers to a situation where an individual's understanding of themselves, their values, interests, and personality becomes blurred or disrupted. Mental health problems can contribute to this loss, as individuals grapple with challenges that overshadow their self-perception, making it difficult for them to define themselves beyond their conditions.

In the context of mental health problems, individuals can experience a loss of identity as their struggles with their conditions dominate their thoughts, emotions, and daily experiences. This loss occurs as their sense of self becomes intertwined with the challenges they face, making it hard for them to recognize and express who they are beyond their mental health issues. It can be seen in the following sentences;

"It's like there are two different worlds: the one inside my head, where everything is chaos, and the one outside, where everything is supposed to be normal" (*You Are Not Stranger Here*, P. 96),

It encapsulates the concept of loss of identity. The phrase "two different worlds" highlights the stark contrast between the character's internal experiences and the external expectations of normalcy. This contrast emphasizes the challenge of reconciling their inner struggles with societal norms and their previous self.

The quotation's depiction of the character's internal world as "chaos" underscores the overwhelming nature of their mental health problems. This chaos can disrupt their ability to maintain a cohesive sense of self and contributes to the loss of identity. Additionally, the use of "supposed to be normal" underscores the pressure to conform to societal standards, which can further erode their sense of self as they strive to fit into an external perception of normalcy. In this context, the quotation exemplifies the loss of identity that mental health problems can bring about. The character's struggle to reconcile their internal world with external expectations highlights the difficulty of maintaining a consistent self-image when facing such challenges. This loss of identity adds another layer of complexity to their overall experience of mental health issues, emphasizing the profound impact on their sense of self.

Another quotation along with an explanation that relates to the theme of loss of identity:

"I'm not sure who I am anymore. It's like the person I used to be got lost somewhere along the way, and now I'm just a shell of who I used to be." (You Are Not Stranger Here, P. 118)

This quotation poignantly captures the concept of loss of identity due to mental health problems. The character's words reflect a deep struggle to recognize themselves and maintain a sense of continuity between their past and present selves. The phrase "I'm not sure who I am anymore" underscores the confusion and uncertainty that mental health challenges can bring. The character's sense of self has become fragmented, leaving them questioning their identity.

The metaphor of being a "shell of who I used to be" paints a vivid image of how mental health issues can strip away elements that once defined the character. A shell suggests emptiness and a lack of substance, indicating that the character's connection to their former self has been hollowed out. This emptiness can result from the overshadowing impact of their mental health condition, causing their personal attributes, interests, and passions to become obscured. In essence, this quotation exemplifies the loss of identity that individuals can experience when grappling with mental health issues. The character's introspective thoughts reveal the profound struggle to reconcile their current state with their past self, highlighting the internal conflict and turmoil that can accompany such a loss. The quotation underscores the depth of the emotional and psychological impact, as the character grapples with the erosion of their identity and searches for ways to reconnect with their true self.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

a. Conclusion

In conclusion, "You Are Not a Stranger Here (2002)" is a collection of nine short stories written by Adam Haslett, exploring the experiences of individuals living with mental illness and the impact it has on their lives and relationships. The stories are set in different locations and time periods, but they all deal with themes of love, loss, and the struggle to maintain a sense of self in the face of mental illness. In conclusion, "You Are Not a Stranger Here" by Adam

Haslett delves deeply into the complexities of human psychology and mental illness through interconnected short stories. The book portrays a range of psychological problems, including depression, anxiety, and trauma, and highlights their profound impact on individuals' lives. Through the characters' experiences, the book sheds light on the various ways in which these conditions manifest, intertwine, and challenge their ability to function in their daily lives.

b. Suggestion

"You Are Not a Stranger Here" offers a poignant and compassionate exploration of the human experience, reminding us that mental health is an integral part of our lives and that seeking help and understanding is crucial for those who are grappling with these challenges. The characters in the book are complex and well-drawn, each grappling with their own unique challenges and experiences. Haslett's writing is poignant and insightful, delving deep into the inner lives of his characters and exploring the ways in which mental illness can impact the human psyche. The character has been praised for its compassion and sensitivity in portraying mental illness. It offers a nuanced and empathetic perspective on the challenges faced by those living with mental illness and provides a powerful reminder of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity. The character in "You Are Not a Stranger Here (2002)" is a deeply moving and thought-provoking that explores the complexities of the human experience with grace and sensitivity. The feature characters represents with a range of mental health conditions, including depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia, among others. Throughout the stories, Haslett portrays the inner struggles of his characters in a compassionate and nuanced way, showing how mental illness can impact every aspect of a person's life, from their relationships and work to their sense of self.

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