

Displacement and Inner Conflict in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Memory of Departure and by the Sea*

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ABSTRACT: *Abdulrazak Gurnah (1948-), a Tanzanian-born British penman and emeritus professor, is one of the harbingers of tracing the fates of the refugees. He enormously depicts the conventional scenario of the refugees and the asylum-seekers in his novels Memory of Departure and By the Sea. Gurnah pens the feelings of displacement and inner conflict in the psyche of the individuals who try to cross the edge of an ajar door toward liberty. It is evident that Gurnah's characters aspire for decolonization but cannot transgress the boundaries of colonial temperament due to the predicaments of displacement and inner conflict. The characters are traumatized in such a way that they consider themselves refugees and asylum-seekers in an independent country. Thus, this paper argues that due to the irresolute mind, Gurnah's characters struggle to resolve the matter of acceptance or the rejection of colonial attitudes, which creates a sense of displacement and, ultimately, leads the characters towards oscillation and inner conflict.*

KEYWORDS: displacement, inner conflict, colonialism, double consciousness, ambivalence, other.

INTRODUCTION

African literature comprises authors from West Africa, East Africa, South Africa and its suburb Rhodesia. Some critics consider African literature as modern world literature. Others consider it a political document resulting from the protest against colonial oppression by the whites. For some, it is simply an accessory to English and French literature. However, African literature is didactic and instructive as well as documentary literature (Course Hero). It portrays and reflects the stories of African and Black people before colonialism, during colonialism and after colonialism

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK (StudySmarter). African literature also focuses on the issues of freedom and identity of the blacks. Moreover, it deals with the displacement of the Africans caused by the advent of colonization. Displacement resulted from colonization can contain several forms- physical displacements, figurative displacement etc. Abdulrazak Gurnah illustrates the complex history of African colonization and decolonization phenomena addressing the outcomes of displacement in his writings. Furthermore, the state of inner or internal conflict is aroused due to the dominance of the whites over the blacks. Besides, forced migration makes the blacks internally and physically displaced from their motherlands.

Abdulrazak Gurnah is the author of several fictions. He has been one of the most dignified authors in East Africa in the last two decades. He has composed a volume of works: *Memory of Departure* (1987), *Pilgrims Way* (1988), *Dottie* (1990), *Paradise* (1994), *Admiring Silence* (1996), *By the Sea* (2001), *Desertion* (2005), *The Last Gift* (2011), *Gravel Heart* (2017) and *Afterlives* (2020). Among these works, this paper deals with his two fictions- *By the Sea* (2001) and *Memory of Departure* (1987). Notably, this article focuses on the issue of inner conflict and displacement of the African blacks instigated by the advent of colonization.

II

The study is conducted by adopting a qualitative methodology. It has driven with descriptive textual analysis procedure for the thematic analysis of the novels. “Textual analysis is a broad term for various research methods used to describe, interpret and understand texts. All kinds of information can be gleaned from a text – from its literal meaning to the subtext, symbolism, assumptions, and values it reveals” (Scribbr). The information or data are accumulated from both primary and secondary sources, which are simply qualitative in nature. This study takes primary data from the original text *Memory of Departure* and *By the Sea*. Furthermore, several authentic books, research articles, newspaper articles, journals, and some websites have been used as secondary sources for collecting data which have been analyzed and presented through logical argument and interpretation.

III

The delineation of inner conflict in any literary piece fabricates an intricate web of versatile features. Inner conflict is an ecumenical affair of the human being for which they cannot tranquilize their mind upon any particular thing. In conformity with Robert Frost, it could be quoted that “Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted if I should ever come back” (Frost 93). Thus, Robert Frost cannot pick the right pathway for his ambivalent mind. Similarly, Abdulrazak Gurnah, in every step, illustrates the inner conflict of different characters in his writings. Moreover, the depiction of displacement becomes a central issue in the realm of postcolonial literature. Henceforth, Abdulrazak Gurnah’s evaluations of those issues and the inconceivable factual portrayal of his fictions are immensely admirable. In his novel, he writes, “In the darkness I lose a sense of space, and in this nowhere I feel myself more solidly” (*By the Sea* 1).

