



## salama's post-traumatic stress disorder in zoulfa katouh's as long as the lemon trees grow

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**Abstract.** This study aims to discuss the problem of post-traumatic stress disorder in the novel *As Long as the Lemon Tree Grow* by Zoulfa Katouh. This study is focused on the symptoms, causes, and effects of post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by the main character in the story. This study uses PTSD theory to analyze post-trauma Salama stress disorder. The research method applied in this study is qualitative, with the literary psychology approach. According to the results of the analysis, there are four symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by Salam. The first is to avoid reminders of traumatic events, the second is a disturbing mind, the third feels anxious and on edge, the last is the symptom of passion and reactive. The cause of Salama experiencing post-trauma stress disorder is a terror incident and bomb explosion that occurred in the past that affected his family, and this incident occurred again when he worked in a hospital in Homs. The effects of post-traumatic stress disorder that Salama experienced first was sedative, emotional and social anxiety. This can be seen in the feelings of greetings because of the dispute that occurs between Salam and the military soldiers. Therefore, it can be concluded that realistic anxiety occurs when there is fear close to danger.

**Keywords:** *PTSD, symptoms of PTSD, causes of PTSD, effects of PTSD*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Trauma is one of the psychological problems commonly found in humans. Life is characterized by many symptoms that shape individuals to live their lives with various kinds of problems. Each individual has their own ability to maintain their existence. maintain an unusual existence, like what people suppose that the process is easy. However, such an individual must understand the life situations they face. Hence, they are able to handle these psychological problems during the socialization process.

Life cannot be separated from its psychological condition, where individuals are directly shaped by the environment. It can be assumed that psychology and human life are tightly tied. According to Gore, A.T (2017), the psychological impact experienced by disaster victims is related to psychological capacity, in the form of self-concept, development, and relationships between people. If someone experiencing PTSD does not get help as early as possible, the trauma they experience will get worse, impacting their physical, emotional, mental, behavioral, and spiritual condition. Post-traumatic stress disorder is very dangerous. It can even destroy a person's existence. Humans are controlled by their minds to act and react to circumstances that befall them. States that the substance of traumatic tension is weakness, which he describes as "loss of control over one's body." This means that when someone has PTSD, they will lose their mind and be unable to control their emotions. This condition will direct them to things related to the past that are the cause of their trauma. Harvey (2002: 23) states that trauma can occur to someone due to the loss of something, such as a family member, partner, or people with whom they have good relationships. In psychiatry, trauma has a different meaning and refers to an emotional experience that is painful, stressful, or shocking, often resulting in lasting mental and physical effects (American Psychiatric Association/APA, 2013: 271).

According to Read and Ross (2003: 1), trauma in relation to psychic injury is mainly caused by emotional shock, suppressed memory, and remains unhealed. Trauma is an extraordinary event that raises wounds and feelings of pain, but it is also often interpreted as a wound or severe pain due to an extraordinary event that befalls someone directly or indirectly. The lightness of an event will be felt differently by each person, giving rise to the influence of the event on behavior. Several traumatic events, which generally include horrific events such as accidents, sexual harassment, natural disasters, experiencing physical violence, and so on, can cause stress due to the traumatic experiences experienced. The stress disorder experienced by victims is often referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental disorder that occurs when someone experiences a traumatic event. People can develop PTSD after experiencing disturbing or frightening experiences in the past. Although PTSD symptoms most often develop within hours or days after a traumatic event, they can sometimes take weeks, months, or even years. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may become the subject of a literary work. One of the literary works that talk about trauma is a novel by Zoulfa Katouh entitled *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. The novel talks about Salama who experienced trauma when she volunteered at a hospital in the city of Homs in Syria, helping the injured victims who came every day. Not only does she witness the horror and toll of war firsthand, but she is also forced to make life-changing decisions when her loved ones are threatened. Salama experienced trauma so she gave birth to her imaginary friend, Khawf. Her was a hallucination who had come to stay.

