

The Delusion and Reality of Migration: A Postcolonial Study of *Gun Island's* Tipu, Rafi, Palash and *Gravel Heart's* Salim



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**The Delusion and Reality of Migration: A Postcolonial Study of *Gun Island's* Tipu, Rafi,
Palash and *Gravel Heart's* Salim**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mushira Habib', is written above a horizontal line.

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nuhash", is written over a light gray rectangular background. The signature is cursive and includes a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	7
Chapter 1: Introduction	8
Chapter 2: Methodology	12
Chapter 3: Literature Review	14
Chapter 4: Analysis	22
4.1: Tipu's dangerous situational experiences due to illegally migrating to Venice	22
4.2: Rafi's issues after taking help from a Venetian trafficker for assisting Tipu	28
4.3: Palash's directionless uncertainty due to his constructed beliefs of European and Bangladeshi cultures	33
4.4: Salim's physical and mental effects for being unable to adjust to his life in London	38
Chapter 5: Conclusion	48
Works Cited	51

Abstract

The term migration refers to the movement of groups of people or communities from one location to another for various reasons related to livelihood. For the cases of poverty-stricken, displaced people or communities in need, the methods of illegal migration play an important role for escaping their life-threatening situations or impoverished livelihoods. However, the delusional dreams related to migration can be very different from the factual realities and it is these same delusions which cause a multitude of problems for immigrants. In Amitav Ghosh's novel *Gun Island*, two young boys Tipu and Rafi decide to illegally migrate to Europe to start new, peaceful and successful lives. Unfortunately, their migratory journey becomes a troublesome experience full of monetary extortions, physical abuse and harassment as well as them facing numerous problems after stepping into the city of Venice. On the other hand, another immigrant named Palash finds himself trapped in a life of uncertainty and dissatisfaction for several years despite migrating to Venice legally. Similarly, Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *Gravel Heart* reflects on the life story of an African immigrant who migrates to London to start a new and fulfilling life. Its protagonist Salim migrates with his Uncle Amir in hopes of experiencing a brand new and exciting life. However, his delusional expectations deteriorate over the course of his lifetime as he experiences the harsh realities of isolation, love, discrimination and displacement while living in London as an African immigrant. This research paper is conducted through qualitative textual analysis and utilizes *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha to understand the various issues related to migration such as racial discrimination, cultural mimicry, cultural alienation and displacement which are apparent in both these novels. As such, Bhabha's concepts are utilized to analyze and study the delusions and realities of migration for Tipu, Rafi and Palash in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* and Salim in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart*.

Chapter One

Introduction

Migration is a term used for referring to groups of people or communities who shift from one location to another for the sake of survival, occupation, safety or livelihood. The reasons for migration of people or communities can vary based on the situations of their surroundings which they inhabit. One of the primary reasons for migration has to do with displacement where a homeland or habitat is destroyed or ruined by political, natural, climate or man-made catastrophes and disasters. As such, the displaced communities and residents are forced to migrate from their homeland to another location for their livelihood.

One route of migration of significance is that from a non-Western or non-European country and into a Western or European one. Usually, the people who partake in these kinds of migratory practices do so for the sake of securing a better and sustainable life or obtaining a career with more financial and welfare benefits. The migrants who think about migrating out of their home country and into a foreign one do so because their own homeland or habitat is destroyed or tarnished due to climate disasters or unfavorable political changes and turmoil. In addition, the people belonging to these displaced or marginalized communities are financially incapable or earn very little by doing physical labor such as fishing, farming or selling agricultural goods. Moreover, their home-country might be influenced or dominated by unethical political and governmental policies which negatively impact their livelihoods and opportunities for living an honest and sustainable life. For this reason, they seek migration to foreign Western and European countries for better opportunities and sustainable livelihoods.

For people belonging to these financially burdened communities, the only options of migrating to foreign countries are illegal methods of migration which is also known as human

trafficking. For a certain sum of money, the access of migrating to a foreign country is granted using illegal travelling channels for moving from one location to another. However, while payment of the required amount of money may appear to be an easily attainable ticket for moving out of a native country and migrating into a foreign one, there are several factors involved which many migrants do not consider when initially partaking in such a journey. The human trafficking networks and organizations that move people from one location to another for a certain sum of money do so by utilizing very harsh, violent and inhumane practices. Migrants are susceptible to monetary extortion, physical harassment, abuse, violence, torture, forced organ donations, discrimination as well as being treated like animals (Pancholi & Mishra 7). This harsh and inhumane reality becomes apparent for many migrants only after they undertake a journey of illegal migration. In addition, one other form of harsh reality regarding migration has to do with not being able to adapt to the society and cultural norms after migrating to a foreign country. Due to the cultural hybridity which migrants experience between the culture of their own homeland along with the culture of the foreign country, they experience a sense of isolation and a lack of proper identity which results in a confused state of not belonging to either cultures (Abarajedha & Rajammal 98). Hence, many migrants face this reality of cultural isolation and identity crises which shatters their delusional beliefs of living a better and more opportunity-filled life in a foreign country.

Amitav Ghosh's novel *Gun Island* reflects on the matters and outcomes related to climate change and migration. While the novel might have a significant emphasis on climate change and the natural disasters that occur which wreak havoc and chaos in many parts of the world, there are also many notable attributes regarding illegal migration, human trafficking and immigrants in the city of Venice. The protagonist Dinanath Datta (Deen) meets a young boy named Tipu who

explains the entire complex system of illegal migration and human trafficking and mentions that he has been working in the business for a long time (Ghosh 60-64). Later in the novel, Tipu decides to migrate to Venice with another young boy named Rafi. However, Tipu's lack of critical understanding and proper planning causes both him and Rafi to fall into the same traps which many immigrants fall into when illegally migrating to a European country. In addition, another immigrant named Palash who has been living in Venice for many years also suffers from several issues such as cultural alienation, unemployment and identity crisis (Ghosh 265-268).