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There are a few research studies on Abdulrazak Gurnah and his writings. Mired in the displacement, he is always serious about migration issues. According to an article by UNHCR, the noble laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah says, “You think you understand places” (UNHCR), reflecting on the obstacles he undergoes as a youth arriving in the UK from Zanzibar. Likewise, Erik Falk appreciates Gurnah’s “strong anti-nationalist stance and its relation to diaspora and displacement” (Falk: 2007). Additionally, on the issue of migration, Sibree illustrates that “Gurnah himself says migration is not only the central theme of his own life but is one of the big stories of contemporary life” (Sibree: 2011). Furthermore, in *Critical Circles*, Bungaro comments that “there has been a varied engagement with Gurnah’s works mostly as a migrant retelling his personal story through fiction” (Bungaro2005:25). Besides, Maria Olausen argues that in most of his novels, “Gurnah approaches Eastern Africa as part of the Indian Ocean World [...] through the lens of transnational migration where Zanzibar and East African coast are both places of arrival and departures within a history of shifting power relations” (205:2012). Likewise, according to Okungu, “Gurnah’s acknowledgment that migration is the central theme in his novels, justifies critics’ obsession with singularly looking at different facets of migrancy in their various works but by no means signifies that this is all there is to the study of Gurnah” (Okungu 20). Subsequently, several interconnected issues like- ambivalence, alienation, rootlessness, double consciousness, colonialism, etc., are accumulated in this study to imply the plights of displacement and inner conflict of Gurnah’s characters. Moreover, there is a strong connection between psychological ambivalence and colonial legacies; in this manner, Nasrullah Mambrol narrates Homi K. Bhabha’s theory as:

Most importantly in Bhabha’s theory, however, ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination because it disturbs the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized. Ambivalence is therefore an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer (Mambrol). The colonizer and the colonized find themselves stuck between two different cultures making their psyche ambivalent. In the process of colonialism, both the colonizers and the colonized may shift from their motherland to a new territory. Without the colonized, the identity of the colonizer is incomplete. Both the colonizer and the colonized are interdependent. If one of them is absent, the identities of the colonized and colonizer will be dispersed (Putri and Clayton 1). Thus, colonial legacies create a sense of selflessness both in the colonizer and the colonized. In the same manner, the psychological ambivalence of the colonized and the colonizer perturbs them much. Zarrinjooee and Khatar also portray that issue in their writings, “The binary relation is based on a psychological desire to create a cultural hierarchy between East and West” (Zarrinjooee and Khatar 231). So, they also admit that two distinct cultures create reversibility in the psyche. Again, Felicity Hand picks out the stories of *Desertion*, *By the Sea* and *Admiring Silence* as a strategy of empowerment explaining that “the characters become storytellers out of a need to counter despair, failure, deceit and disappointment. The stories thus allow them to rewrite their pasts and act as a remedy against displacement and alienation” (Felicity Hand: 2010). So, these are the productive appraisal of Gurnah’s novels which effectively recapitulate his concerns about displacement and inner conflict.

The Depiction of Displacement in Gurnah's Writings

Typically, many authors use the term "displacement" in their postcolonial writings. Amongst them, Abdulrazak Gurnah is the one who profoundly delineates the issue of "displacement" in his writings.

According to Aleksandar Hemon, displacement results in a tenuous relationship with the past, with the self that used to exist and operate in a different place, where the qualities that constituted us were in no need of negotiation. Immigration is an ontological crisis because you are forced to negotiate the conditions of your selfhood under perpetually changing existential circumstances (PictureQuotes).

Gurnah creates miscellaneous displaced characters in his several works of fiction. All of them are entwined with the predicaments of displacement regarding religion, culture, education, morality and geography. In essence, displacement is the harsh outcome of colonialism. Modern people are alienated from their cultures and traditions which they have been accumulating for centuries. Colonial displacement takes place due to cultural exploration and exploitation. Notably, migration and rootlessness are the apparent causes of the displacement of the colonized. The tormented and displaced people consider themselves at the same time as alienated and eradicated culturally, existentially and philosophically. Thus, modern African writings give a tangible form of their painful stories. Likewise, Gurnah portrays the notion of displacement in *Memory of Departure* through the character Moses Mwinyi. He identifies the place Kenge is dead and filled with brothels and arse-fuckers. Notably, the lustfulness displaced Gurnah's characters from their culture and philosophy.

Subsequently, colonialism plays a vital role in the way of displacement of the colonized. Undoubtedly, the Europeans dominated the Africans through their colonial legacy. The colonizers subjugate the Africans politically and culturally. Even the colonizers occupy everything belonging to the colonized, including their lands and shelters. Furthermore, the displacement of native people from their motherland significantly impacts their psyche. Colonial legacies uprooted the native people from Kenya, Africa, Portuguese, Oman, India etc. The suffering for freedom and the urge for independence may make people displaced. The suppressed people try to leave their homeland and find a new place for themselves. However, the African colonized could not fully overcome the exhaustion and suffering of the British period. Colonial oppression dislocates the colonized physically and mentally. As Abdulrazak Gurnah depicts the matter through the character Elleke by saying:

We were European. We could go anywhere in the world we wanted. [...] That was the meaning of colonialism, and everything was done to persuade us not to notice the methods that made it possible for us to go where we wanted (*By the Sea* 131).