There are several previous studies that are related to the analysis of PTSD. The differences between the previous and current studies lie in the data source. In previous research, data sources were taken from the novels *Cherry* by Nico Walker (2022), *Found in*, and *The Girl on the Train* by Paula Hawkin (2021), *Sharp Objects* by Gillian Flynn (2020), while this research uses *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* by Zoulfa Katouh (2022) as a data source. Apart from that, there are other differences in the third previous study, where the approach used was an extrinsic and psychological approach, whereas in this research, the writer only used a literary psychology approach.

Based on the description above, the writer chose the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* by Zoulfa Katouh is because the novel is interesting to discuss since there are deep problems in the mental aspect, namely post-traumatic disorder (PTSD) which affects the life of the character Salama in the novel. This research tries to reveal the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) contained in the novel, starting from the symptoms,

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

To figure out further about the causes and effect of traumatic incident, the writer uses post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), PTSD can be defined as consulted and constant disorder that generally coexist with another disorders including other anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and substance use disorders (Brewin, Dalgeish, and Joseph, 1996). People who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) commonly feel uneasy- they often worry about something like places or people which related with her trauma. Her emotion easily to switch when they recall about memories that related to their trauma. They usually lack of sleep and haunted by nightmare from their own mind, therefore these things make them to take medicine without any doctor's prescription.

### PTSD Symptoms

According to Hamblen, J., & Barnett, E. (2018), there are four main types of symptoms

#### a. Avoiding Reminders of the Traumatic Event

In one condition, of course any situation that makes people avoid fear of memories that can make them traumatized. Because it is reminded of the traumatic events (or events) that are very painful, painful feelings are related to actual or potential damage to social bonds. Therefore, the experience of rejection or social loss is often described in words of physical pain ("feelings of heartache" and "broken heart"), and both physical and social suffering is a very dangerous experience.

#### a. Intrusive Thoughts

Going deeper into understanding the figure, harmony, taste, and senses of certain horrific events can also seriously disturb the perception with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). People with post-traumatic stress disorder are lost in memory and time as they live up to the requirements of the moment and are inattentive to their current lives. Sufferers report frequent relapses of distressing memories. The patient also experienced nightmares about the incident. They show movements during sleep as a result of nightmares.

#### b. Feeling Constantly Anxious and On the Edge

The hallmark of anxiety is excessive curiosity, while in depression there is a lack of energy, motivation and sadness PTSD sufferers talk about having trouble controlling their anger, or feeling very irritable This condition will make feelings more stressed if someone cannot control it and most likely reject everything that makes the anxiety will reappear.

#### c. Arousal and Reactive Symptoms

Arousal and reactivity are perhaps the most common syndromic associations of trauma-related symptoms. In films and literature, individuals with post0traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or other trauma-related problems are characterized by symptoms of definite anxiety, worry, and restlessness. These symptoms are often highly sensitive.

### Causes of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

According to Hamblen, J, & Barnett, E. (2018: 11), many causes can make people experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a serious traffic accident, namely a train, plane, or bus accident that puts someone in danger. Circumstances where many victims and some see their victims firsthand, experiences of criminal acts such as robbery, attempted murder, and rape, severe illnesses such as cancer that cause the death of their loved ones, natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions or possibly tsunamis, sexual abuse or physical violence received by their loved ones such as friends, parents or spouses as well as sexual abuse received by the person himself, and war or terrorism so that they see many casualties as a result of the truce received by their own friends or relatives.

### Effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

There are many very uncomfortable effects of post-traumatic stress disorder disorders (PTSD) are not handled. According to Michelle Lilly (2014: 644), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) disrupts a person's quality of life. PTSD can cause someone to demand a life such as living with someone who experiences efficient or constant fear. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) sufferers can also experience problems with friends, partners, family, and other people. Someone who suffers from PTSD, often vents by consuming sedatives alcohol, or cigarettes to avoid memories and feelings related to the trauma. Even They may be very anxious, easily agitated, irritable, or angry, which makes emotions uncontrollable. And may experience difficulty sleeping such as insomnia, or nightmares. Often people with trauma will experience panic attacks accompanied by shortness of breath and pain in the chest. That's why it's hard for her to take care of herself with a normal life.