On the other hand, Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *Gravel Heart* focuses on the life story of an African immigrant living in London. The protagonist of the novel is a young boy named Salim who decides to migrate out of his Zanzibari hometown in Africa and live in London under the guidance and guardianship of his Uncle Amir. Initially, Salim shows delight about migrating and living in London which consists of feelings of excitement, curiosity and interest (Gurnah 49). However, through the course of the novel, Salim experiences many issues throughout his entire life's journey while living in London such as cultural isolation and alienation, homesickness, familial disputes, displacements, heartbreaking sexual relationships, racial discrimination as well as unsatisfactory career options. Towards the end of the novel, Salim contemplates that his delusional beliefs and overestimations of migrating to London for living a fulfilling life meets with a cruel reality full of issues and complications which affect him mentally and physically.

While there are notable academic journals and research papers on both *Gun Island* and *Gravel Heart* regarding migration, climate crises and cultural issues; the significant focus of many of these journals and papers reflect on how climate change influences migration to foreign countries and how the political and governmental hegemony affects African citizens respectively. There is a lack of precise focus on the sufferings, experiences and consequences on the lives of

Tipu, Rafi, Palash and Salim based on how they have different experiences due to migration. As such, this research examines the migratory experiences of the four characters based on how it affects their lives and what consequences they suffer from.

It is notable to state that this research is limited in its scope of studying and analyzing the delusions and realities of migration due to focusing on the experiences of only the male characters in both the novels.

The aim of this research is to study and analyze the delusions of Tipu, Rafi, Palash and Salim in regards to migrating to a foreign country and how they experience harsh, contradicting, despairing and violent realities. This research investigates the delusions and realities of the characters from the novels *Gun Island* and *Gravel Heart* by utilizing Homi K. Bhabha's theoretical concepts and ideas of culture and its features from his book *The Location of Culture*.

Research Questions:

1. How does Tipu's misconceptions of migrating to Venice using illegal human trafficking processes cause him to fall into dangerous situations?
2. What issues does Rafi face in Venice in his attempts to assist Tipu by taking help from a Venetian trafficker (scafista)?
3. How does Palash's delusional contradictory beliefs of European culture and Bangladeshi culture cause him to become trapped in a state of directionless uncertainty?
4. How Salim is affected physically and mentally due to being unable to adjust to his life in London as an African immigrant?

Chapter Two

Methodology

This research is conducted using qualitative textual analysis in order to study how the delusional migratory beliefs of the characters in the two novels causes them to suffer in realistic scenarios full of cruelty, harshness, violence and uncertainty. To justify and understand the delusions and realities of migration and why migrants face issues in foreign countries, Homi K. Bhabha's book *The Location of Culture* is utilized.

Specifically, three chapters of the book are used for examining the migratory decisions, delusions, realities as well as unpredictable outcomes of the characters from the two novels. The three chapters "The Other Question", "Of Mimicry and Man" and "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern" are utilized for investigating how Tipu, Rafi, Palash and Salim suffer in various scenarios due to their misconceptions of living a better life by migrating to a foreign country.

Homi K. Bhabha's ideas and concepts regarding culture which focus on the characteristics of alienation, isolation, hybridity, mimicry and rejection are utilized in this research to analyze the migratory experiences of the four characters as mentioned. Hence, Bhabha's concepts and ideas on the aspects related to culture allow for examining the actions of the characters from the two novels and how their actions influences their outcomes and consequences.

Chapter 3 "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism" allows for understanding how colonial practices employ certain stereotypical systems which causes prejudices to form regarding differences based on racial and cultural characteristics. These practices also enable a "subjectification" of the "other" by colonial powers through construction of identities based on traits of race, culture and color which are judged by stereotypical racist and discriminatory perspectives.

Chapter 4 “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse” allows for studying how colonial powers, strategies and knowledge implement a concept called “mimicry”. This element of mimicry causes “othered” individuals to mimic colonial characteristics which results in them becoming an “incomplete” or “partial” being due to simply repeating colonial characteristics instead of representing their own distinct attributes of their own race or culture.

Chapter 9 “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern: The Question of Agency” allows for recognizing how postcolonial perspectives portray minorities based on improper development, differentiated and disadvantaged histories of races, nations, people and communities. This chapter also signifies culture as being incomplete in terms of value and meaning and results in the production of certain practices and demands for the sake of social and cultural survival for an individual. Postcolonial practices also play roles in assigning discriminatory cultural and legal statuses to diasporic, refugee and migrant populations which forces them to become victims to the wrong side of the law and suffer in regards to both nations and cultures.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* and Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart* both offer insight into the matters and situations revolving around migration to foreign countries. Both the novels portray the harsh truths about the different and various problems which migrants face upon travelling to or living in a foreign colonizer's land. Many literary scholars have established and theorized their own findings based on the reasons and causes of migration. The following paragraphs are a review of some relevant journal articles and papers which reflect on the traits of migration.

In her article, Alia Rawshan Banu highlights the reasons for migration from one's own country to a foreign European country in Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island*. She emphasizes on how Rafi and Tipu become fascinated with settling in a safe, secure and new life in Europe. Both Rafi and Tipu gain awareness about the joyful and successful life in Europe through the internet and this matter reflects the much larger scale of migration in the present time where the whole process of migration becomes a large infrastructure connecting multiple cultures, ideas and people through usage of the internet and technological platforms (Banu 2). The article further elaborates on how the human trafficking system plays an influential role in the process of migration. Human trafficking has become significantly important and dominant in the present time for the case of migration due to the stricter laws and regulations supervising the crossing of international borders (Banu 3).

Claudia Sadowski Smith explores Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* by incorporating the principles of migration studies and discussing how the novel brings attention to the matters of human migration across oceanic systems. She mentions that while the novel portrays the manner in which the European borders have installed stricter regulations for halting or suppressing

immigration, there is a much greater focus on how the human trafficking organizations play a crucial role for transporting migrants into European borders through oceanic bodies (Smith 2). The article further states how a major cause of migration has to do with natural climate disasters which can cause extensive damage to areas such as the Sundarbans which disrupt and destroy agricultural lands and farming procedures. As a result of climate change, the number of people wishing to migrate to European countries increased, which further caused an increase in the number of human trafficking organizations (Smith 3). She also mentions how the human traffickers trap migrants who want to cross borders by ensnaring them into an extortionist payment scheme. Those who are able pay the required amount and those who cannot are forced to donate their organs. Both Rafi and Tipu suffer from this extortionist scheme where they were kept in connection houses on several instances throughout their journey across the borders towards Europe. Furthermore, after reaching Italy without Tipu, Rafi becomes trapped by an Italian crime syndicate and is forced to keep paying them money believing that he is helping his friend (Smith 4).