Thus, the Europeans intend that they have the right to dominate the dark skin. In that manner, they can go anywhere in the world and grab the land and wealth of the blacks and consider those

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things as their own. Subsequently, the colonized are uprooted from their land. The natives become homeless. So, as a consequence of colonialism, the colonized people are displaced from their motherland and forced to find a new place for them. Additionally, Gurnah writes- “They too longed for Kenya, and were shaken by what they found in Germany” (*By the Sea* 136). Thus, displacement is an exigent issue in the incumbency of colonial legacy. Besides, displacement gives birth to a series of problems. It creates a nostalgic illusion between the former motherland and inevitably settlement to the new land. On one side, one cannot forget the language, people, culture, and landscape of the deserted and the former place. On the other side, they find it difficult, due to a variety of reasons, to disassociate themselves from the new place, country, and language that they chose to adopt or were forced to adopt. It generates an ambivalent psyche to those people who go through these circumstances. People cannot deny any of the situations. Nostalgic remembrance of the motherland and the fantasy of the new place create an ambivalent psyche and identity crisis. Once displacement takes place, the possibility of reclaiming an individual identity comes to an end. So thus, their well and woe remain with them through their remembrance of their past and lamentation for their present (PictureQuotes).

Displacement has a close connection with a psychological disorder. A displaced person cannot stay away from the stigma of “homelessness”. Thus, a person’s cultural displacement chastises him and forces him to be considered as a psychological refugee. For instance, the British Empire made people culturally displaced. They also assured the spread of English. As it is depicted in the novel *By the Sea*- “‘Without English you are even more a stranger, a refugee, I suppose, more convincing,’ he guessed. ‘You’re just a condition, without even a story’” (*By the Sea* 143). Furthermore, alienation is closely associated with displacement. It is the initial form of rootlessness. Alienation happens due to the existential crisis of a displaced person. Namely, Gurnah portrays the figure Saleh Omar as an alienated person in the novel *By the Sea*. He lost his own house and had to leave another place as a refugee. It is delineated in the novel as-

I visited your house once,’ Latif Mahmud said. ‘I don’t know if you remember that. It was a very long time ago. And now a lifetime later I visit your other house here. It’s as if a little length of string ties your claw to a post in the ground, and you scratch and scratch there all your time even as you imagine that you have flown worlds’ (*By the Sea* 151).

And- “Now here I am at your other house, which is perhaps not as beautiful as the one you left behind (*By the Sea* 152).

Subsequently, Geographical dislocation and displacement make people nomads and aliens. Those who have been dislocated believe there is no longer any land they can claim as their own. Though they have their “very own” place in their motherland, the dislocated people feel that they are refugees and asylum-seekers. As Gurnah says-

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My parents were refugees, from Romania. [...] I know about the hardships of being alien and poor, because that is what they went through when they came here, and I know about the rewards. But my parents Are European, they have a right, they're part of the family (*By the Sea* 12).

By the by, at a pristine level, all creatures are displaced beings. It is noteworthy that human beings are departed from the paradise of their mother's womb or the first place. Moreover, to endure the agonies of displacement, there has to be a first place or an essential identity. Consequently, all those displaced beings want to return to their motherland or their first place where they belong, with a strong desire to reclaim their cultural identity. Thus, Gurnah pens the notion- "Being back on the coast was like being at home, or more than that, like recognizing that here I had a place in the scheme of things" (*By the Sea* 175). And again, "Back on the coast, I felt part of something generous and noble after all, a way of living that had a part for me and which I had been too hasty in seeing as futile raggedness" (*By the Sea* 175-6).

The Portrayal of Inner Conflict

According to American writer Erica Jong (1942-), "Conflict is the soul of literature." Abdulrazak Gurnah portrays diverse characters with the notion of inner conflict in his different writings to give his stories a unique dimension. All of the characters are studded with the impulse of inner conflict regarding their desire, emotion, religion, and so on.

