

Going to the Bittersweet Roots vs. New World Blues in Gurnah's *Gravel Heart*- A Psychological Analysis

S. Moorthi¹, Jayashree Premkumar Shet², Christy Paulina³, M. Natarajan⁴, & Tribhuwan Kumar⁵

¹ Assistant Professor of English Sree Sevugan Annamalai College Devakottai, Sivaganga Tamil Nadu, India

² Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Translation, College of Science & Arts, An Nabhanya Qassim University, Buraida, Saudi Arabia

³ Assistant Professor of English, Bishop Caldwell College, Maravanmadam, Thoothukudi Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli, India

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, India

⁵ Assistant Professor of English, College of Science and Humanities at Sulail, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia

Correspondence: Dr. S. Moorthi Assistant Professor of English Sree Sevugan Annamalai College, Devakottai -630303 Sivaganga Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: moorthisukumar@gmail.com

Received: July 6, 2023

Accepted: September 25, 2023

Online Published: December 11, 2023

doi:10.5430/wjel.v14n1p431

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n1p431>

Abstract

This descriptive qualitative paper aims at presenting a close reading of the protagonist Salim's reminiscences in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart* in terms of an eclectic approach toward representation of trauma. Psychological trauma refers to the unbearable, untreatable, and unspeakable psychological wounds remaining on the subject's unconsciousness. The most widely used method for studying trauma is based on Freud's, (1995) psychoanalytic study. Alongside with Freud's theory, Kristal- Andersson's(2000) and Felititi & et al.,'s (1998) studies are also used to draw the descriptions and explanations of trauma in Sali, the protagonist of *Gravel Heart*. Also, this study is a clarion call to the authorities at the top to provide a realistic technique and manner of working with immigrants in counseling and provide able and humanitarian assistance- services as the study also found out like many other real heroes, Salim a victim of bitter childhood and as an immigrant. Abdul Razak Gurnah, who was honoured with the Nobel Prize for Literature (2021) for his true and passionate retelling of the woes, longings of immigrants in general, and specifically Africans. In *Gravel Heart*, one among his evocative oeuvre retells the ties that bind' as well as 'the ties that fray.' (Telegraph) Hence this study would pave way to the emergence of likewise multidisciplinary studies to blend psychological frameworks to investigate the causes of real as well as fictional character's trauma.

Keywords: Gravel Heart, Salim's Character, Psychology, Analysis

1. Introduction

Postcolonial theory asserts that some shadows do persist even after the 85 percent huge European Colonial Hegemony was dismantled. This viewpoint was shared by millions of people. That was why certain memories from the past persisted, prevail and continue to linger in discourses of Asian, African and American Literature. Through the protagonists voices, the writers voice their protest against the destruction of their roots. As Nayantara Sahgal's protagonist Sanad of, *A Time to be Happy* (1964) says: "Take our clothes, our mannerisms, our speech. Take us, what are we? I'm not saying it's not a good thing to borrow from another culture, but to take it over lock, stock and barrel, and become an imitation of it - it's pathetic." In 2020, Spreier and in 2022 Qurratulaen Liaqat studied how Mohsin Hamid's 2017 novel *Exit West* depicts the trauma of migrants and refugees in general. After laying the theoretical groundwork by defining the field of literary trauma hypothesis, the significance of displacement via trauma studies, and the concept of the Double Absence, Spreier (2020) looked at how Hamid depicts the trauma of refugees in his work of fiction and how closely these depictions align with literary trauma theory. On the contrary, by examining the symbols, metaphors, and narrative technique used in Hamid's text, Qurratulaen Liaqat (2022) established the poetics of migrant trauma in modern literature with the goal of establishing a discursive artistic trajectory of the migratory trauma narrative. Qurratulaen Liaqat (2022) asserts that the issue of immigrants feeling alienated is a concern shared by numerous other writers. Liqat argues that the Specter of of migration, as described by Hardt and Negri (2000, p. 133-134), haunts the modern world, and the Age of migration, as referred to by Castles (2012, p. 1), has inspired a range of creative works on the subject (Frank, 2008, p. 2; Fraser, 2018, p. 8; Naeressan et al., 2008, p. 1). As a result, migratory fiction has emerged as a literary genre that explores various aspects such as discursive stylistics, discourses, languages, enunciations, multicultural hybridity, and thematic elements (Frank, 2008; Moslund, 2010, p. 1-28; White, 1995). Moreover, Jhumpa Lahiri, a Canadian/American novelist of Indian descent, has left a lasting influence on the literary landscape, as has Bharati Mukherjee. The problems of their unique cultural setting in West Bengal, India, are accurately portrayed in their writings. Their final relocation (assimilation) to the USA as naturalized citizens followed their

displacement (alienation) from their country of origin, where they were "simultaneously invisible" as writers and "overexposed" as a racial minority. The Tiger's Daughter, Wife, and The Namesake were all written by them. These three books address the issues of nationality, place, identity, and past recollections in the USA. The subject of identity is one of flux and misery throughout these works.