In their article, Nupur Pancholi and Sanjit Kumar Mishra elaborate on how climate change in *Gun Island* becomes a driving factor for environmental degradation as well as human migration. Through exploitation of natural resources, human lifestyle and culture has driven nature and its natural environment to its ecological limits which in turn fuels the effects of climate change (Pancholi & Mishra 1). The effects of climate change cause problems most significantly for the people and communities living in climate-affected areas. Due to the environmental and climate devastation, the locals in these kinds of areas like the Sundarbans are forced to migrate out of their homelands by any means; whether it is paying money to agents for slipping into Bangladesh for work or paying human traffickers to travel across the sea and slip into European countries. The article reflects on how the lives of migrants affected by climate change are wretched and difficult

as presented in *Gun Island* through the journey of Rafi and Tipu. Both the boys illegally journey across several borders in order to reach Europe and a major part of their experience was centered around being stuffed into vehicles like animals with several other migrants, being locked up in connection houses and being assaulted, beaten and harassed for paying extra money to continue travelling (Pancholi & Mishra 7).

Neelam Hooda discusses how migrants gain shifting identities while travelling to different countries while also encountering xenophobic principles in the host country. Migration causes a sense of confusion with one's identity as the individual sits between the identities and cultures of both their own homeland and the host country which they migrate to. Migrants face a constant dispute with their own identities trying to fit into both cultures at the same time. Cultural and social values influence a person's identity based on the environment they are present in. Due to migration, an individual can develop a question of belonging in the host country which can result in two opposing attitudes. One is where a migrant tries to adapt the social and cultural values along with the principles of the host country while rejecting anything related to their homeland. The other is where a migrant tries to resist the social and cultural norms of the host country while proudly practicing and following the social, cultural and religious principles of their own homeland (Hooda 125). The article refers to a migratory study and report of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) which revealed that "Bangladesh ranked globally in the sixth position as the largest migrant-sending country where during the year of 2023, about 15,000 Bangladeshi migrants travelled to Italy though the Mediterranean sea." In *Gun Island*, characters like Tipu and Rafi end up becoming refugees instead of migrants due to travelling through international borders using illegal methods. They face uncertainty with their lives and are under constant threats and dangers. One other character called Palash also finds himself in a state of uncertainty due to

dropping out of his university studies after migrating to Italy. Moreover, Palash faces an identity crisis among his own Bengali community in Italy due to the other Bengali migrants discriminating against him as he did not undergo the same struggles and hardships of migration as they did (Hooda 128).

On the other hand, Abigail O. Oaikhena highlights how post-colonial practices and principles establish a subjugated and altered cultural identity in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart*. The article states that postcolonial governance and policies in Zanzibar influenced migratory decisions for people like Salim's grandfather and Uncle Amir (Oaikhena 153). In the novel, Zanzibar is described as a postcolonial state where the government, norms, culture and religion all have undergone transformations due to colonial rule and it is this change which influences the lives of its citizens. Due to the influence of the British colonizers on the African government, discriminatory practices based on class difference, language, ethnic superiority and other characteristics are utilized for controlling and dominating the citizens; a major example being the hegemonic attitude towards Salim's family by Hakim (Oaikhena 154). The article further explains that due to these postcolonial hegemonic practices, many citizens migrate in search for security and safety in other places. Both migration and displacement become a major factor of a postcolonial state due to the lives of the citizens being affected by hegemonic and dominating principles utilized by the government and its leaders (Oaikhena 157).

Ajoy Batta and Shalini present a postcolonial perspective of *Gravel Heart* in their article by incorporating Homi K. Bhabha's concept of uncanny and unhomeliness. Referring to Bhabha, the authors explain that "unhomeliness is a feeling of dislocation which occurs when the boundaries between a domestic world and outer world become blurred" (Batta & Shalini 5262). The traits of a migrant experience can undergo the following characteristics of the uncanny where

there is a partial presence of a colonial identity as well as experiencing a repetition of one's past life in their country of origin which may not be identical and can undergo transformation or contain differences. These ideas portray the colonial and migratory experience along with the individual's identity which does not belong to a specific homeland. This matter of uncanny aids in understanding the experience of an individual who is rooted both to their homeland while also constantly being on the move (Batta & Shalini 5263). The article examines Salim's identity crisis as he feels a sense of not belonging in England or his own home in Zanzibar. Moreover, Salim undergoes many struggles in England and yet does not have any reason to return home to Zanzibar. This reflects on the migratory experience of unhomeliness where one loses their identity after migrating out of their own homeland while also feeling a certain sense of strangeness towards it (Batta & Shalini 5264).

Likewise, in their article, Meena S. Abarajedha and Pandia P. Rajammal focus on the themes of dislocation, belonging and identity in *Gravel Heart* and how Salim is affected by these traits. Referring to postcolonialism, the article elaborates on how Salim's displacement and migration causes him to suffer from an identity crisis in both his Zanzibari homeland as well as in England due to the opposing cultural aspects and way of life (Abarajedha & Rajammal 96). Through utilization of postcolonial perspectives along with Homi K. Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity, the authors reflect on how Salim's identity and life experiences undergo many struggles due to the hybridization of two differing cultures. There is a conflict between Salim's past life in Zanzibar and his new life in England; as such, this causes him to have difficulties fitting in his new life in England while he was also facing problems living in his homeland in Zanzibar with his mother (Abarajedha & Rajammal 97). Additionally, the postcolonial elements of the novel also play a role in shaping Salim's displaced and shattered identity. His sense of exile from his

Zanzibari home and culture along with his confusions of England's norms and customs create a kind of alienated and displaced identity as he feels he does not belong to either Zanzibar nor England. This feeling of confusion and alienation of one's own identity and culture highlights the effects of colonialism on states like Zanzibar and people like Salim (Abarajedha & Rajammal 98).