Inner conflict happens when the characters undergo an emotional battle. For instance, Gurnah portrays the inner conflict of a character by saying: "I am a refugee, an asylum-seeker" (*By the Sea* 4). These are not common words. These words express the existential conflict and emotional battle of a refugee. Notably, several emotional, cognitive and behavioral components are associated with the term existential conflict. This aforementioned singular sentence discloses all of the components. For instance, emotional pain, helplessness, anxiety, loneliness, meaninglessness and the loss of personal values are the vigorous issues exploded in this single quotation. So, how internally conflicted the character Saleh Omar is! Furthermore, Gurnah portrays the plight of inner conflict through his other prominent characters as he quotes:

Why did they blame me who had never done him any harm? They all beat him. I was five. He was my friend, he was my brother. He was my only friend and my only brother. Why did they blame me (*Memory of Departure* 12)?

Mired in inner conflict, Gurnah's characters develop an ambivalent psyche. In the fiction *Memory of Departure*, the protagonist Hassan, a young boy, goes through an internal emotional battle. From his early childhood, his parents condemn him for his elder brother's death, wherein their cold, indifferent and careless attitudes are the causes of his brother's death. Hassan desires his parents' kind behavior toward him. However, their actions do not match his desires. In fact, not only his parents but every family member blames him for the incident, which he has not done. His neighbors console him as his family chastises him. So thus, he struggles internally to meet his

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desires and to get little care and affection from his family. In the same way, Gurnah states the emotional battle of a person through the following lines:

Perhaps I exaggerate, or cannot resist dwelling on my difference from them, cannot resist the drama of our contrastedness. [...] It is not easy, after all these years, to learn not to see, to learn discretion about the meaning of what I think I see. I am fascinated by their faces. They jeer at me. I think they do. (*By the Sea* 2-3)

The reality of the surroundings troubles Saleh Omar, the narrator and one of the protagonists of the fiction *By the Sea*, in such a way that he emotionally struggles to accept those predicaments. His desires do not match the harsh reality. Reality breaks him down internally and he thinks of himself as a stranger. Besides, he considers that everyone laughs and mocks him. He denies knowing anyone. Thus, those things indicate that his yearnings do not fit with reality and so he struggles internally. Remarkably, the more expectations and desires we have, the more likely we have to suffer from internal conflict. For instance, Gurnah portrays such character Latif Mahmud in the novel *By the Sea*. He writes, "I did not want to come here. I wanted to go to France, but the only scholarships available were to fraternal socialist countries, either to come here or go to the Soviet Union to learn to drive a snow plough" (*By the Sea* 119). Here, the character's internal conflict creates reversed psychological impulses or feelings. Latif's actions do not match his desires due to the societal values and ideals he adopts growing up. Besides, inner conflict is associated with existential conflict. In those cases, the person does not match the high living standards of his/her surroundings and suffers from an inferiority complex. Gurnah delineates the matter by saying- "When I went to register for my card, I gave a false name" (*Memory of Departure* 72). Thus, in the fiction, Hassan does not use his real name for his identity card, wherein an identity card supports a man in finding himself. Nevertheless, he gives the wrong information. Moreover, he suffers from existential conflict as he cannot understand the importance of selfness. Here, self-image creates an inferiority complex and makes a person internally conflicted. It makes a character psychologically ambivalent. Likewise, in the fiction, Hassan thinks of himself as subordinate to his uncle. What Hassan's uncle says is unbearable to him. He always harbors a feeling that whatever his uncle tells him is meant to humiliate him. Hasan goes to his uncle to get back his mother's property. His uncle knows about it, but he does not help Hasan financially. However, Hassan cannot ask for it out of shame. So far, Gurnah portrays- "There was an amused smile on his face. I assumed it was the one he reserved for poor nephews" (*Memory of Departure* 103).

As per Fanon, a black is frequently measured by his outward look, which has been annotated negatively by the whites. He thinks that the way white people view black people never changes. Moreover, colonialism aspires to total dominance over local life. Fanon further opines that black people develop an inferiority complex as a result of all these sentiments held by white people. The blacks feel inferior as the whites dominate them in their own country. According to Fanon, many individuals experience an inferiority complex because they perceive themselves, their country, and their culture as inadequate and primitive compared to the European way of life and culture. Fanon