## 2. METHOD

This study is qualitative research. Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena, which means that this research aims to help us understand the social world in which we live and why things happen. It is concerned with the social aspect of life, including people's behavior, opinions, attitudes, and social activity (Hancock, B. 2006: 7). Furthermore, according to Creswell (2009: 3), qualitative studies employ research plans and procedures to gather and analyze specific data. The purpose of choosing a qualitative approach is that the writer will describe the data taken from the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*.

In this study, the writer uses a literary psychology approach. Literary psychology studies the types and principles of psychology applied to literary works. This means that this research looks at how topics and cases in psychology are applied to the characters of literary works (Wellek & Warren 1977: 81). The literary psychology approach focuses its attention on human thought patterns and behavior and all the problems they experience. By utilizing psychological principles in literary works, things and phenomena in human existence can be explored and explained. So, the writer uses a literary psychological approach to analyze one aspect of the problem of the main character, namely post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), in the novel. The data source in this study is a novel entitled *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* by Zoulfa Katouh, published in 2022. The novel contains 448 pages. In this research, the data are taken in the form of several

narratives and dialogues in the novel that describe the PTSD of the character Salama in the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. The research instrument is the writer herself because the writer acts as the main observer who collects, interprets, and analyzes data to produce valid results in uncovering Salama's PTSD as the main character in the novel. There are several steps that the writer takes in collecting the data: 1) reading the novel; 2) classifying the data. After collecting the data, the writer classifies the data based on the research problem. Because the problem in this study is focused on the symptoms of PTSD that occur and the causes and consequences of PTSD, the writer classifies the data based on the symptoms of PTSD that occur and the effects of PTSD. To make it easier to answer research problems, after collecting data, there are two steps that the writer takes when analyzing the data. 1) interpreting the data; 2) drawing conclusions. The writer draws conclusions based on the data that has been analyzed. The conclusion is followed by the findings obtained by the writer after conducting the analysis.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. RESULT

*Table 1 PTSD Symptoms Data*

No	Salama's PTSD Symptoms	Frequently	Total
1	Avoiding Reminders of the Traumatic Event	3	15
2	Intrusive Thoughts	4	
3	Feeling Constantly Anxious and On the Edge	4	
4	Arousal and Reactive Symptoms	4	

Based on the table above, it can be seen that Salama experiences symptoms of intrusive thoughts, feeling constantly anxious and on the edge, arousal and reactive symptoms each have 4 data, and finally the avoiding reminders of the traumatic event symptom which has 3 data.

#### B. DISCUSSION

This part discusses Salama's PTSD consisting of the symptoms causes, the effects her PTSD.

##### 3.1 Salama's PTSD Symptoms

The writer finds four symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder faced by the character Salama in the novel. The symptoms are Avoiding Reminders of the Traumatic Event, Intrusive Thoughts, Feeling Constantly Anxious and On the Edge, and Arousal and Reactive Symptoms. To analyze the PTSD symptoms suffered by Salama, the writer applies trauma theory and post-traumatic stress disorder in this section. Based on Salama's past in Syria, the writer discovered Salama's PTSD symptoms.

### 3.1.1. Avoiding Reminders of the Traumatic Event

The first symptom that appears in the novel is avoiding remembering traumatic symptoms. This symptom is shown by Salama when she avoids places that are locations of terror and shootings which make her scared and traumatizes. A quotation that describes Salama's avoidance symptoms is as follows:

“I was the only girl in my family,” I say. “An older brother, Hamza. He was my world. My best friend. My everything. He and Baba were at a protest, and they couldn’t get away when the military swooped in. A week later, Mama died when a bomb fell on our building.” (Katouh, 2022: 80)

The quotation above explains that Salama does not want to remember or reminisce which makes her remember the death of her family due to terror and bomb explosions carried out by military snipers. The terror and massacres that repeatedly occurs in the surrounding area makes Salama remember her past. When Salama is with her Kenan, Salama tells Kenan about the bad events in the past that happens to her family. Bad events in the past cause Salama to experience trauma so Salama feels that the events she experiences are repeating themselves. This is called a flashback, or reliving the event. This incident disturbs her mental health so Salama often has nightmares and even hallucinations about her trauma.