Suraj Soni and Vipin Pal Singh discuss the matters of “placeness” and “place-bound identity” in *Gravel Heart*. The article begins with an explanation of how a “place” is not limited to one certain aspect or one geographical location. Instead, the concept of “place” extends beyond geographical boundaries and incorporates elements such as artistic, literary and aesthetic aspects (Soni & Singh 2). The “place” can become a point of various social, material and human activities which can be influenced by a change of the place in terms of geographical or material context. The article then mentions the post-independent timeline in Zanzibar where many chaotic political and cultural changes took place. These chaotic changes have an effect on Salim's “place-bound identity” as he faces many struggles as an immigrant such as existential crisis, social isolation, discrimination and joblessness (Soni & Singh 6). Moreover, the cultural changes and political subjugation which affects Salim's family portrays another crucial reason for the migration of individuals to other locations. This migratory action is what results in problems such as “racial segregation, ethnic cleansing, placelessness and non-homes” (Soni & Singh 10).

Gene H. Blocker elaborates in his article about the concept of western aesthetics and how non-western aesthetics are influenced and constructed by it. The article mentions how the idea of “aesthetics” is a term which is colonially invented by the West, especially in regards to non-Western or non-European aesthetics. Due to this, there is a “cultural difference which presents itself through comparison of Western systems and non-Western systems”. As such, the comparison can go in either direction. Western or European systems can compare their own cultures to non-

Western systems while non-Western systems can compare European or Western cultures to their own Indian, Chinese or African systems. Due to the West's militaristic, scientific and economic domination across the globe, it is them who have utilized their intelligence and frameworks to judge and analyze non-Western systems. Europeans were interested to know about how the colonized people would think, what their values and goals were and how they interacted in their own cultural environments (Blocker 4). The article states that the philosophical terminology of "aesthetics" does not have any standard or professional usage in any particular scenario. The usage of this term varies or drifts quite easily based on human taste or aesthetic sensibility (Blocker 8).

In their article, Katherine M. Donato and Douglas S. Massey discuss the matters of illegal migration and migration policies. The globalization of capitalism enabled a freedom of movement across international borders by people. However, currently, all nations establish and incorporate restrictions for international migration. The article mentions how migrants have different values, speak unfamiliar languages, come from divergent cultural backgrounds and behave in different, unusual manners. These characteristics have chances to initiate misunderstandings, risks, conflicts and threatening situations between immigrants and the general public in foreign nations which can establish beliefs that immigration must be controlled and restricted (Donato & Massey 9-10). A primary reason for people seeking migration is for acquiring advantages such as higher wages and better employment which are more in demand in the Global North compared to the Global South. Factors such as natural disasters, economic catastrophes, political upheavals as well as other life-threatening situations also influence migration (Donato & Massey 15-16).

In a relevant book chapter, Michael Bommers inquires about illegal migration in modern society as well as the problems related to European migration policies. Individuals are motivated by international migration for seeking opportunities and benefits in sectors such as labor markets,

educational systems along with participating in international societies or communities. People migrate across international borders in order to obtain a certain lifestyle; however, international laws and politics intervene and obstruct such processes of migration in many ways (Bommes 158). Illegal migration is reliant on a foundation which bases its facts on how migrants are unable to find opportunities in their own countries and tend to migrate to other countries that can offer richer opportunities and advantages. Additionally, foreign countries place certain and selective rules and regulations in order to limit both movements and accesses of migration which results in many individuals partaking in illegal methods of migration in order to seize opportunities in such foreign countries despite political and legal prohibitions (Bommes 160).

Both the novels *Gun Island* and *Gravel Heart* present the traits of migration and the cultural hybridity which influences the characters and their lives. Thus, the list of the reviewed secondary sources aids this research for elaborating on the reality and delusion of migration through studying the four characters from the two novels.

Chapter Four

Analysis

4.1) Tipu's dangerous situational experiences due to illegally migrating to Venice:

Tipu is one of the significant characters introduced in the beginning of Amitav Ghosh's novel *Gun Island*. The protagonist Dinanath (Deen) gets introduced to Tipu through agreeing to a journey to travel to the Sundarbans to uncover the mystery of the Gun Merchant. Tipu's mother Moyna explains Tipu's backstory of how he travelled to the United States at an early age with the guardianship and guidance of Piya but was forced to return to India due to getting involved with the wrong types of people. Moyna mentions how Tipu is very capable with computers and technology as well as speaking in English like an American (Ghosh 50-51).

The beginning of the novel where Tipu's characteristics are described by his mother displays two important factors that can be highlighted. The first is that Tipu had already gained an awareness of the Western cultural background and aesthetics from a very early age when Piya took him with her to Oregon in the United States. This in turn causes him to act and behave in an American or Western manner after Piya brought him back to India and he was admitted to an expensive school in Kolkata. His mother Moyna stated that his classmates and teachers were not accepting his attitudes which were influenced by American culture. Another point to mention would be how Tipu changed his real name Tutul into Tipu as the latter was easier for Americans to pronounce (Ghosh 51). The second important factor has to do with Tipu's understanding of the utilization of technology as well as the reasons for people to migrate abroad to foreign countries. After meeting with Deen and beginning the journey to head to the Sundarbans, Tipu describes his job and responsibilities to Deen. Tipu declares that he provides a kind of "essential service" for people who want to gain a better life. The only way to achieve this is through gaining access to the

human trafficking network and meeting people like Tipu through the internet. Tipu mentions that due to reasons such as climate change, the inhabitants of the Sundarbans and its surrounding areas are unable to make a sustainable living through farming or fishing. As such, they migrate out of the areas in search of a better and more sustainable life, and if possible, they try to migrate abroad. Tipu states that “the internet is like a magic carpet for migrants” (Ghosh 61). Based on the descriptions that Tipu gives, it can be interpreted that he has a firm grasp and belief that the concept of a better life is something which exists only in foreign Western and European countries.

Homi K. Bhabha mentions in Chapter 3 “The Other Question” of his book *The Location of Culture* that one of the main attributes of colonial discourse is its ability to act as an apparatus which initiates a recognition or disavowal of cultural and racial differences. The main function is to establish a space through the production of knowledge which in turn incites a complex form of pleasure and unpleasantness (70).