Across much of twentieth-century American and European literature, the alienated protagonist is a regular role. There have been numerous efforts to depict contemporary man's bewilderment, dissatisfaction, isolation, disintegration, and estrangement. Alienation, rootlessness or homelessness is a prominent theme in World literature too. In many works of fiction, alienation is a central topic and recurring element. "She'll never fit in' in India," says Indo-English novelist Balachandra Rajan of his protagonist Nalini of *Too Long in the West*, "because you'll live in two worlds and fall between two stools, as she had lived in the lost world for too long." (P.55) The feeling of being homeless, as well as the alienation of migrants, is a key theme in post-colonial literature. So, when an opportunity arises, do migrants choose returning to their roots, which has been a long-held goal, or continue to live as a second-class citizen, as they got used to it or for any other reason? Also, Miller (2014) investigated how immigrant novels use the perspective of newly arrived immigrants to address the current national scenario and societal histories of shared marginalization. His investigation identified works by Abraham Cahan, Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, Lee Yan Phou, Myra Kelly, and Constantine Panunzio as instances of immigrant writing that portray narratives of continental dislocation and anticlimactic arrival. Also, Oniwe (2017) focused his research on the fiction of Third African Generation writers in order to demonstrate how their works strengthen postcolonial theoretical discussion by maneuvering the complicated terrain of how African fiction has become embedded in global literary culture using the narratives of migrants. In order to emphasize the accomplishments and failings of globalization, global issues such as racism, cosmopolitanism, and human trafficking are evaluated and examined through the prism of African migrant experiences.

1.1 *Gurnah, the Immigrant*

Gurnah, like his characters, was displaced from his home Zanzibar and migrated to UK at the age of 17, So he could see identity as a fluid concept. Gurnah's primary protagonists not only create and modify identities for themselves, but they also disrupt the identities of the Europeans they meet in the places to which they travel. All of Gurnah's characterizations revolve on migration and displacement, a yearning for home, financial and psychological problems, whether from East Africa to Europe or inside Africa, and the culture clash they create. Also, Falk (2020)'s study points out that Gurnah's literature explores the complex web of social conventions, sentiments, and tales that construct subjectivity in a social reality that is both fragile and global. He adds that cultural alienation, migration, and the struggles to maintain a base of societal and literary consistency in the shape of a home are all themes that recur in Gurnah's works.

1.2 *Gravel Heart*

Gravel Heart is Abdulrazak Gurnah's most remarkable effort, capturing the immigrant experience with dispassionate accuracy and tremendous insight. It is a highly poignant story of loneliness, identities, belonging, and treachery. Salim is the protagonist. The seven year old Salim's little universe was his inattentive father, his cherished uncle, his prized books, the routine rituals of public school and Islam studies. It is the mirror that reflects the change sweeping through Zanzibar in 1970s. In addition, Salim will have to fathom the guilt and oppression lurking at the core of his family's past years down the line, as he navigates an unfamiliar and unfriendly Britain. Salim got befuddled and embarrassed when his father walked out was not told anything about the changes, and he was not clarified about his mother's absenteeism by being sighed with a mysterious man; quietness is stacked on top of stillness his boyhood. Salim, the lonely youngster, moves to London for higher studies when his flashy Uncle Amir, now a senior envoy, promises him an opportunity. But nobody could have equipped him again for freezing temperatures and swarming throngs of this inhospitable metropolis.

2. Liminality

Academicians and researchers have studied the liminal aspects of American authors' and other their fictional characters. The shifting states and hazy bounds of the characters' personalities are examined in-depth by these experts. Exploring these liminal spaces reveals crucial nuances and nuanced aspects of the characters. Countless literary novels depict the prevalence of liminalities in the protagonists of immigrants. Furthermore, immigration might cause a shift in gender relations among families. For instance, Tal's *Double Crossing* (2005), Frost's *The Braid* (2006), and Auch's *Ashes of Roses* (2002) depict the pressure felt by homes as girls pursue their newly gained independence to examine varied societal positions, which is frequently met with opposition from grandparents, in particular dads. Williams-Garcia's *No Laughter Here* (2004) graphically depicts the consequences encountered by females from families reluctant to adopting new practices. During her summer vacation in Nigeria, the central character, Victoria, experiences female circumcision

Sasinedran, R.T. & Shet. J.P (2022) in their study on Gunrah's *Cages* cite Shure, Charles La's article (Liminality. . . The Space in Between | About | What Is Liminality?) to highlight the cat on the wall position of migrants. It's real trauma for few immigrants who can live forever without experiencing like they fit in someplace, at certainly to some level. Shure, Charles La adds that liminality is not a permanent state of mind. Therefore, though they undergo stress and trauma the migrants learn to live by them. Their qualitative study proves that the protagonist has all the psychologists- listed trauma. Lewis, (1999) in his study "Impossible Domestic Situations': Questions of Identity And Nationalism In The Novels Of Abdulrazak Gurnah And M. G. Vassanji' *Thamyris: Mythmaking from Past to Present* " opines both Gurnah's and Vassanji's doubly diasporic identities, have everything to do with a common sense of destitution than with a mutual sense of belonging. 'They challenge the premise that becoming a subjugated inhabitant of a place entails a threat to national belonging in the postcolonial state,' according to the authors. Vassanji's work has a number of themes in common with Gurnah's.

Going back to the roots is the ceaseless longing in some characters but there have been the real life characters and fictional characters that

are not bold enough to take this decision. So the longings can be attributed to just liminalities. It's really a million dollar question to choose the poisonous roots or the New World blues. Most of Abdul Razak Gurnah's characters from most of his fictions are thrown at this. This study wants to probe whether the protagonist Salim and a few other characters of *Gravel Heart* undergo this dilemma and which one they choose.

3. Research Questions

1. Does Salim, the protagonist of *Gravel Heart* undergo sufferings more at home or as an immigrant at London ?
2. Which is more potent his longings to go back to the roots or to settle down in a foreign land as any other materialistic hero? Do his sufferings emerge at the backdrop of adverse childhood experiences of his?
3. How does Salim's characterization deviate from other characters of Gurnah on taking the final decision. Is it because of the liminalities as psychologists say ?