We stay silent the rest of the way, lost in our worries and thoughts. When my home comes into view, I let out a small breath of relief. My neighborhood is quiet, and Kenan and I are the only ones on the streets. Everything looks as normal as can be, the faded blue front door still in one piece. I take out my keys, fumble desperately at the lock. Kenan leans against the wall. “I’ll wait outside.” “What! Get in before someone shoots you!” I usher him inside and close the door quickly. The house is quiet. No light filters from the living room’s drawn windows. Shadows dance against the hallway walls and somehow it feels colder inside the house than outside it. (Katouh, 2022: 83)

The quotation above explains that when Salama and Kenan, walk towards Salama's house, throughout the journey Salama feels afraid and always worried about bad things that might happen, but Salama thinks that she might feel safer at home than on the street. All kinds of crimes can happen in the house, especially at night. Salama feels that she would be fine if she is inside the house. It is different if she is on the street, she does not know whether the military snipers would come back and attack again or not. It is because her fear makes her very alert to everything related to terror while on the streets, that if something happens no one will protect her. When Salama and Kenan arrive at their house, the house seems quiet but Salama feels safe inside the house and feels cooler than outside.

### 3.1.2. Intrusive Thoughts

The second symptom is intrusive thoughts. Salama shows these symptoms when she is with her sister-in-law Layla at Kenan's apartment. A quotation that describes this symptom is as follows:

“Is it safe?” I put on my lab coat. “Are there snipers? I’m worrie about Layla. She better be okay. Kenan, what time is it? I have a shift at the hospital.” I snap my fingers behind my back to get his attention while watching the roads outside. They’re half empty and it seems no one is trying to hide on the rooftops. (Katouh, 2022: 78)

The quote above explains that when Salama was in Kenan's apartment, Salama was always worried about his sister-in-law Layla and always asked Kenan about the snipers out there carrying out terror and shooting around his neighborhood and the hospital area who might be able to persuade them. Salama always felt anxious with all her bad thoughts, and she always thought that the snipers might be hiding on the roofs of the empty rooms. As Salama walked towards the hospital where she worked, his thoughts made her very disturbed while she was outside.

### **3.1.3. Feeling Constantly Anxious and on the Edge**

The third symptom that appears in this novel is that Salama shows feelings of anxiety and restlessness. Salama feels uncomfortable talking about Syria. A quotation that describes this symptom is as follows:

Khawf's voice is as deadly as nightshade. "If you're not careful, Salama, you might become the instrument of your destruction." "I already changed my mind about leaving," I grumble. "So why are you tormenting me?" His lips curl into a slow smile. "You did. But a lot can happen between now and the boat's departure. I can't have that. You're not in control, Salama. I am. Remember: If you're arrested, then I'm not going anywhere. I'll be showing you all sorts of terrible things. (Katouh, 2022: 142)

The quotation above explains that from this situation it can be concluded that Salama feels very uncomfortable with the presence of Khawf who is always present, whispering bad things to her and even preventing her from leaving Syria. Salama's mind is filled with constant negative emotions such as anger and fear. Salama's inability to experience peace and happiness in Syria.