As Tipu had been to America and experienced Western culture at a very young age, he developed a kind of bias and a sense of superiority in regards to Western culture and lifestyle. Moreover, Tipu’s in-depth understanding of Western cultures becomes more apparent when he explains to Deen about the political, religious and sexual orientation stories he constructs for his clients’ migratory needs for some countries like Sweden (Ghosh 62). Tipu’s understanding of what processes and improvisations his migrant clients need to follow to gain access to Western or European countries shows that Tipu has done his research properly in the years that he has been working in the people-moving industry.

This brings into discussion about how Tipu views the Western or European countries and their cultures. As mentioned previously, Tipu appears to believe that a better life exists outside of India and Bangladesh. Due to this constructed belief and the information he discloses about how

the internet displays the successful and sustainable lives of migrants living in foreign countries, he seems to express a certain bias towards the Western or European countries in the sense that it is possible to achieve success in these countries as they are superior in terms of characteristics as a country and a nation. However, Tipu's optimistic biases towards Western or European countries and cultures is the very reason why he falls into very dire and drastic situations when migrating illegally to Venice. Initially, when Tipu begins his journey of migration together with Rafi, he feels optimistic about it as he believes he knows and understands the migratory routes and procedures as he has been working in the human trafficking business for a long time. Unfortunately for Tipu, he falls into the same trap as every other migrant who crosses borders illegally by the help of connection men (dalals). While everything seems fine at first when Tipu begins his migration journey with Rafi from Dhaka, his situation becomes bitter after a certain point when he reaches close to the Pakistani border. Here, the dalal's henchmen or "jackals" who are driving the vehicle full of migrants declare that in order to travel further, extra money needs to be paid. As this comes as a shock to both Tipu and Rafi, Tipu becomes angry and starts arguing with the jackals. In response to this, one of the jackals slaps him which fails to shut Tipu up and afterwards two other jackals drag Tipu into a room to beat him and attempt to physically assault him. This entire experience forces Tipu into a submissive state and he does not try to argue any further during their next crossing near the Iranian border where all the migrants are ordered to pay another sum of extra money again in order to get across. As a result, Tipu realizes the situation he is trapped in and how he unfortunately also gets Rafi involved. Upon realization, Tipu advises Rafi to keep moving forward and get across the borders in case both of them get separated (Ghosh 236-241). This entire matter as described by Rafi during his meeting with Deen in the hospital in the later chapters of the novel portrays the harshness and brutality that migrants experience when crossing

borders illegally through the help of connection men (dalals). It is interesting to note that Tipu's delusion of migrating from Dhaka to Venice is partially influenced by his understanding of the routes of migration as well as the procedures required for illegal border crossings. Upon closer analysis, during the beginning of the novel when Tipu first meets Deen, it appears as if he has a very in-depth understanding and experience regarding the matters of illegal migration and border crossings. However, much later in the novel, as Rafi explains the entire matter to Deen, it appears that even someone like Tipu did not anticipate the dire and difficult situations he would be trapped into. Perhaps even more alarming is the situation Tipu ends up in towards the end of the novel when he enters Venetian borders in the Blue Boat full of other refugees trying to reach Venice as well. Upon arriving in Venetian waters, the Blue Boat is intercepted by two groups of ships containing people with opposing opinions. One group belongs to Lubna and her migrant-supporting activist accomplices aboard the *Lucania* while the other group of ships belongs to right-winged, anti-immigrant groups who appear to also be full of multicultural people from countries like Hungary, Germany, Singapore, Australia and Russia (Ghosh 272). The anti-immigrant groups are focused on rejecting and deporting the Blue Boat and its refugees while Lubna's group are determined to support and aid the refugees attempting to enter Venice. This scenario portrays the extensive amount of discrimination that migrants and refugees face upon crossing Western or European borders and attempting to set foot in their lands. The fact that the Blue Boat which Tipu is on is confronted by a multicultural group of anti-immigrant activists with supporters from countries like Germany, Russia, Australia, Hungary and Singapore shows the severity and seriousness of discrimination against migrants.

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi K. Bhabha explains in Chapter 9 "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern" that the "myth believed by the modern people on the concept of

the language of rights and obligations need to be viewed and questioned on the basis of the discriminatory cultural and legal status assigned to migrants, refugees and diasporic populations as the people belonging to these groups inevitably find themselves on the other side of the law between cultures and nations” (175). In addition, Bhabha exclaims that this also “raises the questions centered on cultural difference and incommensurability. It represents a kind of temporality of the cultural meaning as a form of multi-accentual and it is the cultural sign which unsettles the liberal ethic of tolerance and the framework of multiculturalism”. At times of social crises, the issues of cultural differences emerge and raise questions of identity which are agonistic. The matter of identity is asserted from either a position of marginality or from an attempt of obtaining the centre (177).

The refugees of the Blue Boat where Tipu is present are given an unfriendly and discriminatory welcome. Upon analysis of the confrontational and bitter attitudes of the anti-immigrant activists, their hostility appears to portray that these refugees and migrants are performing an unlawful action by entering Venice as they belong to cultures and legal regulations which are vastly different from European cultures and regulations. As such, the entirety of the Blue Boat is being judged based on the difference of culture, ethnicity and identity. As these refugees and migrants are non-Western and non-European, the anti-immigrant activists believe that they do not belong in Venice and are attempting to push them back to where they came from. Towards the final chapters of the novel, Tipu no longer becomes present in the foreground partaking in any action or speaking any dialogues. Therefore, it is not possible to declare what his opinions and thoughts would be regarding the dangerous and life-threatening situation he dragged himself into. Based on the scenario of the Blue Boat, it can be stated that Tipu’s expectations of migration to Venice from Dhaka did not go as planned. What started as a simple journey turned problematic in

the middle and then ended up becoming an unpredictable catastrophe towards the end. This highlights that Tipu's determination of migrating to Venice and living a peaceful and sustainable life is confronted with the reality of migratory discrimination and cultural rejection from the people of the Western and European culture. Tipu probably did not comprehend the situation he would end up in before he started his journey. Due to his biased beliefs of experiencing a better life in Oregon in the United States at an early age as well as observing Western and European cultures and lifestyles on the internet, he becomes blinded by his intuition of migration which results in him not only facing physical harassment, humiliation, extortion and being treated like an animal but also forces him to become a victim of the European discriminatory practices and norms against migrants and refugees while he is present on the Blue Boat. To some extent, it is possible to address that Tipu becomes a sort of migrant prisoner during his time in the Blue Boat while he is being judged, insulted and discriminated against by the anti-immigrant activist groups. His only option while in the Blue Boat appeared to be to wait for a governmental decision from Admiral Vigonovo. While the ending of the situation regarding the Blue Boat is resolved peacefully due to Admiral Vigonovo's kind gesture for rescuing the refugees and letting them enter into Venice, the opposite could have also taken place where he might have commanded the navy vessels to destroy the Blue Boat or have the refugees and migrants arrested and sent to prison. In the case that such an event might have taken place, then Tipu would have either lost his life or landed in a Venetian prison where he would have suffered a punishing fate.