4. Methodology

This study draws its data from Abdul Razak Gunrah's fiction *Gravek Heart*. (<https://www.bloomsbury.com/in/gravel-heart-9781408881309/>)

This study is qualitative in nature. To comprehend and describe the underpinnings of the human mind and how they shape human lives, the research uses the textual analysis method. It uses Freud's (1995) psychoanalytical theory, which addresses the psychological factors influencing human behavior as well as the individual's feelings and behaviors associated to past events, to evaluate how one's mind develops. It emphasizes unconscious psychological behaviors and makes the case that infantile influences play a key role in shaping personality traits in adults. Also, Freud posits that immigrants experience liminalities, which manifest as a sense of alienation. This phenomenon is explored within the psychoanalytic examination of the protagonist in the novel. This psycho analytic study also investigates the causes of liminality in Salim's, the protagonist of *Gravel-Heart's*, character by comparing Salim's childhood experiences with the study of Felitti VJ, et al.(1998)on Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults.Also it tries to traces the aspects of *A schematic model*, derived from extensive clinical experience, for understanding the refugee/immigrant and for application in psychotherapy and support work proposed by Kristal-Andersson (2000)

5. Literature Review

The works of Tanzanian-born writer Abdul Razak Gurnah demonstrate his insight, observations, and interpretation of real-life traumas of colonialism and immigration. In 1994, he wrote "**Paradise**," which earned him a spot on the Booker Prize shortlist. It was set during World War I in colonial east Africa. Elizabeth Maslen (1996) in her study *Review essay: Stories, Constructions and Deconstructions: Abdulrazak Gurnah's Paradise* explores how in *Paradise*, Abdul Razak Gurnah emphasizes the importance of Otherness in the construction and destruction of self and culture. She also examines how two great stories as from Bible and the Koran together becomes the backbone of Gurnah's *Paradise*. Because the content of the native's testimony will, by definition, contradict the foreign storyline, Elizabeth Maslen asserts that Gurnah totally builds his argument in *Paradise*. 'Gurnah's exquisite use of his medium, ultimately, is what stands out citing the references that span from Zanzibar to Mombasa, transcending 'state' lines; and spectacular barricades, such as the wall built by the legendary Iskander to keep out the giants Gog and Magog, that are mostly metaphysical,' in Elizabeth Maslen's view.

Falk's (2007) study focused on "Subject and History in Selected Works by Abdulrazak Gurnah, Yvonne Vera, and David Dabydeen" is concerned with subject formation in the fictions of these three contemporary postcolonial authors. Gurnah's *Admiring Silence* (1996), *By the Sea* (2001), and *Desertion* (2005) are featured in this contextualized reading. In the texts, the researcher looks at conceptual and procedural components of the victim's construction. This research aims to look at the depiction of physical and linguistic evidence that make up the individuality

Mwongeli's (2019) thesis is a comprehensive assessment of interactive storytelling approach in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart's* depiction of social unrest. According to the researcher, interactive storytelling approach is focused on giving a reader the ability to explore a writer's narration style in order to get at a text's meaning. Characterization is also explored by the author in order to illustrate how it catalyzes or even epitomizes societal breakdown. The research also examines the novelist's depictions of a fragmented society in order to determine if the narrative method used emphasizes the issue of social disintegration. The researcher uses Imogen Tyler's Social Abjection Theory and narratology to analyze the constructs of the study.

Unlike Mwongeli's (2019) study this study tries to highlight the liminality in the protagonist. Salim's likes and dislikes for a life in England as well as in homeland are accounted.

6. Results

The content analysis of the novel reveals that Salim, the protagonist of *Gravel Heart*, suffered a great deal of pain, suffering, and humiliation both in his boyhood at homeland as a victim of child-abuse and as an immigrant in adolescence and adulthood abroad.

Paradise or New World Blues

Salim's love for his house is expressed in lines like: In later years, in my banishment, I pictured the house inch by inch. I don't know if it was lying nostalgia or painful proper longing, but I paced its rooms and breathed its smells for years after I left. (12) The word banishment tells volumes of love and passion for everything of his identity. It also reveals his knowledge that it was the way Saida chose

to get rid of her adolescent boy, who went crazy on knowing the cause of his dad’s agony and poor mental state. The word gets repeated once more in the novel.

You banished me to this place in the name of love. You said you wanted the best for me but really you let him take me away so you could live your life in peace. (96)

His hard life in the new world and his passion for his homeland is expressed well with one single word, “banished.”

Rather than the letters he wrote to his mother, his unsent letters to his mother and father describe his longing for his homeland, his family, and the hardships he faces in the UK. Salim was giving an account of his friendship with Reshat and Mahmood. His father remarked that he fancied all this while that Salim was among ‘angry English men and superior madams.’ Salim denies that it wasn’t for all the while. (235) At last for his sister’s sake he decides to pay a visit to Hakim and Hakim offers him, “There’ll be something” there for him. Alike his step-father, Hakkim his father, Masud also wishes him to stay by repeating the same utterance: “There will be something here for you.” Nevertheless Salim denies and makes it to London and he thinks even if he returns to his homeland, ‘it won’t be to become a beast’ in Hakim’s pens. (242) His hatred for his step father is ever the same, even after his losing his mother.

Saleh Omar, an abnormally aged illegal immigrant who has made the journey in the UK and Latif Mahmud, a college professor who might have lived in England for several years, meet in *By the Sea* (2001) to unravel stories from their pasts that would expose to one other surprising relationships. The meeting of English Orientalist Martin Pearce and Hassanali, a shopkeeper from a tiny seaside village in Kenya, around the beginning of the nineteenth century, sparks the novel *Desertion*. When a person migrates to the United States or any other region of the world, he or she discovers that they are viewed as second-class citizens. That is why immigrants yearn for their hometown, where they think they will be able to breathe freely. It’s merely a visit to a motherland where one can’t find a home, ironically. “I believe there’s a sense, in the mind, that it’s home more than England could ever be,” *Gurnah* adds. He has spent more time in England than in his Zanzibarian neighborhood.

