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POST-REVOLUTION CRISES, MIGRATION AND THE QUEST FOR SELF-IDENTITY IN ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S *GRAVEL HEART*¹

Abstract

This paper examines post-revolution crises, migration, and the quest for self-identity in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart* (2017). Gurnah is a postcolonial cosmopolitan Zanzibarian writer born and raised in Zanzibar, Tanzania, but who lives and writes in London. *Gravel Heart* reviews the 1964 post-independence revolution in Zanzibar with a focus on how it leads to the mass exodus of people of other ethnic backgrounds from Zanzibar. Among those forced to leave the island are the ruling Omani Arabs, the Yemenis, the Indians, and the Europeans. The paper adopts the Postcolonial theory in the analysis of the text with an emphasis on both remote and immediate causes of the revolution and the crises it generates. It is discovered that the 1964 revolution is an inevitable stage in the political development of Zanzibar going by the structure left behind by the British colonial government who fled the country in 1963. The text also reveals migration challenges faced by immigrants in the Diaspora, such as identity crises, unemployment, and accommodation prob-

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lems. It can also be seen that the return of the leading migrant character serves as an epiphany for him regarding certain factors that culminated in the family and national crises. The narrator berates the revolution since the new emerging leaders failed to address the critical challenges faced by the people of Zanzibar; rather, they instituted a new government of terror. The post-revolution Zanzibar witnessed unjust arrest and detention of members of oppositions, corruption, high handedness, abuse of power and family disintegration. The paper thus concludes that forced migration, bad leadership, corruption, abuse of power, family disintegration, and crises of identity mar the post-revolution lives of Zanzibarians both at home and in the Diaspora.

Keywords: Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Gravel Heart*, Zanzibarian Revolution, Diaspora, Family Disintegration

Introduction

The 1964 Zanzibar revolution occurred between January 11, 1964, and January 12, 1964. The revolution changed the political narration of Zanzibar. It also changed the cultural values as well as the composition of the Zanzibarian society. Zanzibar is a cosmopolitan society full of the indigenous Bantu people, the Indians, the ruling Omani Arabs, the Yemenis, and the colonial British, among others. During the 1964 revolution, the Omani Arabs who had earlier deposed the Blacks and installed themselves in power were for decades dislodged and a new revolutionary government was installed, mainly of elites of African descent, with leftist political ideology. The period of the revolution is marked with ethnic politics, genocide, incarceration of opposition political parties, high handedness, sexual promiscuity among the new ruling elites, corruption, and power drunkenness.

The 1964 revolution led to the expulsion of the Indians and the Omani Arabs who were revolted against because of their collaboration with the British government and their marginalization of the indigenous Blacks. The supporters of the revolutionaries are now occupying most of the privileged positions formerly occupied by the Indians and the Omani Arabs. The dislodgement is forcing most of the displaced Omani Arabs and Indians to seek a new life elsewhere outside Zanzibar. Some have sought asylum in the United States and Europe while others have moved towards the East. This, undoubtedly, has led to the disintegration of family life of most of the affected individuals who are being forced to migrate to other places because of the pandemonium and trauma created

by the revolution. Therefore, this paper seeks to examine the 1964 revolution in Zanzibar and how it engenders migration with all its attendants' challenges as well as how the revolution disrupts the existing family life of Zanzibar. The paper will also look at the return of the migrant characters, the decayed infrastructure and the issue of identity.

The Political Structure of Zanzibar and the Great 1964 Revolution

Abdulrazak Gurnah has published nine full-length novels, and in each of the texts, the novelist focuses on various aspects of colonial life of Zanzibarians especially the British policy of the divide and rule system and how it eventually culminated into political crises after independence. The British occupation of Zanzibar was achieved through their connivance with Omani Arabs, the ruling elites from Oman who have launched and lorded themselves over the island of Zanzibar for decades. Just as the British did in other colonies they controlled, they colonized the people of Zanzibar through the established Omani Arabs' rule. One of the divide and rule tactics employed by the British to sustain their hegemony was the race card used to create disaffection among the people and hence, sustain their hegemony. To achieve this, the European government makes the issues of ethnicity and tribalism more prominent while classifying people. According to Anne K. Bang, "... the British administrators were more prone to closely categorize the governed peoples... (and) placed much emphasis on where people came from (literally where people arrived from)." (172-173). It would be recalled that this process was similar to what was played out in South Africa during the apartheid regime (1948-1994) during which the country was classified according to race and the black people were mandated to carry their passbook wherever they went. During this epoch in Zanzibar, the emphasis on where people came from was later used to classify them and determine their political representation. Therefore, the cumulative effects of this ethnic classification led to the 1964 revolution. The revolution was championed by the revolutionists who came to right the perceived wrongs of the indigenous black populace in Zanzibar as a resistance not only to the European colonial government but also the Omani Arab hegemony.