4.2) Rafi's issues after taking help from a Venetian trafficker for assisting Tipu:

In *Gun Island*, similarly to Tipu, Rafi is another character who finds himself trapped in a problematic and unpredictable situation which he probably did not expect to experience. However, it is worth highlighting that Rafi's experience is rather different from Tipu's experience as mentioned previously. To begin with, Rafi grew up in the Sundarbans and worked as a fisherman while occasionally watching over the shrine of the Gun Merchant (Ghosh 57, 73). As such, Rafi has no idea regarding the systems or procedures of illegal migration and human trafficking. This lack of knowledge becomes more apparent during his journey with Tipu which he decides to partake in as he chooses to move out of the Sundarban areas. Furthermore, as he is a young boy of only seventeen or eighteen years of age as mentioned by Horen Naskar, he has a certain bit of naivety and lack of intellect in regards to the situation he gets himself trapped in. Towards the later parts of the novel where the protagonist Deen travels to Venice and meets Rafi unexpectedly, Rafi explains the complicated situation he gets involved in due to listening and following Tipu's idea of migrating to Europe (Ghosh 236). When making the illegal migration journey from Dhaka to Europe with Tipu, Rafi becomes shocked when the jackals demand further payment in order to continue on with the journey. Unlike Tipu, who becomes angry and starts insulting the jackals only to later be beaten by them, Rafi tries to deescalate the situation and calm Tipu down so that both the boys do not get into any trouble. This shows that Rafi is understanding of his lack of power and authority over the jackals and can realize that he is powerless in the situation he is in and must comply with whatever demands are asked of him. However, Rafi's naivety is displayed after he reaches Venice upon receiving Tipu's instructions after they are separated while attempting to cross the Turkish border. After receiving Tipu's phone call about how he would reach Venice through some other country by the help of another dalal which would require extra money, Rafi

begins to collect money to send for Tipu's journey. However, Rafi does not have the sufficient amount of money as the amount required is huge. Therefore, he decides to make a deal and take a loan from a Venetian trafficker (scafista) who agrees to pay money to Tipu's dalal so that the journey can be made. Afterwards, Rafi would pay back the trafficker in installments to make up for the loan he agreed upon (Ghosh 191, 242). This is where Rafi's naivety and lack of intellect is portrayed as he does not understand the system which is set in place for migrants like Rafi who take loans from traffickers for various and personal reasons. When Rafi misses some payments, the trafficker initially gives a warning to him and later when Rafi fails to pay the later installments, he is beaten quite severely by the trafficker's henchmen and hospitalized. Rafi is desperate to help Tipu reach Venice and so he arranges the monetary transaction to occur as soon as possible by any means possible. When he makes the deal with the trafficker, he probably does not imagine falling into such a mess and getting beaten up violently. Due to his desperation, he decides to get involved in a process which he has no idea or experience with and as a result, he pays the price through receiving violent beatings which lands him in the hospital.

The interesting matter to note is how another character called Palash explains the entire situation about these traffickers (scafisti) and how they operate their businesses. The traffickers have connections to the Italian Mob as well as other crime syndicates in countries like Libya, Egypt and Nigeria. Their sole purpose is to find ways to smuggle migrants into Venice or other parts of Italy and force them to work on farms or construction sites where they are treated like slaves. Getting involved with these kinds of people causes migrants to fall into a trap and getting out of this trap is very difficult. Moreover, Palash mentions how these traffickers do not actually care about receiving their payments back and are only interested in keeping people and migrants like Rafi in their debt so that these traffickers can command migrants to follow their orders and do their

bidding. Palash also addresses how Lubna's husband Munir was killed by members of the Italian Mob for getting involved and being a nuisance to their businesses (Ghosh 200-201). It is possible to deduce that Rafi becomes involved in a system which only seeks to exploit and use him. As Rafi has no experience or knowledge of how these loan sharks operate and run their businesses, he takes a loan to help Tipu in his journey, only to later succumb to the violent beatings of the trafficker's thugs.

Homi K. Bhabha highlights in Chapter 3 "The Other Question" that colonial discourse has a productive ambivalence which constructs an "otherness" which becomes an object of derision and desire which has an articulation of variations in regards to origin and identity. The colonial subject which is constructed in discourse as well as the exercise of colonial power through this discourse refers to the difference of racial characteristics. It is this difference which becomes important in terms of the body being inscribed in both the economy of desire and pleasure as well as the economy of domination, power and discourse (*Location of Culture* 67).

While Rafi might not admit or express his powerlessness against the trafficker (scafista) who he takes a loan from, he can mentally acknowledge the fact that he does not have the power or capability to physically fight back or vocally protest when he is threatened to pay the money on time or even beaten by the trafficker's thugs. All he could do is take the beatings and later receive treatment at the hospital. On the other hand, the Venetian trafficker has an understanding of Rafi's situation as well as needs and so chooses to exploit Rafi for the sake of money. The Venetian trafficker knows that Rafi cannot do anything as he is a non-European illegal migrant who has no Venetian rights, official documents or powerful connections. In terms of culture, race and social standing, the European superiority of the Venetian trafficker can dominate and exploit the non-

European inferiority of Rafi and this in turn leads to Rafi succumbing to the threats and violence from the trafficker and his thugs.

The other matter of the Venetian trafficker's trap which Rafi falls into which can be elaborated on is based on how Rafi's troublesome situation portrays and highlights a common and serious problem faced by migrants who illegally cross borders and set foot into European countries.