Salim has no one at home to make him feel lonely in a distant place save his mother, whom he lately declared to despise after learning of her betrayal to his father. But, he adored his mother, and even after learning of her plan to send him away, he remains haunted by her memories. ‘Sometimes I hear your voice in the dark. I know it’s you.’ (96)

Salim had to toil to know himself and others in his new world. On the contrary, he got a lion’s share of fatherly love from Mr. Mgeni. Most of his acquaintances and friends many of whom: ‘have been kind to me. I do not know why I have been offered these kindnesses, by Mr Mgeni in particular. I have done nothing to deserve them, nor do they come to me through any virtue of mine.’ His stay in London can be described in a nutshell borrowing his own words: I had not understood how fear and trouble can co-exist with such generosity. Salim’s this utterance is the tale of every immigrant: ‘I have learnt that I am timid and cautious, afraid to cause offence.’ (90)

Psychological Background For Salim’s Trauma

In spite of seeking a little happiness with his short – lived relations with women, Salim can be found with ceaseless stress and inferiority complexes. There can be two psychological reasons that attribute to his trauma.

It may be due to his childhood bitter experiences. Regretfully, humans will all experience numerous traumatic events and circumstances during their lives. While they can surely have an emotional and physical influence on them, in their study many psychologists proved it. The relationship between Childhood Abuse and causes of mental trauma in Adults. (Felitti et al., 1998) Felitti and others listed types of prevalence of childhood exposure to abuse (8) and household dysfunction (9). One of the research questions was: ‘Was one of his household members mentally sick?’ So, this proves Masoud’s silence hurt not only him, but also Salim later down the road.

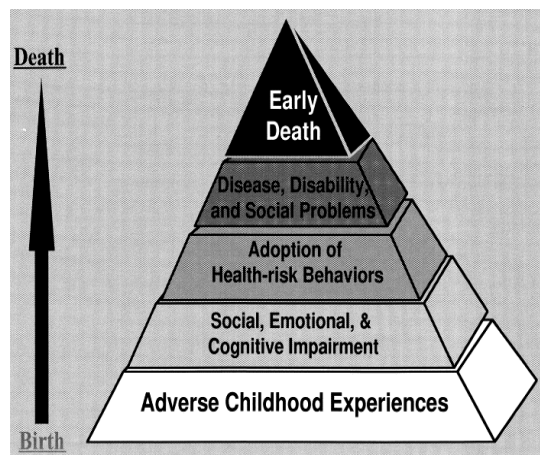


Figure 1. Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults

Adapted from Felitti et al. (1998)

It might also be due to the innumerable immigrants’ untold mental agony.

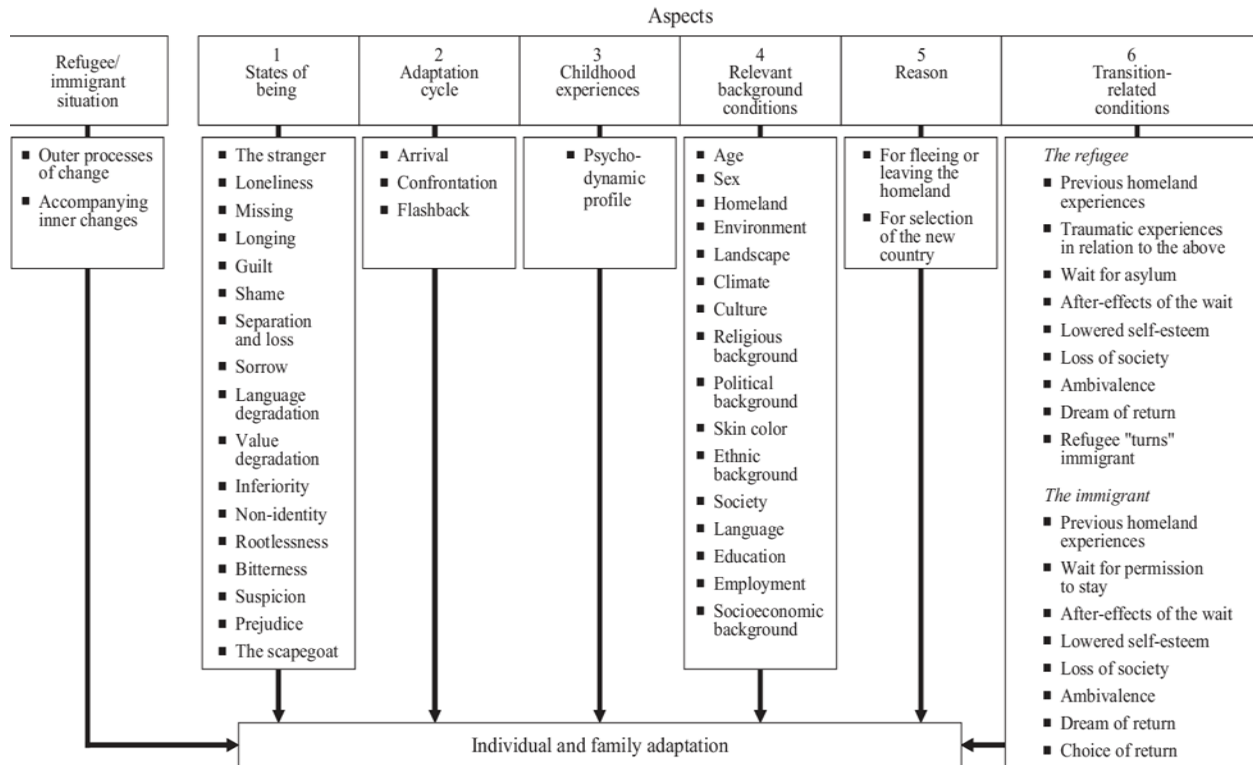


Figure 2. A schematic model, derived from extensive clinical experience, for understanding the refugee/immigrant and for application in psychotherapy and support work. (Kristal-Andersson. (2000).)