The revolution was a major political shake up that redefined and restructured the political landscape of Zanzibar. In the view of Jonathan Glassman, the 1964 Zanzibar revolution occurred as a reaction to the colonial history of Zanzibar. Glassman further submitted that the revolution, according to the Afro-Shirazi party (ASP) is a "... 'spontaneous' outburst of popular anger that had sprung 103

from centuries of racial oppression” (4). The January 11-12, 1964 revolution brought to an end the leadership of the Omani Arabs and led to the pogrom and mass killings of Omani Arabs and the Indians as well as people of foreign nationalities living in Zanzibar (Glassman, 3).

The leader of the revolution was Abeid Amani Karume. In his March 1964 speech, he made it clear that the colonialists introduced the ethnic division. Zanzibar, being a heterogeneous, multiracial and cosmopolitan society was governed through the ethnic line in order to sustain British colonial hegemony with its multiple effects in the post-independent state leading to the revolution. Abeid Amani Karume was of the opinion that the British introduced the ethnic division “...in order to divide the people” (Glassman, 5). Abeid Amani Karume had taken power from Ali Mushin al Barwani, the de facto leader of the de-throned government.

Amrit Wilson, in his own contribution, states that Zanzibar is made up of two major islands. The islands of Pemba and Ungunja. Wilson affirms that Babu, one of the leaders of the revolution was of the opinion that the peoples of Zanzibar rose up to overthrow a politically bankrupt government and a caricature monarchy. They revolted in order to change the social system, which had oppressed them, and for once to take the destiny of their history into their own hands (Babu, 3). However, the revolution was hastily carried out. In the midst of the revolution, the people could no longer be controlled as observed by Hashil Self Hashil.

Many people just did not know what they were doing. One of the things, which the Ummu party did, was to explain the purpose of the revolution. It was not to kill, rape or steal but to change the country. Some people listened but obviously not everyone (qtd. in Wilson 3).

Following the 1964 revolution, it was clear that the new Republic of Zanzibar and Pemba is going to align with the communist states of China and Cuba. As a result, the capitalist British and the US connived with the liberal government of Tanganyika under the leadership of Julius Nyerere to force a compulsory marriage between the mainland of Tanganyika and the Island of Zanzibar. Amrit submitted that: “The situation in Zanzibar deteriorated particularly after the union and Karume, the leader of ASP began to rule the Islands like his personal fiefdom, killing, torturing and incarcerating those who disagreed with his policies or stood up to him.” (3) The postcolonial context of the western world in

Zanzibar and the entirety of Africa is as a result of their unholy union to “... compete for Africa’s natural resources particularly oil” (Wilson, 5).

Wilson argues further that the unholy marriage between the mainland of Tanganyika and the Island of Zanzibar had brought stagnation to the Island. What the British did in most of their colonies was to merge a prosperous part of a country with the economically weak part so that the excess produced in a part could be used to develop the economic weak part. This was a replica of what brought about the formation of a country like Nigeria as it equally played out in Zanzibar. According to Wilson,

The creation of Tanzania by the British Americans has led in Zanzibar to half a century of stagnation, during which it has subsumed into the underdeveloped mainland of Tanzania and the administration has all but destroyed its productive forces. (Wilson, 8).

Zanzibar is a house made name for one of the tropical Islands off the coast of Africa. It is 637 square miles (approximately 1660 square km) (Hashim, XI). The island is a conglomeration of people of different racial backgrounds such as Bantu Africans, Asians, Omani Arabs, Indians, British, among others. It has been a focus of attraction to different people such as the Iranians, Arabs, British, Cubans, United States, etc. (Hashim, IX).

The Zanzibar revolution took place on January 12, 1964, with the adoption and supports of communist states like the Soviet Union, communist China and East Germany (Peterson, IX). Prior to the revolution, there was a pre-election violence where about sixty people were killed (Peterson, XVI). The revolution was ignited because the black Zanzibarians saw the 1963 independence as more of the freedom of the Omani Arabs from the British while the Blacks saw themselves still under the hegemony of the Omani Arabs who enslaved the black people for ages. As a result of this, the black Bantu saw the independence as “*Uhuruwa Waarabu tu: freedom for just the Arabs*” (Peterson XVI). On December 10, 1963, Zanzibar achieved its independence.