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development-UK claims that the colonized have a yearning to be "Other" due to their sense of inferiority (Karada 1467-1478). Gurnah explains how colonialism in Africa formed an environment where the black African natives were recognized as inferior by themselves and the colonizers. The African Arabians love as well as hate the British. The natives subconsciously accept the superiority of the British. Notably, the natives secretly admire the British as Mr. Shaaban quotes, "I think also we secretly admired the British, for their audacity in being there [...] conceding to their command over our material lives, conceding in the mind as well as in the concrete, succumbing to their blazing self-assurance" (*By the Sea* 17-8). On the contrary, the natives also wish to drive the British away. The dichotomy of love and hate towards the whites makes Gurnah's characters feel conflicted. Moreover, they concede the dominance of the British as Saleh Omar quotes- "It was as if they had remade us, and in ways that we no longer had any recourse but to accept, so complete and well-fitting was the story they told about us" (*By the Sea* 18). The colonized people think that the British are superior to them which creates a 'double consciousness' in an oppressive society. "Double consciousness often produced an unstable sense of self, which was heightened by the forced migration colonialism frequently caused [...] This feeling of being caught between cultures, of belonging to neither rather than to both, of finding oneself arrested in a psychological limbo that results not merely from some individual psychological disorder but from the trauma of the cultural displacement within which one lives," (Tyson 421).

Besides, inner conflict arises due to an identity crisis as Hassan is compared to an animal. In *Memory of Departure*, Bwana Ahmed tells Hassan, 'You're an animal' (*Memory of Departure* 153). Out of his rage, he continuously calls Hassan an animal. Similarly, his uncle's servant Ali also intentionally repeats such things, making Hassan more disgraceful. Their words torment Hassan internally and existentially. Moreover, it leads him toward depression and oscillation. Hassan feels an identity crisis as he quotes: "I wished I could leave that house and return to them, and tell them that we deserved no better. The whole world holds us in contempt" (*Memory of Departure* 118). Furthermore, inner conflict can also occur due to racial conflict. The whites constantly belittle the Africans or the blacks. The Europeans view Africans as savages. Thus, there were no prestigious works for the blacks. They can be merely salt sellers, sailors, masseurs, or something like that. Moreover, black people belonging to the same race can diminish each other. Hassan describes this notion as: "Glory, glory, there was not even a painter who carried our name" (*Memory of Departure* 157). Hassan is the victim of racial conflict. His own ethnic group and his cousin Salma belittled him as he could not eat the ice cream properly. Salma quotes, "Didn't you see all those white people eating in there? And you spit it all over the table" (*Memory of Departure* 129). Additionally, her friend also humiliates him by saying: 'What do you people on the coast know? You're just sailors and fishermen' (*Memory of Departure* 133). All of these predicaments make Hassan feel conflicted and humiliated. Furthermore, racial conflict is also apparent among the homogenous tribes. They cannot trust each other, and apparently, they blame each other. For instance, in the novel *Memory of Departure*, Bwana Ahmed criticizes the blacks and says, "You can't trust these Africans. They either steal from you or they let the business go to hell" (*Memory*

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of Departure 139). Gurnah portrays the issues of racism and inner conflict through the characterization of Latif Mahmud in the novel *By the Sea*.

I am a grinning blackamoor. You are a grinning blackamoor. He is a grinning blackamoor. She is a grinning blackamoor. We are grinning blackamoors. They are grinning blackamoors. It's not clear about that *a*, why it has survived in blackamoor when it has been dropped in other black combinations (*By the Sea*76).

Here, Latif emotionally struggles to find the meaning of 'Blackamoor', which evokes his inner conflict. He utters this word repeatedly. Blackamoor is an offensive word for a black person who has low status. Additionally, blackamoor is a type of visualization that boosts sexual objectification (Shohat). That is why such offensive words furcate his feelings. He continuously struggles to cope with the standards of the whites and to get magnanimous behavior from them. Likewise, Hassan loses the beliefs and faith of everyone. Hassan develops inner conflicts when he wants to get a passport, but the passport officer turns him around a lot, and he wants to avoid issuing the passport quickly. Hassan says, "I suspected that he was playing a game with me" (*Memory of Departure* 32). Hassan cannot believe anyone here as he is humiliated in the passport office. Hassan also questions the morality of others. His belief makes him an apostate. Moreover, he cannot fulfill his desires from his own family. Hence, inner conflict may cause moral conflict when a character is displaced from his morality. Hassan fulfills his latent anguish in *Memory of Departure* by slapping his drunken father. However, his moral and inner conflict leaves shame for him. Gurnah describes the moment as "slapped him as hard as I could [...] feeling shame for the pleasure it gave me" (*Memory of Departure* 58).