As Kristol-Anderson (2000) lists the various psychological mental illnesses, he follows Seeman (1991), who proposed six key types of alienation to address this need (powerlessness, normlessness, emptiness, self-estrangement, social withdrawal, and cultural estrangement) to integrate multiple interpretations of the concept. There have always been several studies on alienation, owing to the fact that alienation is a multi-faceted topic with numerous ramifications. This research also looks for signs of such mental diseases in the characters.

Salim, the typical Materialistic Man

A comparison of Salim’s character with Gurnah’s and other novelists’ protagonist reveals how Gurnah could present Salim a typical, 21st Century individual. Like Abbas, Sindhi also suffers due to biculturalism. Alienation is the root cause for all the dilemma one undergoes. ‘Perhaps I felt like that because I was a foreigner in America. But then, what difference would it have made if I had lived in Kenya or India or any other place for that matter! It seemed to me that I would still be a foreigner.’ (55)He was rejected by Billie, with whom he confides his secrets and was doubly hurt after being rejected for being a ‘Muslim from Africa’ and for letting her, know his past.

Arun Joshi’s ‘*The Foreigner*,’ Sindhi has to bear the guilt of June’s death as Abbas is haunted by abandoning his young wife and still born child. But being a visitor wouldn’t help, you should be Indian. He understands the Indian values and starts to work for others and gets detached to detachment through attachment to the humanity. To echo the protagonist lamenting of his past that lingers on him as a shadow, “In many ways the past had been a waste but it had not been without its lessons.” The sad demise of Babu due to a car-accident since he drove his car at a high speed on his coming to know the relationship between Sindhi and June and June’s death during the abortion are the burden he couldn’t drop down. In spite of trying to develop a sense of detachment and going to India he suffers as Shiela rightly says that he doesn’t feel that he belongs to India. Sindhi is awakened by Muthu, a factory worker who educates him the value of hard work, “consistently getting involved with the World.” The story ends with a moral that industriousness and being a true social member is the summum bonum of life. Sindhi ultimately gets the peace and solace he sought after.

Glimpses of Gurnah’s other Charaters

Abdul Razak Gurnah’s intent desire to be a full- fledged writer sprung as he decided to sort out the things that were nagging and troubling as he himself says: “Some of those feelings of regret or homesickness, of wanting to think about what had been left behind. You couldn’t just really sit the way you are at eighteen,” and writing gives him place to indulge in a conversation to express those nagging things.

The same thing his characters take to. The unsent letters written by the protagonist whether they were to his mom or dad served as mnemonic devices to provide an account of his sufferings. He never expressed his fear, failure, humiliation which he actually sent to his mother but in those two note-book full of unsent letters to his mom and dad. Gurnah could give to get an insight into Salim’s character. Like the father, like

the son. His father gets himself buried into fathomless silence on knowing his loved wife's betrayal. Salim, though becomes aggressive and shows disobedience and destroys every expensive appliance, which he thinks might have been a gift from Hakim as an adolescent, behaves himself once, he goes to London. He never discloses his sufferings, disappointment to his mother. He, though, understood she has sent him on banishment, never expresses it to his mom, nevertheless, he doesn't even justify his actions to his mom, which any son would have done. He blankets himself with silence so as to be a gentleman.

Hunsu .F. (2014) in his *Autobiography and the fictionalization of Africa in the twenty-first century: Abdul Razak Gurnah's art in desertion*, demonstrates in Abdulrazak Gurnah's eighth novel, the autobiographical tactics is deployed in order to explain how migrant subjects are suffering. His study ends with the bottom-line: Desertion succeeds as an African work because it rethinks migration and identities in twenty-first-century Africa, along with other things.

Gurnah's novel offers two major contributions to the fictionalization of Africa in the twenty-first century. Gurnah demonstrates that migration is a problem that should be viewed as a major determinant of who an African is. He utilizes his characters, to demonstrate that racial identities can defy easy categorizations and that a mono-racial Africa is neither tenable nor possible in the twenty-first century. Gurnah especially emphasizes the excellent nature of people of all races, religions, and castes. Hasanali is a devout Muslim who is submissive to God and the pinnacle of kindness. He mulls over his fateful meeting with Martin, wondering how he could ever refuse the wounded man's kindness and care. After determining that giving up the European would be a sin against God, he decided to give it up... (23)

Desertion was released four years after a terrorist incident in the United States of America, and it appears that Gurnah's portrayal of Muslims and Islam is intended to counteract the unfavorable reaction that they have received in the twenty-first century. Christians and Muslims coexisted without bloodshed or hatred in post-independence Zanzibar, even before Rashid left for Britain. Practitioners of each religion respected one other's space. There are Christian and Muslim schools, and parents have the freedom to select which school their children attend. There are no conflicts. Jamila goes to both sorts of schools while remaining a devout Muslim. Furthermore, unlike conventional perceptions of polygamous Muslim families, none of the three families shown in the story fit under this category. Paradise is more than just an engrossing novel and a well-balanced testament to a bygone era. Slaves are described, as well as their unimaginable miseries. Gurnah provides voice to a "unheard" group in Foucauldian and New Historicist terms, and in Yusuf he concentrates on the obscure rather than the big makers of history.