Postcolonial Revolution in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Gravel Heart*

Abdulrazak Gurnah works dwell so much on the 1964 post-independence revolution and this has always served as a motivating factor in developing his subject matter. In fact, the issue of the postcolonial revolution resonates pro-

foundly in nearly all his eight previously published works: *Memory of Departure*, *Pilgrims Way Dottie*, *Admiring Silence*, *Paradise*, *By the Sea*, *Desertion*, and *The Last Gift*. Gurnah sees the post-independence revolution as the catalyst that brewed other socio-economic and political challenges in Zanzibar. Unarguably, it brings about bad leadership, promotes ethnic chauvinism and completely breaks down the fragile multi-ethnic, heterogeneous, and cosmopolitan Zanzibarian society. The Black aborigines in Zanzibar have been oppressed and marginalized for centuries by a conglomeration of foreign powers at various times by the Portuguese, the Omani Arabs assisted by the Europeans, the British, and the United States, among others. However, the revenge of the Black people against foreign rule and especially the Omani power is counterproductive as the Black people who assume power are more reckless, self-serving, revengeful and corrupt. The result is the institution of state terrorism, the sacking of members of the opposition, and economic degradation leading to a mass exodus of foreigners out of Zanzibar to Europe, Asia and other places where the displaced migrants believe they could live a peaceful life.

In the early part of the story, Salim, the protagonist of the novel, presents his father as “the silent man” (4). His silence is a consequence of the revolution. He begins to act strange and excommunicate himself from his immediate environment after the revolution especially following the snatching of his wife from him by one of the revolutionists. Salim is raised in a simple but dignified home. They are not rich, but they are contented. According to the narrator:

That was the doorstep of the house I was born in, the house I spent all of my childhood in, the house I abandoned because I was left with little choice. 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 smell years after I left. (6)

The pre-revolution era in Zanzibar is full of bliss and happiness and if most of the migrant characters have their ways, and if not for the revolution, many of the migrant characters would have preferred and chosen Zanzibar above other places in the world. The narrator maintains that,

[a]side from the big roads that led out into the country, our roads bent and turned every few metres, fitting themselves to the way people lived their lives. In our part of the town there were no mansions and courtyards and wall gardens, and people lived their lives in a small way. That was how

it was when I was a child when the lanes were quiet and empty, not as crowded and dirty as they become later. (8)

The revolution is counterproductive. It brings more pain to the people and destroys the little achievements that are recorded in the pre-independence era. The revolution has failed to bring freedom and succor to the people while the infrastructure that is in place becomes moribund and dilapidated. The narrator is embittered by the disorderliness and chaos that the revolution has brought. The implied author is always ashamed to make a direct reference to this inglorious turn of events from a blissful co-existence among the people of Zanzibar to a disoriented and discordant society. In one of his narrations, the narrator recalls:

For several years, before things went wrong, my father Masud worked as a junior clerk for the Water Authority in Gulioni. His job there was respectable and secure, a government job. That was before I really remember and I only know that time of his life as a story. When I remember him clearly, he worked at a market stall or he did nothing, just sat in his room. For a long time I did not know what had gone wrong and after a while I stopped asking. There was so much I did not know. (10)

The period being referred in the outset of the excerpt above is the pre-revolution age, a period that is now being equated with bliss and tranquility. At this period, Masud, Salim's father has a job and life was good. The revolution brings about unemployment and sufferings to the people. Many people are sacked. Some are arrested and jailed while the wives of the less fortunate ones like Masud are taken away from them. The narrator claims he does not know much because he is young at the period of the revolution and many parents are ashamed to divulge the practical details of that inglorious moment to their children. The narrator recalls the life story of his paternal grandfather, a scholar of repute, Maalim Yahya who leaves Zanzibar to go to the gulf before the narrator is born. Maalim Yahya is another victim sacked after the revolution. The revolution leads to the disintegration of his family as one of his family members, Masud, refuses to follow his father to the gulf.