### **3.1.4. Arousal and Reactive Symptoms**

The fourth symptom experienced by Salama in this novel is difficulty sleeping, which is a symptom of passion and creativity. Since the terror incident that occurred in the surrounding area, other trauma-related problems have been characterized by difficulty sleeping, anxiety, worry, and definite restlessness. This can be seen in the following quotation:

I'm showing the people—the world—what's happening here." He nods to his laptop. "I upload the videos on YouTube when the electricity is back." My nails drag nervously against the floor. "Why are you telling me this? You do realize if you were found out, you'd be worse than dead? If the Free Syrian Army fails to defend us from the military, you'll be arrested." (Katouh, 2022: 74)

The quotation above explains that this traumatic event still haunts her. Salama is not ready to face the continuous terror that occurs in Syria. She is afraid whenever she hears someone say something about the Syrian liberation army, Salama's reaction proved that she is uncomfortable with it and starts to show her anxiety.

## **3.2 Cause of Salama's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

According to researchers Hamblen, J., & Barnett, E. PTSD is a mental disorder that can arise after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, such as military combat.

natural disasters, terrorist incidents, serious accidents or acts of violence, individuals such as rape and physical violence. PTSD is characterized by biological changes as well as psychological symptoms. When someone is diagnosed with PTSD, it means that the person has experienced an event that caused physical and mental harm, and the person responds with an overwhelming sense of fear and helplessness. It can be seen in the following quotation:

Back then I lay on a hospital bed, silent tears stinging the cuts on my face, my left thigh aching from the fall, and my bruised ribs protesting painfully every time I breathed. My hands were wrapped in such heavy gauze, they looked like mittens. Shrapnel had dug holes into my hands; the blood burst out like a fountain. But all of that was manageable, the only serious injury was at the back of my head. (Katouh, 2022: 22)

The quotation above explains that the cause of the post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by Salama is an explosion that occurs in the area around her house. The military soldiers not only terrorized but also carries out shootings, resulting in many fatalities. This incident causes Salama to experience physical and mental harm. She lies in pain with her wounds. The incident is so clearly indelible from her memory and the characteristics of the terrorist that there are too many flashbacks to the day of the shooting that she experiences trauma.

### **3.3 Effects of Salama's Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

PTSD sufferers also sometimes take sedatives to ease the pain. In this case the writer will explain the effects of Salama's PTSD on the various events that happen to her. This can be seen below.

#### **4.3.1 Taking Sedatives**

One of the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder that Salama experiences is excessive anxiety and fear, which makes Salama have to prevent it by taking sedatives to relieve the trauma. This can be seen in the following quotation:

“We'll be providing you with enough antibiotics to keep the infection away, but there's only so much Panadol we'll be able to give, everyone around here needs it. I can give you more than the hospital will. And believe me, Samar will need them. That pain will not disappear easily.” I'd have to sacrifice the two Panadol boxes I've been saving for Layla and me. But as long as we get to Germany, it doesn't matter. Nothing matters. (Katouh, 2022: 102)

The quotation above explains that Salama has excessive anxiety and fear which ultimately makes Salama turn to sedative drugs to avoid memories and feelings related to her trauma. By taking sedative drugs, Salama may feel calm even thoughts this is only temporary. Salama knows that the trauma is so severe that Salama used Panadol as a precaution when Salama is in Germany with Layla. Salama keeps two boxes of Panadol in case the trauma recurs, she can use Panadol to treat the pain.



### 4.3.2 Emotional Effect

One of the impacts of post-traumatic stress disorder from Salama's anxiety is emotional. It appears that Salama is experiencing uncontrollable emotions characterized by feelings of anger. A quotation that describes this, symptoms is as follows:

Humiliation burns through me. My jeans are smeared with dirt and sharp pebbles prick my hands. One lemon has tumbled under the car. After grabbing it, I straighten up, pushing down the hatred in my eyes. The soldier rests one arm over the open door, his eyes roaming me from head to toe. Revulsion threatens to choke me. (Katouh, 2022: 266)

The quotation above shows that Salama is at odds with the military soldiers when Salama, Kenan, and his brother are crossing the border wanting to leave Syria but they are blocked by the military soldiers. Salama becomes very angry when the military soldiers rummaged throughs Salama's bag and all the items inside fall and roll over. The soldier looks at Salama as if he wanted Salama. Salama expresses the hatred she encounters towards the soldiers. Salama keeps it to herself because she does not want to be finished off by the soldiers, but Salama feel that she needs to tell Kenan what she thinks.