"If there is hell on earth, then it is here" is the reality within the paradisiac garden, by which Yusuf was enthralled as it had fragrance, the sound of water and music; Here again we find Amina and Khalil enslaved by Aziz and imprisoned into his palatial residence.

Admiring Silence's storyteller could make a new home for himself in Britain, surviving the totalitarian tyranny that reins Zanzibar. Unfortunately the circumstances lead him to witness the demolition of his Utopian African stories he has created for his bride and his in-laws since he has to depart to Africa. Whether one migrates to the United States or another part of the world, one is viewed as a second-class citizen. That is why they yearn for their motherland, where they imagine they will be able to breathe freely. Merely by a visit to a homeland, you can't find a home. "I think there's a sense, in the imagination, that it's home more than England could ever be," Gurnah relates. He has spent more time in England than in his Zanzibarian neighborhood that he knows England much better now in terms of living in it. In *Admiring Silence* the narrator's silence where he should have voiced, is an instance of how the administration controls the voice of the marginalized people.

Abbas, the key character in *The Last Gift* (2011), tells his children stories about his youth as a merchant seaman instead of narrating them his "true" immigration story, which is traumatic and haunting: "those deep silent places that he couldn't resist travelling to, that he despised going to, " as a gift of a new understanding of the value of rootedness and cultural legacy that the couple Abbas and Maryam pass down to their children after having shied away from it for so decades. In *The Last Gift* Abbas's willful prolonged silence an outcome of his abandoning his wife and child and as Maryam, his second wife asks herself: 'Will he tell them that they are the children of a bigamist?' Besides the guilt of being a bigamist, his feeling of alienation also runs throughout the novel. Others clad in winter clothes 'as if they knew from practice and familiarity how cold it really was,' whereas Abba did not," despite many ears of living here'. Abbas becomes when he becomes mutated wanted to 'describe to her his wretched cowardice' and when he could not speak becomes impatient. (127). 'I'll never let myself die in a strange land that does not want me,' thinks the protagonist Abbas. During his diabetes crisis due of his intense sense of connection to his lost motherland, Zanzibar, he opposes anything British. He is unfamiliar with their habits and traditions. Birthdays are of no importance to him, and he calls Christmas as a "wasteful carnival of pagan debauchery." (36). Abbas tells his children, "Life here isn't a vacation" (98). He understands that he has "fallen" in his new country (253). A Monkey from Africa! (279) which, paradoxically, highlights Abba's story, written by his son, will explore his sense of belonging as well as the anguish of alienation and both Hanna and Jamal are going to explore Zanzibar to explore his roots.

A complete rejection of Western way of life by not mentioning anything about money or power is incredible, but that's what is expected from didactic writings. The same didacticism is seen in the characterization of Masud. As Ernest Hemingway said, 'The most painful thing is losing oneself in the process of loving someone and forgetting that you are special too,' Gurnah's characters Salim's father destructs his own fate for Saida's sake. At Seventeen, he prefers to live all alone by himself by rejecting to go abroad with his family for his teen age love for Saida, without even knowing whether it would be acknowledged or not. Then, when he understands Saida's betrayal- he alienates himself from the rest of the world. Anybody would feel awed by 'his self-neglect,' Anyone who has loved sincerely would understand how deep his disappointment at the loss of Saida's love must have been for him to live like that with such resigned dedication.

Tilting Towards West

Elizabeth Maslen quoting Gurnah's notion that the locals' use of English, rather than portraying dependence, she highlights the post-colonial victim's connection to the colonial language and imperial culture. Another bitter reality the novel exposes is the myth of diaspora. The novel reveals individual dilemma through its last five chapters. Salim's decision to return back to the UK at the end makes it more complex and challenging to understand the reasons behind taking this decision.

Is it the way of life chosen by ambitious youth of colonized nations? Salim's family has precedents of men going abroad seeking a livelihood. Maalim Yahya, his paternal grandfather left to work in the Gulf before he was born. He and the rest of the family, his wife and two daughters never returned back home. Ahmed Musa Ibrahim, Salim's maternal grandfather was an educated man, a travelled man, He had spent two years at Makerere College in Uganda, one year at Edinburgh University in Scotland, completing a Diploma in Public Health, several weeks in Cairo, and travelled through Beirut and stayed in Istanbul for three weeks on his way to London. His uncle Amir was a diplomat. So sending Salim abroad couldn't have been a thought of banishing him as he names it. If so, why he resumes it, is a million dollar question. Billie's English father missed India after his return to London whereas Billie's Indian mother couldn't be happy in England, though She stayed back for she wanted to be loyal to her dead husband.

Salim preferred to lose himself in a larger world of chance and danger, rather to seek his so called archrival, his step father's help to plunge down to the roots. Like Revathi. T.S & Shet. J.S's study which proved Hamid, Gurnah's protagonist of *Cages*, Gurnah's Salim, the protagonist of 'Gravel Heart' is a prototype migrant for whom the psychological concerns are not a permanent state of mind. They suffer, but learn to live by it or later come to a conclusion New World Blues are better than the old World blues. Or is he really got fascinated with the UK's industrialization and high - tech society as we see in his letters to his mother, which were largely filled with admiration and wonder at the New World.