A major hallmark of Gurnah's writings as a postcolonial writer is the deconstruction of the erroneous portrayal and wrong representation of African culture and belief especially in the writings of westerners. Salim, the protagonist of the novel is asked to write a story as an assignment with a picture of "...two

smiling children, a boy and a girl, running after a ball on the beach, free-flowing blonde hair and a sleeveless blouse looked smiling on” (11). The narrator is asked to narrate how they spend their holiday using the pictorial representation as their guide. The narrator faults the pictorial representation given because it is quite different and does not represent how the children spend their holidays in Zanzibar. The children spend their time in western schools during the day, the Koran school in the evening and sometimes, they work on their parents’ farm. The narrator says, “During school holidays we went to Koran school all day, not to the seaside where our frizzy curly hair did not stream behind us as we ran not to grandfather’s farm where there was no windmill and where our hair did not blow about our faces” (12). Salim’s story earns him a lot of praise from the school head teacher who has to invite him to his office and praises him for his excellent write up. However, Salim has only succeeded in concocting the story he writes; the story is unlike the reality of the life of Africans. The theme of reconstruction of African history is the major preoccupation of Abdulrazak Gurnah’s short story entitled “My Mother Lived on a Farm in Africa.” Salim’s presence in the head teacher’s office also brings to memory, the personality of Maalim Yahya, Salim’s paternal grandfather, who has formerly served as the head teacher at the same school in 1963 before he is sacked after the revolution. The picture of Maalim Yahya found in the office is dated 1963 which might be his last year in service before he travels to the gulf. The narrator recalls,

The date on the photograph in the headmaster’s office was December 1963, which would have been the end of the school year just before the revolution. Maalim Yahya lost his job soon after that, which was why he went to work in Dubai. The rest of the family, his wife and two daughters, followed but my father stayed behind. (14)

The 1964 revolution has been repeatedly fingered as a main factor leading to migration and the disintegration of many families in Zanzibar. Another victim of the revolution is Ahmad Musa Ibrahim, the maternal grandfather of Salim. Ahmad Musa Ibrahim is a scholar who has studied at Makerere College in Uganda, Edinburgh University in Scotland and he has also studied in Cairo. Ahmad Musa Ibrahim is a revolutionist who the narrator compared with other revolutionists and radicals such as Saad Zaghloul Pashal (Egyptian), Gandhi Nehru, Habib Bourguiba and Marshal Tito, among others (16). The narrator is of the opinion that what all these mentioned personalities have in common is their resilience and struggle against injustice. They believe that their various

societies could be better managed, rather than those forcing themselves on the people who lack the wherewithal to move the country forward. Ahmed Musa Ibrahim opines that the British are intruders and exploiters whose intervention in Africa is mainly exploitative and oppressive. He states:

No one bid the British to come here, ...they came because they are covetous and cannot help wanting to fill the world with their presence... the British authorities preferred to forget that they were conquerors who ruled by coercion and punishment and considered any outspoken comment on this as sedition. (17).

The narrator presents Ahmad Musa Ibrahim thus, “an educated man, a travelled man, who had no time for these self-deluding patrician airs. He preferred to speak about justice and (sic) liberty and the right to self-fulfillment. He would pay for these words in due course” (15). He eventually paid for his ideology with his life. During the revolution, people are abducted and taken away not to return. One of them is Ahmed Musa Ibrahim who is abducted and killed by the revolutionists. His corpse is not released while his properties are confiscated. The period of revolution is marked by angst, terror, panic, and sufferings by the people and Gurnah always tries his best to make it a reference point as a major causative agent among Zanzibarians—a political activity that redefined Zanzibar’s political landscape. Recounting the horror of the revolution, Saida, Salim’s mother states:

You cannot imagine the terror of it, the arrests, the deaths, the humiliations. People were driving each other mad with rumours of new decrees with news of further sorrows. But yes, you can imagine, you must try. Nothing stands between us and atrocities but words so there is no choice but to try and imagine (20).

The period of revolution is really a turbulent era for Zanzibarians who are forced to leave the country in search of greener pastures. Saida informs Salim that the only option left for people during the revolution is to migrate. This further adds credence to the fact that most migrations are forced, and the issue of voluntary migrations is rare. According to Saida:

Thousands of people were forced to leave because they had no work or money, and had no choice but to throw themselves on the mercy of a brother or a cousin living in a more fortunate place, further up the coast

or across the ocean. ...It was a time of turmoil, their lives torn apart like that, and they were forced into a kind of callousness in order to survive. (23-24)