### 4.3.3 Salama's Social Anxiety

Salama, who is a woman of Syrian descent who lives in a racist small- town environment, grows up to be a woman who lacks self-confidence. As previously explained, environmental factors influence a person's anxiety because the environment influences a person's growth and development. Salama always finds it difficult to adapt to new environments and communicate with other people. Salama is described as a character who has social anxiety by Zoulfa Katouh in the novel *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*. A quotation that describes this, symptoms is as follows:

“I can't believe university starts in a week.” I shake my head. “I can't believe we're sitting here drinking zhoorat three years later.” “I can't believe you're with me.” He kisses the wedding ring on my finger, then kisses along one scar sliced into my wrist. “How did I score someone so out of my league?” I chuckle. “You seduced me with all your Studio Ghibli facts.” He grins. “Miyazaki doesn't use scripts in his movies. He comes up with the dialogue as he goes along. I act all flustered, fanning myself.“Oh my God!” He laughs and we finish up our tea. As soon as the sun's light has engulfed the sky, we go back inside. It's a small one-bedroom apartment but it's home. A few boxes still clutter the floor. Tariq and his friends furnished the apartment for us, and I had to hide in the bathroom to cry from gratitude for a solid ten minutes before I could face anyone. (Katouh, 2022: 289-290)

The quotation above explains that Salama was offered to continue his studies at a university pharmacy program in Canada and will start in a week, Kenan always helps Salama in his social life. Salama couldn't believe that she would sit with his friends and drink Zhoorat for three years. Even Salama doesn't believe that Kenan will continue to be with her. But Kenan always reassured Salama by kissing the wedding ring on her finger. Salama told Kenan that he couldn't score a score that was so beyond his capabilities. But Kenan continued to seduce Salama and continued to convince him

that Salama could do it. Kenan tries to help reduce his social anxiety. However, Salama's anxiety arose when Salama was afraid and did not believe that Kenan would continue to be with her. Salama wants to be like people who can socialize with confidence, but Salama is not ready to face his social environment alone. Salama hid in the bathroom and cried because of gratitude, she tried to convince herself to be able to face whoever it was.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the data, the following things can be concluded. First, it is found that there are four symptoms of trauma experienced by Salama in *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow*, such as avoiding reminders of the traumatic events, intrusive thoughts, feeling constantly anxious and on the edge, arousal and reactive symptoms. These four symptoms are influential causes of Salama's PTSD. The incidents of terror and massacres carried out by military snipers makes Salama feel anxious and even excessively afraid, thus causing Salama to feel negative emotions characterized by forebodings and signs of somatic tension, such as a fast heartbeat, restlessness, sweating, and frequently has difficulty breathing, which indicates how uncomfortable she is when she hears someone talk about the terrible events that are happening in Syria. Both are causes of PTSD. When Salama is 19 years old, she has to witness terror and shooting that occurs at the hospital where she works which claimed many lives. This incident causes Salama to experience physical and mental harm. She is in a lot of pain from her ankle wound. This incident is unforgettable including the characteristics of the terrorists, so there are too many flashbacks. Salama's bad experiences in the past give her a bad emotional response. This incident triggers a feeling of anxiety that emerges every time she witnesses a bad incident that keeps repeating itself. It can be concluded that of all these causes, negative experiences in the past, as well as the hospital environment where Salama works, are the causes of Salama experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder. The third is the effects of PTSD. From these causes, Salama experiences several effects such as taking sedatives, emotional effects, and social anxiety. One of the impacts of PTSD that Salama experiences is excessive anxiety and fear, so Salama has to prevent this by taking sedatives to relieve the trauma. The emotional impact that Salama experiences is uncontrollable emotions, namely feelings of anger. The next impact is that Salama experiences social anxiety that will appear every time she is in a social situation. This makes it difficult for her to interact with other people.

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