Homi K. Bhabha mentions in Chapter 3 "The Other Question" that racial stereotypical discourse establishes a "form of constitutional knowledge and exercise of power". Some of the practices which are carried out "recognize the difference of culture, history and race" which are elaborated and defined by racial theories, stereotypical knowledge as well as administrative colonial experience. These attributes then institutionalize cultural and political ideologies which are discriminatory and prejudicial (*Location of Culture* 83).

Upon a closer analysis, it can be discussed that the Venetian trafficker (scafista) understands about Rafi's cultural and racial background. For this reason, he knows that Rafi has no official documents or ethical human rights while he is in Venice and is completely helpless and defenseless. The trafficker also probably realizes that illegal migrants like Rafi have no understanding of how Venetian laws work and therefore can take advantage of their lack of knowledge and naivety. It is worth mentioning that as Rafi belongs to a non-European racial and cultural background, the trafficker probably also believes him to be easy to manipulate and dominate which in fact turns out true as Rafi does not even care about fighting back against the trafficker's violent behavior or even reporting to the Venetian police after he is hospitalized. Furthermore, Rafi does not appear to even ask Deen to help him get justice for all the violent beatings he receives from the trafficker's hired thugs. The entire experience which Rafi encounters highlights a crucial and vital reality of illegal migration to European or Western countries,

especially for young boys who are like Rafi. It shows that the colonial practices of power of the Western or European citizens play a role in discrimination, domination and control over the non-European or non-Western groups of people who are either marginalized groups or they belong to different non-European cultural or racial backgrounds. The Venetian trafficker who has connections to the mob and crime syndicates understands very well that migrants like Rafi are powerless to do anything while they are in a foreign, European city like Venice. Thus, these European traffickers, smugglers and other connection men (dalals) within these locations such as Venice or Sicily choose to take advantage of illegal immigrants by any means possible. Rafi probably did not expect to experience such a harsh and violent encounter when he initially arrived in Venice. However, his delusion and misunderstood belief of helping Tipu with his journey by paying money through a trafficker is broken by the reality of the financial trap he falls into and pays the price through physical threats and violent beatings. Although Rafi's situation does not have a tragic ending in the novel; theoretically, it is possible to still highlight that Rafi's situation could have escalated to a point where he might have been killed if the Venetian trafficker wished to perform such an act and he could have met a tragic ending similar to Lubna's husband Munir.

4.3) Palash's directionless uncertainty due to his constructed beliefs of European and Bangladeshi cultures:

In addition to both Tipu and Rafi, Palash is another character in *Gun Island* whose delusion about migration meets with an opposite spectrum of reality. It is during the journey of the *Lucania* where Deen meets with Palash and learns of his backstory. Palash explains that “he belongs to a successful family background from Bangladesh and has a degree in management from Dhaka University. His father is a banker, brother is a civil servant and Palash himself used to work in a multinational corporation as a manager where he dressed formally and commuted to work in a car. However, Palash had a dream of migrating to Finland which he planned out with a group of his friends. Unfortunately, when his plan was unsuccessful, he decided to migrate to a different European university initially and then would later transfer to Finland. After several attempts, he finally found acceptance at the University of Padova and migrated to Italy in hopes of starting a new life. Palash's confident delusion was met with a harsh reality as his time passed in Italy. Initially, while he was content with studying at the university, later onwards he was struggling with adapting to the coursework and eventually dropped out after a year. Then, he pursued a work permit which he was also unsuccessful in gaining after several attempts. This brings into perspective his current situation where he meets Deen and declares that even though four years have passed, Palash is still trapped in a kind of limbo not only in terms of his status as an Italian but also in regards to his status as a Bengali compared to the other Bengali migrants. Furthermore, Palash also mentions in the novel how he does not mind doing low level physical laboring jobs such as delivering pizzas, washing plates or cleaning latrines. Interestingly, he highlights that in Venice, he does not mind doing these kinds of jobs while back in Bangladesh he despised even working as a clerk in an office” (Ghosh 265-267).

For Palash's backstory, there are three major aspects which can be analyzed. Firstly, Palash's lack of intellect as well as overconfidence is what lands him in the position he finds himself trapped in during the course of the novel when he meets Deen. Had he been careful in creating a proper plan before migrating out of Bangladesh, he would not have suffered in such a manner. As he was desperate to follow his dream of migrating to a European country, he did not believe in the fact that his plan might one day become unsuccessful or problematic.

Secondly, Palash has this strange psychological trait which makes him view his own Bangladeshi culture and work environment as inferior while portraying the European systems as superior. This is apparent in how he exclaims to Deen that he would be happy to work in manual laboring jobs such as delivering pizzas, cleaning latrines or washing plates. Additionally, his displeasing attitude towards working as a manager while he was in Bangladesh shows that he has a contrasting mindset and opposing perspectives on the differing characteristics of the East and the West. Based on Palash's opinions, it appears that he is discriminating and lowering the Bangladeshi work culture and its values while also highlighting the superiority of the European work culture and values. Upon analyzing Palash's ideologies, it can be stated that he believes working as a manager in a multinational corporation in Bangladesh is not a very profitable, enjoyable or valuable achievement. However, he believes that working as a low-level manual laborer such as a pizza delivery man, dish washer or latrines' cleaner in a European country such as Venice is more of an enjoyable and valuable achievement.

Homi K. Bhabha describes a postcolonial concept known as "mimicry" in Chapter 4 "Of Mimicry and Man" where an "othered" subject or individual tends to adapt to Western or Colonized practices and norms through mimicking or copying. Bhabha mentions that this practice of colonial mimicry for the "other" is simply an ironic compromise which causes the "othered"

subject or individual to become alienated from their own sense of liberty. Moreover, the ambivalence of colonial mimicry tends to transform the “othered” subject or individual into an uncertain and “partial” presence who is both virtual and incomplete (*Location of Culture* 86).

Based on Bhabha’s theoretical ideas, it can be interpreted that Palash is simply a colonized subject from Bangladesh who is attempting to copy or mimic a European personality while staying in Venice. Palash believes that his decisions and ambitions for working hard in low-level manual laboring jobs in a European city is what can enable him to be a part of a European community and society.