Another ugly aspect of the postcolonial life of African people that the writer writes about is the disgusting state of hospitals in most of the countries, especially Zanzibar. The decay in hospital facilities in Africa is the central thematic focus of Festus Iyayi's *Violence* and Ifeoma Okoye's *The Fourth World*. In *Gravel Heart*, Salim's mother is attacked by an unknown ailment that suddenly renders her unconscious. She is taken to a hospital where the nurses move around without attending to her while there is no single doctor in sight to attend to the patients. The narrator captures this unfortunate situation thus:

The room was large, and all its doors were wide open but that did not disperse the smell of waste and disease. There were people of all ages there: a fatigued old woman with her eyes closed leaning against a younger woman who was likely her daughter, a baby wailing without pause in its mother's arms, its eyes clotted with infections, young woman in no obvious distress and men and women in the exhausting grip of one of the many illnesses that befall people like us who live in the poor countries of the world (25).

Regrettably, despite the deplorable state of the patients, they are abandoned and are asked to return home. Salim's mother, who has been brought to the hospital, is returned home where she eventually dies. Therefore, the 1964 revolution is counterproductive as it brings agony rather than succor to the people. It also forced many foreigners living in Zanzibar to migrate to other places where life was promising.

Migration Trends in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart*

Gurnah's works always focus on the factors that culminated in his own migration from Zanzibar to the United Kingdom. To this end, he is associated with a style of narrating himself into his story and *Gravel Heart* is not an exception. Towards the end of part one of the novel, the novelist has cleared the ground and set migration of the major characters in motion. First Uncle Amir, Salim's maternal uncle, works as a diplomat in London. He has married Asha, the daughter of the Vice President of the country, and the two of them have agreed to take Salim along

with them in order to “...get him away from that feeble minded man and give him a new start” (48). The feeble-minded man being referred to here is Masud, the father of Salim. Uncle Amir has a way of looking down upon him and treats him with scorn especially after Masud’s wife Saida divorced him and got married to Hakim, the son of the Vice President. The Vice President is the father of Asha, Uncle Amir’s wife. The circumstances that culminated in the divorce between Saida, the protagonist’s mother and his father Masud is highly disheartening. Their marriage is brought to an abrupt end through the abuse of power by Hakim who orders the arrest of Uncle Amir after accusing him of raping Asha, the Vice President’s daughter. Saida tries to secure the release of her younger brother from the grip of Hakim who insists that Saida agrees to have an affair with him or her younger brother Amir will rot in jail. This is one of many oppressive lifestyles of the emerging ruling class in Zanzibar after the 1964 revolution. It is this use of naked power that plunges Masud into deep depression and forces him to reluctantly accede to join his father, Maalim Yahya, in Kuala Lumpur.

The protagonist’s migration from Zanzibar to London is on the request of his uncle and his wife. Salim’s travelling to London opens a new chapter of the story. The attention is shifted from the dictatorial Zanzibarian leaders in Africa to the lives of the Zanzibarians in the Diaspora. Salim notices the cosmopolitan nature of London and according to him, “London is full of people from everywhere in the world. I just had not expected to see that Indians, Arabs, Africans, Chinese and I don’t know where all the European people come from but they are not all English”. (62)

Salim discovers that life in London is not as rosy as he had imagined. He begins to learn from using the cutleries, which according to uncle Amir is “... not about becoming a European stooge and giving up your culture... No, it’s not about losing anything. It is to begin thinking about food as a pleasure, as a refinement” (59). Other things that Salim has to learn fast in order to be able to fit in properly into the English society, according to him, include:

I learnt to live in London to avoid being intimidated by crowds and by rudeness, to avoid curiosity, not to feel desolate at hostile stares and to walk purposefully wherever I want. I learnt to live with the code and the dirt and to evade the angry students at college with their swagger and their sense of grievance and their expectations of failures (66).

Gurnah writes with the consciousness of a third world writer and privileged cosmopolitan educated elite who makes a criticism of his own society by showing how the outside world looks like compared with the self-inflicting, self-imposed underserving state of the African third world societies. The narrator makes it known that his life is engulfed with panic and anxiety while in London. The English society is hostile to the immigrants and many of them live and struggle to survive in panic. Salim laments, "...I thought I could study without being interested but I had not anticipated the anxieties of living in an alien and hostile city without the company of other students like myself or the nagging persistence of my mother." (67).