7. Discussion

Gurnah's writing was "driven by problems of identity and displacement, and how they are influenced by the residues of colonial exploitation," according to academic Luca Prono. Also on British Council's website, he commented, "Gurnah's works are always founded on the catastrophic consequences that relocation to a different geographical and social setting has for his protagonist's personalities." Moreover, Gurnah himself told *The Guardian* that the concerns he was addressing are not new ones. He added, "But, even if they aren't new, they are heavily influenced by the specific, imperialism, dislocation, and the reality of our times. " "And one of our times' realities is the influx of so many foreigners into Europe," he continued. But do these protagonists if given a chance, are ready to go back to their roots was the probe with regard to Salim, the protagonist's anecdotes, longings, sufferings, and decisions.

With admirable elegance and control Gurnah's novel goes in detail "his understanding of how quietly and slowly and repeatedly a heart can break,' as Kamila Shamsie, (Guardian) His father, who collapses into hellish detachment, represents the apex of Salim's character, who punishes his mother for discovering the true cause of his father's estrangement. Saida's fondness for her brother causes her to lose perspective of her husband's perfect divine love. She is willing to cuckold him, divorce him, and marry the wealthy Hakkim in order to live a lavish lifestyle. He is a bundle of emotions and attached to Zanzibar as his true son, but as Saida's son, he desires to return to London and immerse himself in the materialistic world.

Turner.V. (1967) views liminality as a "middle junction point... across different locations" that is more of a passing phase than a lasting one. That's the reason may be the protagonist decides to go back to London. Even when he was ashamed of his father Masud's for his beggar like appearance, he loved to visit him, carry his meals (at his mother's request), and sometimes carried books. (at his own interest) Doesn't he owe anything to his father, to take care of him, to show him a little more love? Why he runs after the life in the New World, maybe it's no longer a bag of Blues but, may be his home- town, to which old tales of Blue clung together. Salim later blames his own character and brushes aside the tales of New World Blues:

As one hears Arun Joshi's protagonist in *The Foreigner* belittles himself:

'Perhaps I felt like that because I was a foreigner in America. But then, what difference would it have made if I had lived in Kenya or India or any other place for that matter! It seemed to me that I would still be a foreigner.'(55)

Salim also questions the uselessness of his father, Masud's as well as his lives in the concluding lines of the fiction: 'What use was someone like me to this England?'and 'What use was someone like my father anywhere?' (244)

Falk (2020) also examines Gurnah's fiction against the backdrop of Zanzibari heritage and diaspora, arguing that various sorts of "quagmires" counter intuitively to give the tools to draw the protagonist out from anxious and alienated realms of being and further into sustainable states of being. He further adds that Gurnah tends to dismiss nationalist and functionalist perspectives in favor of focusing on the liminalities and complexity that characterize East African society and its interaction with the Indian Ocean. His study was on Gurnah's *Admiring Silence, By the Sea* and *Desertion*. This present study wants to list liminalities among the reasons for the protagonist's decision on his 'self-banishment'.

Nevertheless, this study wants to highlight such choices of choosing the New World Blues due to liminalities as psychologists name it or 'brave the West' attitude in the characterization of women protagonists in Indian Diaspora studies, where it is a combination of expertise in blending cultures and proving the adage: "Survival of the Fittest"

Kumari (2014) in her study drawing a Matrix of Diasporic Consciousness in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *Arranged Marriage* (1995) describes the same mental state of 'braving the West' of the immigrants. Kumari. A cites the decision taken by the protagonist, Sumita, an Indian bride residing in America, has been inundated with conventional views about what it means to be an Indian bride. Sushmita's traditions are as follows: She covered her head with her sari, didn't call her spouse by his name, and so on. All of these things are considered respectable in India and are scrupulously adhered to in her California household. Sumita's life in America is not dissimilar to that of other Indian daughter-in-laws, but she refuses to return to India, her birthplace, even if her husband is murdered in his store, because it would be far more difficult for her to adjust to her origins than to remain in a "dangerous nation." In the following lines, the conflict between consciousness and sensation of absorption is clearly visible: "That's when I know I cannot go back. I don't know yet how I'll manage, here in this new, dangerous land." (33)

But unlike Salim, who much often dares to adopt Western Culture, having many a short time relations with women, immigrant experience offers women a host of opportunities, aids the evolution of female protagonists' personalities as Kumari. P. P (2018) in her study on Diasporic Consciousness in the select novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni finds immigrant experience, providing the women characters an insight into the culture.

8. Conclusion

Salim's achievement in London is the culmination of the fiction "Gravel Heart," a mirror to the dynamic cycle of survival in a Zanzibar town where sentiments combined with power change a family into robust and strong. On the other hand, Salim's resolve to return to New Blues near the end of the book demonstrates that Gravel Heart is a story of success in overcoming his psychological anxieties, sense of alienation, and homelessness. Salim, the protagonist of Gravel Heart, was happier to return to the New Blues, the world he never wanted to visit, the world where he didn't feel at home, and the world on which he poured words of hatred, according to the study that examined whether Salim experienced sufferings more at home or as an immigrant in London. He found refuge in New Blues, which was superior to his home country. Salim was also able to put aside his desire to return to his home and establish himself in a distant country, just like any other materialistic hero, according to the study. Additionally, this investigation was able to pinpoint his problems as they arose against the background of his traumatic childhood. Salim's personality also differed from that of the other characters in Gurnah when it came to making choices since, as psychologists have noted, he also experienced the liminalities that immigrants experience. This study emphasizes that in order to alleviate the agony of alienation, we need truly look forward to cultural harmony because complete insularity toward other cultures is unacceptable. We should all strive for a more harmonious society free from racial, religious, and class divisions.

Recommendations: Future studies can be complete contrast analyses in the depiction of alienation and trauma of African, American and Indian protagonists.