Subsequently, developing a sense of "selfness" is essential to become a sensible person. This sense of "selfness" creates an identity of an individual. Someone feels wounded when his/her identity is injured. In the fiction, *By the Sea*, Celia consistently calls Rajab Shaaban "Mr. Showboat." As it is depicted in the novel- "Oh, I hope you don't mind me calling you Mr. Showboat. It's just my way of remembering your name. I hope you won't be offended" (*By the Sea* 58). First, Saleh Umar used the pseudonym Rajab Shaban to protect his life. He suffered from an identity crisis long ago, and now Celia also questions his existence. She does not give any value to his actual identity. In the same manner, some derogatory comments by others are enough to break up someone internally. As Gurnah narrates- "They call me Jerk" and "Sometimes they call me Wog or Nigger" (*Memory of Departure* 185). So, these derogatory comments create inner conflicts within Hassan's mind. Moreover, 'Double Consciousness' often produces an unstable sense of "selfness" due to forced migration or when one is separated from his/her original homeland. Thus, it creates trauma of cultural displacement, specifically, the feeling of belonging neither here nor there. Likewise, it interweaves with inner conflict and identity crisis. For instance, in the novel, *By the Sea*, Mr. Shaaban goes through inner conflict due to his 'Double Consciousness.' In the novel, *By the Sea*, Celia further says, "Only you'll have to learn some English, Mr. Showboat" (*By the Sea* 58). Hence, it indicates that she humiliates Mr. Shabaan as he does not know English. On the contrary, Mr.

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Shabaan is capable of speaking English. Nevertheless, he wants to stay in the asylum, for which someone from the passport office tells him not to say anything. He only says, "I am a refugee and an asylum seeker." Moreover, he does not speak or answer anything. That is why everyone at the asylum thinks he does not know or understand English. Everyone humiliates him for his silence. Mr. Shabaan was forced to live in the asylum and deprived of the power to speak and protest all those tedious things which happened to him. Furthermore, this environment creates a sense of 'Double Consciousness' in Mr. Shabaan. Additionally, Mr. Shabaan was on good terms with the British for his furniture business, for which people in his area misunderstood him as a broker of the English. He states in the novel, "Would they tell me, or think to themselves, how English I had become, how different, how out of touch" (*By the Sea* 73)?

Likewise, procrastination is another way of developing a character's inner conflict. Fear or intense worry makes a person a procrastinator. Gurnah portrays the character Saleh Omar as a procrastinator. Saleh Omar says, "I have come to love Rachel, though I wouldn't dare tell her that" (*By the Sea* 202). Each of us has a hidden belief that lives in the shadow of our conscious awareness. Saleh Omar loves Rachel, but he is afraid of being a success. He is unsure whether he will get his beloved. That is why his state of suspense conflicts with his desire and creates an attitude of resistance and procrastination. Finally, emotional components like pain, despair, helplessness, anxiety, loneliness etc. provoke a feeling of existential crisis. The inner conflict of a character instigates an existential crisis. A person who is in an existential crisis struggles internally to understand the preeminence of life. The individual needs resolution about which path in life to follow. Instead, in the state of existential crisis, the issue of meaninglessness or absurdity arises due to the discrepancy between the desire of humans to live a meaningful life and the apparent vanity and futility of the world. Gurnah writes-

At times I felt such hatred that I have no words to describe it. I shook with it, could have destroyed myself with the rage of it, thrown myself into a fire, or off a ledge of a cliff or on the gleaming blade of a sabre or the point of a bayonet (*By the Sea* 231-2).

Thus, the restlessness of detention camps, the brutality of the soldiers, and the bleak and incommensurable life torment the character Saleh Omar internally. That type of life is meaningless to him. Hence, he is ready for death. Finally, his existential crisis leads him to commit suicide.

IV

Abdulrazak Gurnah creates a number of African, Arabian and Indian characters and portrays their role spontaneously to emphasize the repulsive and dark aspects of colonial legacies. In his writings, Gurnah depicts colonial legacies with the sentiment of displacement and inner conflict. Gurnah's novels cover the complexities of migration. Moreover, in his novels, the memories of pain and bitterness stirred by displacement are the common phenomena in the way of developing the inner conflict of a character. Gurnah delineates that his fictional characters feel internally conflicted and displaced as they simultaneously belong to two cultures. Thus, it alludes that the notion of

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displacement and inner conflict stays abreast with close contiguity in *By the Sea* and *Memory of Departure*.

The plights of displacement and inner conflict profoundly impact the various fictional characters. Moreover, due to several wars and riots, people continuously migrate from one place to another. Hence, the predicaments of geographical dislocations of the migrated people can be the field of further research.

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