One major challenge Salim confronts while in London is the course being imposed on him by Uncle Amir and Aunt Asha. He has wanted to study literature, but his uncle wants him to study Business Studies. He has to fight his way through. He becomes more infuriated when he gets to know that Hakim, Asha's brother and a junior minister, has forced Salim's mother Sadia to abandon Salim's father and marry him. Gurnah has a way of bringing issues related to family tussle in expanding the plot of his story. Family occupies a central subject in Zanzibarian society and Gurnah always brings issues relating to family crises to the fore. At the peak of Salim's revolt, he opts out of the Business Studies course and leaves his uncle's house in order to take control of his life.

Salim's life in the house of Mr. Mgeni, the man from Malindi in Kenya, is also worthy of note. Mr. Mgeni also speaks Kiswahili just like Salim and the house comprises of other immigrants from various part of Africa. Alex from Nigeria, Peter comes from South Africa, Mannie from Sierra Leone, and a cousin to Mood. Mr. Mgeni named his house, "the OAU house" (85). The narrator argues that it is not the Christian-dominated westerners alone that destroy Africa. The Muslims from the Middle East also contribute to the backwardness of Africa. Amos, a Nigerian who has come to live in Mr. Mgeni's "the African Union House," has a phobia of Muslims. He is always ready to pick a fight with whoever argues in favor of the Muslims. According to him, "Muslims are fanatics, imperialists, racists... [T]hey came to Africa and destroyed our culture. They made us subservient to them and stole our knowledge and inventions and made us into slaves" (100). However, Peter differs on this because according to him, "the only things Africans ever invented was the assegai, and we did that" (100). The writer wonders how the African people treat themselves before the advent of colonialism. He, however, posits that the West are not sincere, and they are not as

smart as they claim and makes a claim that, “they probably learnt from Muslims in Persia and Egypt” (88). The opinion of the narrator here is that the West are copycats, and they have no claim to the cradle of civilization as most of the smart things they arrogate to themselves emanate from Africa and the Middle East.

Gurnah touches on another postcolonial issue affecting the development of Africa, which is corruption. Most African countries are languishing in poverty because of the level of corruption on the African continent. Regrettably, Nigeria, the largest country on the continent, is the epicenter of corruption. Gurnah observes the following:

Alex loved talking about the huge appetites of Nigerian politicians for stolen wealth. When it came to pilfering public money, they were definitely the worst in the world... Nobody else came close to Nigerian corruption. Travel allowance, community allowance, hardship allowance, constituency allowance, contingency fund, seed corn fund..., you name it, they voted it for themselves. And all that besides the secret numbered accounts and the hidden commissions. (90)

The issue of identity is central to any discourse on migrancy, and Gurnah has a way of making a case for the issue of identity in his work. Mr. Mark, the owner of Café Galileo, always speaks Arabic with his friends. One day, he asks Salim, “where are you from with a name like that” (108). Salim simply answers “Zanzibar,” which Mark utters as “Zinjibar” (109), the old Arabic pronunciation of the coastal city. Mark refers to Zanzibar as belonging to “the Dark continent, darkest, darkest Africa” (109). Sophie, Basil’s girlfriend, calls Salim “...a poor Indian ocean boy” (11). Salim is not fully accepted in his new society. Therefore, he is always discriminated against because of the color of his skin. According to him,

In the three years, I had been in England until then, I had kissed some girls at parties when words were not required—snogged some girls at parties... To be honest, I was snogged by three girls at three separate parties when I had done little to deserve their attention. One of them told me, as she was pulling my shirt out and reaching into my jeans that she would have gone to bed with me if I were not black. (112)

The English society is a highly bifurcated and radically conscious society. The black people are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.

They can be tolerated in the English society but are not fully accepted as bona fide members of the English society.

Another aspect of life of the Black immigrants is in the aspect of accommodation. Most of the buildings they occupy are always out of place and mostly inhabitable and descript. One of such houses is the house that Salim shares with five other foreign students Salim comments on the state of the house.

It was a dirty house and I thought it would be cold in the winter. The windows were loose and rattled in the wind. The carpets and rugs were thread bare scraps that were impossible to clean but which produced fibres and dust that gave all of us allergies probably for life. The woodwork was enveloped in a powerful stench of rot that hit me like a diseased Miasma when I entered, and I knew it was not good for any of us. But it could not be helped (114).

Salim faces a series of accommodation challenges in England. Therefore, the accommodation problem is one of the major problems confronting Africans in the Diaspora. Salim reports many instances of the accommodation problems that he faces. According to him, "At the beginning of my final year, I moved to a onebedroom upstairs flat with an annoying leaking cistern the landlord's plumber could not fix" (119). Nearly all Gurnah's characters face challenges or other problems relating to accommodation, Dauda in *Pilgrims Way*, Dottie and her sister Sophie in Gurnah's eponymous novel *Dottie*, and Omar Saleh in *By the Sea*. All these leading migrant characters face the challenges of accommodation in the respective novels where they feature.