References

- Athey, S. (1999). Poisonous Roots and the New World Blues: Rereading Seventies Narration and Nation in Alex Haley and Gayl Jones. *Narrative*, 7(2), 169-193. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107180>
- Auch, M. (2002). *Ashes of roses*. New York: Dell Laurel Leaf Press.
- bloomsbury.com. (n.d.). *Gravel heart*. Bloomsbury. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomsbury.com/in/gravel-heart-9781408881309/>
- Castles, S. (2012). 7. Migration and Social Transformation. In M. Martiniello & J. Rath (Eds.), *An Introduction to International Migration Studies: European Perspectives*, (pp. 155-178). Amsterdam University Press, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9789048517350-007>
- Divakaruni, C. B. (1995). *Arranged Marriage*. London: Black Swan.
- Falk, E. (2007). *Subject and History in Selected Works by Abdulrazak Gurnah*, Yvonne Vera, and David Dabydeen (Doctoral dissertation, Universitetsbiblioteket, Karlstad University Press).
- Falk, E. (2020). That little space: Locating Abdulrazak Gurnah in the Global Literary Marketplace. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, 19(4). <https://doi.org/10.35360/njes.606>
- Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson D. F., M. Spitz. A. M., Edwards, V. J., ... Marks, J. S. (1998). Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4). [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8)
- Frank, S. (2008). *Migration and Literature: Günter Grass, Milan Kundera, Salman Rushdie, and Jan Kjaerstad*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230615472_5
- Fraser, R. (2018). *Literature, Music and Cosmopolitanism. Culture as Migration*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-68480-2>
- Freud, S., & Josef, B. (1995). 1893/95. *Studies on Hysteria*. Standard Edition, Vol. II, London: Hogarth Press.
- Frost, H. (2006). *The braid*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.
- Gurnah A. (1996). *Admiring Silence*. The New York Press, New York.
- Gurnah, A. (2011). *The Last Gift*. Bloomsbury, London.

- Gurnah, A. (1994). *Paradise*. New Press (Norton, distr.), New York
- Hand, F. (2015). Searching for New Scripts: Gender Roles in Memory of Departure. *Critique Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 56, 223-240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00111619.2014.884991>
- Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674038325>
- Hunsu, F. (2014). Autobiography and the fictionalization of Africa in the twenty-first century: Abdul Razak Gurnah's art in desertion. *Brno Studies in English*, 40(2), 77-89. <https://doi.org/10.5817/BSE2014-2-5>
- Joshi, A. (1968) *The Foreigner*. Delhi.
- Kristal-Andersson, B. (2000). *Psychology of the refugee, the immigrant and their children – A framework and its application to psychotherapeutic and related support work*. University of Sweden.
- Kumari, A. (2014). The Matrix of Diasporic Consciousness in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's Arranged Marriage. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 2(11).
- Liaqat, Q. (2022). Poetics of Migration Trauma in Mohsin Hamid's "Exit West". *English Studies at NBU*, 8, 141-158. <https://doi.org/10.33919/esnbu.22.1.8>
- Liminality . . . the space in between | About | What is Liminality? (2005). Retrieved from <http://www.liminality.org/about/whatisliminality/>
- Maslen, E. (1996). Review essay: Stories, Constructions and Deconstructions: Abdulrazak Gurnah's Paradise. *Wasafiri*, 12(24), 53-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02690059608589513>
- Miller, J. L. (2014). The Immigrant Novel. In Oxford University Press eBooks (pp. 200-217). <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780195385342.003.0013>
- Moslund, S. (2010). *Migration Literature and Hybridity: The Different Speeds of Transcultural Change*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230282711>
- Mwongeli, J. M. (2019). *Interactive Narrative Technique In The Depiction Of Societal Disintegration In AbdulRazak Gurnah's 'Gravel Heart'*. A Research Project Report. Print.
- Naerssen Van, T., Ernst, S., & Zoomers, A. (2008). *Global Migration and Development*. Routledge.
- Oniwe, B. A. (2017). *Narrating the (Im)Migrant Experience: 21st Century African Fiction in the Age of Globalization*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/4524>
- Parmeswaran, U. (1998). "Trishanku and Other Writings". *Current Perspectives in Indian English Literature*. Ed. Gauri Shankar Jha. New Delhi: Prestige Books.
- Ruberto, M. (2009). *Itinerant narratives: travel, identity and literary form in Abdulrazak Gurnah's fiction*. Retrieved from <https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.680391>
- Sahgal, N. (1975). *A Time to be Happy*. Sterling Publishers PVT.Ltd.
- Sasinendran, R. T., & Shet, J. P. (2022). Glimpses of Alienation leading to Fear, Hallucination and Liminality in Gurnah's *Cages*. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering, Kalahari Journals*, 7(2).
- Sinha, S. (2013). *The Trauma of the Loss of Identity and Anguish of Alienation: An Appraisal of the Indian Writing in English*. The Asian Conference on Literature & Librarianship 2013 Official Conference Proceedings. Retrieved from http://papers.iafor.org/wp-content/uploads/papers/librasia2013/LibrAsia2013_0448.pdf
- Spreier, K. (2020). *The Trauma of Migration in the Novel "Exit West" by Mohsin Hamid*, Munich, GRIN Verlag. Retrieved from <https://www.grin.com/document/1172378>
- Tal, E. (2005). *Double crossing*. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press.
- Turner, V. (1970). The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual. *Western Folklore*, 29(2), 134. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1498807>
- White, P. (1995). Introduction. In J. Connell, R. King, & P. White (Eds.), *Writing Across Worlds: Literature and Migration* (pp. 1-30). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203426128_chapter_1
- Williams-Garcia, R. (2004). *No laughter here*. New York: Harper Collins.