The Return and the Search for Self-Identity

The theme of return is a major issue in Diasporic literature especially in the works of Abdulrazak Gurnah. Gurnah's characters always find a way of returning home like the anonymous character in *Admiring Silence*. By returning home, it affords the central character to assess the situation at home. Salim returns to Zanzibar after several efforts. He is welcomed by his half-sister Munira and his father Masud. Salim's return helps to unravel some of the past happenings in his family especially the botched marriage of his parents. Again, memory plays a predominant role in recalling past events vividly and clearly. This is achieved through the use of flashback. According to Gurnah, "memory... those dark im-

movable moments that refused to fade” (168). Unfortunately, Salim’s family history is wrapped in ignominy, shame, unnecessary family squabbles, etc.

Through a string of narration made available to Salim by his father Masud, he gets to know that Maalim Yahya, the grandfather of Salim, is engaged by the colonial government to teach in the western school in order to restore the confidence of the locals in enrolling their children in western schools. Regrettably, following the 1964 revolution, Maalim Yahya and other Islamic scholars are sacked by the revolutionists on the premises of an argument that religious teachings are not in tandem with socialist principles. According to the narrator, who testifies about it on page 179,

[t]hat was how matters seemed to the new rulers and their fraternal socialist advisers from the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, who had allocated themselves the education portfolio in our affairs (while the Chinese took over the hospitals and the Soviets advised on security and the armed forces).

The revolution brings about an ethnic reawakening and those that are sacked have to re-align with their ethnic affiliation, such as Arab, Indian and Iranian, for survival (180). The 1964 revolution has also been identified as a major factor that forced people to migrate. This group of people include Maalim Yahya who is persecuted and sacked from his teaching job. Salim’s father informs him.

With the revolution that politics turned violent and punitive and forced many people into flight because they feared for their lives and their futures. To the government, this search for connection across the ocean demonstrated the underlying forgiveness of these people and it waited patiently for their departure stripping them of whatever it could in the meantime (50).

Masud Yahya, the father of Salim refuses to travel to the Gulf with his father because his father being an Islamic scholar disapproves of his worldly lifestyle. The main reason Masud has refused to travel out of Zanzibar is his love for Sadia, Salim’s mother. Masud has come across Saida at a debate organized by the Youth League, a school group established by the ruling party to inculcate the socialist principles in the students. Initially, Masud is worried of becoming a wanderer and he says, “I did not want to wander the world like a beggar without a country” (190). Elsewhere, he says, “...I did not want to lose my freedom to be where I know how to live” (p.191).

Masud reminisces on the building that used to serve as his office in those days, which has once served as the official quarter of a Scotsman who has come to discover the source of the Indian Ocean (195). The narrator also states that most of the pipe borne water in Zanzibar was installed during the reign of Sultan Barghash in the 1880s during the Omani Arab rule. However, the time that follows the revolution is a difficult period for Zanzibarians because of the decayed infrastructure, authoritarian government and unpatriotic citizens who could not survive the life's hardships being thrown at them by the autocratic one-party socialist government.

Salim's return serves as an epiphany for him as his father, through the flashback technique, reminisces on the past issues of family crises, the disorderly Zanzibarian society and the great 1964 ethnically inclined revolution. After the revolution, Masud recalls that the houses built by individuals were confiscated. Salim's father says "the house was rented but since it was now illegal to be a landlord, the owner was too frightened to ask for rent. Officially, the house belonged to the government" (198). The period of revolution is also marked by looting. For instance, the family of Jaffar, an Indian man who owns a cloth shop is looted while the shop is converted to a bookshop where used books are sold.

In Masud's narration to his son Salim, he explains to him how he got married to Saida and how Saida's brother Amir lived with them. Masud also narrates to the protagonist how Amir and Saida later connived to mock Salim's father. Salim's uncle, Amir, works in a hotel named Coral Reef Inn. The hotel "...was funded by big international money which people said was money laundering of gangster loot drug money kickbacks, prostitution, slave labour" (216). Following the revolution, people belonging to opposition parties are arrested. Because of this uncle Amir is arrested and detained. Amir has been accused of raping Asha, the daughter of the Vice-President, an accusation that Amir denies. One of the conditions given by Hakim, the son and the chief protocol officer to the Vice-President, is that Asha must have a sexual affair with him if he wants her brother Amir to be released. Hakim is using his position as the son of the Vice-President and his Chief Protocol Officer to humiliate and oppress Masud and his family. Amir and Hakim later succeed in taking away Saida from her husband, Masud. Masud is forced to quit his matrimonial house despite the appeals made to him by Asha and Amir at the Ministry of Water Corporation where he works. Masud begins to live an ascetic life until he joins his father, Maalim Yahya, in Kuala Lumpur. Maalim Yahya, Salim's grandfather has

established a free school for the orphans in Kuala Lumpur where he now works and lives. Masud only returns to Zanzibar upon hearing about the death of his mother Saida.

Conclusion

The paper examines the post-independence revolution in Zanzibar and its effects on Zanzibarians. The paper argues that the British rule of Zanzibar creates room for the ethnic balkanization of Zanzibar, which triggers off the post-independence violence. One major effect of the revolution that is identified is the victimization and unjust arrest of members of opposition parties and foreigners living in Zanzibar. Those who are in the service of the government have their appointment terminated and are thereafter forced to migrate. Again, the revolutionary party fails to offer a responsible government to the people, as situations get worse under their leadership. The second aspect of the paper deals with the lives of the Zanzibarians in the Diaspora. Salim, the protagonist of the novel, is not fully accepted and integrated into the English society. At different times, he also faces accommodation and job challenges. The third part of the paper looks at the return of Salim to Zanzibar from England where his father unravels to him some of the incidents that culminated in his solitary lifestyle. He lets him know that those who came to power after the revolution took away from him his wife Saida, the protagonist's mother. Therefore, the post-independence revolution of Zanzibar creates chaos in Zanzibar. It leads to the sacking of people of other ethnic nationalities. It also leads to the abduction and killings of many others. The revolution is also the main reason why many Zanzibarians migrated to other places for safety. The return of the protagonist to Zanzibar after many years of sojourn in the United Kingdom reveals the bad state of things in Zanzibar as evident in bad governance and poor infrastructure. Salim's return also serves as an epiphany for him, and it sheds more light on his identity.

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„POSTREVOLUCIJSKA KRIZA, MIGRACIJA I POTRAGA ZA IDENTITETOM“ U ROMANU *GRAVEL HEART* ABDULRAZAKA GURNAHA

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Rad istražuje postrevolucijsku krizu, migraciju i potragu za identitetom u romanu Abdulrazaka Gurnaha *Gravel Heart* (2017.). Gurnah je postkolonijalni kozmopolitski pisac rođen i odrastao u Zanzibaru u Tanzaniji, a živi i piše u Londonu. *Gravel Heart* sagledava Zanzibarsku revoluciju nakon stjecanja neovisnosti 1964. godine s naglaskom na povode masovnog egzodusa drugih etničkih skupina iz Zanzibara. Otok su, između ostalih, prisiljeni napustiti vladajući omanski Arapi, Jemenci, Indijci, Europljani. Rad analizira tekst kroz vizuru postkolonijalne teorije s naglaskom na posredne i neposredne uzroke revolucije i posljedične krize te otkriva da je revolucija neizbježna faza političkog razvoja Zanzibara u skladu sa strukturom koju je za sobom ostavila britanska kolonijalna vlada, a koja je zemlju napustila 1963. godine. U tekstu se također razotkrivaju migracijski izazovi s kojima se iseljenici suočavaju u dijaspori, npr. kriza identiteta, nezaposlenost i problemi prilagodbe. Također, povratak protagonista u Zanzibar razotkriva određene čimbenike koji su kulminirali obiteljskom i nacionalnom krizom. Pripovjedač kritizira revoluciju s obzirom na nove vođe koji nisu odgovorili na kritične izazove s kojima se suočavaju ljudi Zanzibara, već su uspostavili novu strahovladu. Postrevolucijski Zanzibar svjedočio je nepravednim uhićenjima pripadnika oporbe, korupciji, zlouporabi vlasti i rasapu obitelji. Rad stoga zaključuje da prisilna migracija, loše vodstvo, korupcija, zlouporaba vlasti, rasap obitelji i kriza identiteta narušavaju postrevolucionarne živote Zanzibaraca i kod kuće i u dijaspori.

Ključne riječi: Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Gravel Heart*, Zanzibarska revolucija, dijaspora, rasap obitelji