In his article “Non-Western Aesthetics as a Colonial Invention”, Gene H. Blocker mentions the characteristics of western aesthetics and how non-western cultures are influenced by it. The concept of “aesthetics” is a term invented by the West which is used to highlight and contrast the differences between the Western cultures and non-Western cultures. The Western systems were interested to know and understand how the values, social norms and cultural environments of the non-Western systems functioned (8).

As mentioned that non-Western cultures are influenced by Western cultures and there is a matter of comparison between the two, it can be elaborated that Palash is using this very same concept for comparing his previous life in Bangladesh to his current life in Venice. The interesting point to observe is how Palash is derogatory towards his own successful life working as a manager in a multinational corporate office while he was living in Dhaka in Bangladesh. However, he appears to find satisfaction and pleasure in the ideas of working in low-level manual laboring jobs in Venice such as delivering pizzas, washing plates or cleaning latrines even though he is still unfortunate in securing a stable job and proper source of income after four years of failed attempts. Palash’s misconceptions about the Western or European cultures and work systems shows that his

mind is heavily influenced by Western or European ideologies as he believes in the delusion that he might find success in Venice if he simply works hard. On the other hand, he does not want to admit that the reality of his unfortunate situation due to his decision of migrating from Bangladesh to Europe is the very reason that has caused his life to be trapped in a kind of directionless limbo. While Palash was a “complete” being back in Dhaka, with a degree from Dhaka University and working as a manager in a multinational corporate office, he has degraded into an “incomplete” being in Venice who dropped out of his university education and is struggling to secure a proper job and a stable source of income.

Thirdly, Palash is treated as an outsider even among the community of the other Bengali migrants. Palash mentions to Deen that because he arrived in Venice through legal processes of a student visa and is from an upper class family background, the other Bengali migrants are reluctant and against sharing information or getting involved with him. This is perhaps the most interesting factor regarding Palash’s migratory experience. Even though he is from Bangladesh and is a native Bengali, he is treated differently by the other Bengali migrants due to his family background, mannerisms and methods of legal migration. As Palash did not experience the same harsh, violent, cruel, inhumane and torturous encounters as the other Bengali migrants faced when migrating to Venice illegally, he is treated as someone incapable of understanding the realities of the illegal migration and human trafficking experience and is believed to be incapable of enduring physical hardships. Palash’s current situation of not being able to secure a decent low-level job while suffering in a directionless limbo for four years is further diminished by his sense of alienation which he receives from the people belonging to his own cultural background.

Neelam Hooda mentions in the article “Changing Climate and Shifting Identities: The Consequences of Migration in Amitav Ghosh’s *Gun Island*” that individuals can experience a

sense of confusion with their own identities after migrating to a foreign country. As migrant individuals live and experience two identities at the same time; one from their own homeland and one in the host country, they develop opposing attitudes towards each of the cultures (125).

For Palash's case, he appears to believe that working hard in Venice would allow him to fit into and identify with European culture while at the same time he wishes to receive acknowledgement and find his sense of belonging with the other Bengali migrants who share the same Bangladeshi nationality as him. Being a native Bengali who faces cultural alienation and living as an unsuccessful immigrant within a European society has resulted in Palash to have a split identity where he feels that he does not belong to either of the cultures as he expresses that he is trapped in a kind of void in terms of his status both as an Italian and a Bengali. Thus, Palash's delusional overconfidence and mistaken beliefs of migrating to a European country to live a new and fulfilling life is diminished with the reality of becoming a university dropout as well as being unemployed, alienated and suffering from an identity crisis.

4.4) Salim's physical and mental effects for being unable to adjust to his life in London:

In Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *Gravel Heart*, the protagonist Salim leaves his Zanzibari hometown in Africa and migrates to London in hopes of beginning and experiencing a new life. However, his hopes turn bitter and sorrowful over the course of his life while living in London as the novel progresses. While there are quite a few interesting points to focus on when analyzing Salim's character, for this research paper, four aspects are studied.

The first matter which is studied is in regards to Salim's deteriorating familial relationship with his Uncle Amir and Auntie Asha. When he receives the invitation from his Uncle Amir, Salim expresses his inability to "resist the opportunity of leaving his Zanzibari hometown to experience the outside world and the fascination of living in London" (Gurnah 49). After arriving in London, Salim listens to his Uncle Amir's advice for studying in the subject of Business Studies even though Salim himself wants to study Literature. As the story progresses, it shows that Salim finds difficulty in focusing on his Business subjects and has been missing classes while at the same time secretly borrowing literary books from the library for reading. During his time with his Uncle Amir and Auntie Asha in their home, Salim slowly becomes part of a controlling and obedient lifestyle where he is not allowed to make decisions or choices for himself and instead everything is chosen for him by his uncle and auntie. One of the significant points in the novel where Salim loses his admiration for his Uncle Amir is when his Auntie Asha reveals the scandalous sexual story about Salim's mother Saida and her brother Hakim. Salim finds out that it was his Uncle Amir's own relationship problems that caused his mother Saida to suffer such a fate. Afterwards, the final scenario where Salim's relationship with his uncle and auntie is destroyed is when he decides to leave their home and familial care in search of creating his own life in London independently. After failing his Business Studies' exams, Salim negotiates a financial deal with his Uncle Amir

for re-enrolling into college for studying literature and exclaims that he would support himself through unregistered work. Salim's entire spectacle causes his Uncle Amir to become resentful of having brought Salim to London in the first place and further expresses that Salim's failure occurs because he "might have gotten involved with drug addicts and criminals and can now become a proper unemployed immigrant" (Gurnah 57-77).

Homi K. Bhabha describes in Chapter 3 "The Other Question" that postcolonial ambivalence of authority and identification through "construction of discriminatory knowledge depend on a presence of difference" which in turn results in a process of multiple, splitting and contradictory beliefs for the case of subjectification (*Location of Culture* 80).

It can be interpreted that Salim's Uncle Amir is someone who has already adjusted to the Western lifestyle in his many years living and working in London. Hence, it is possible to derive that Uncle Amir is influenced by the Western lifestyle and has an understanding of how the systems in London work. Moreover, Uncle Amir's statement regarding "criminals, drug addicts and unemployed immigrants" shows that he is knowledgeable about the types of non-Western and illegal people living in London. Based on these attributes, it can be theorized that as Salim is an outsider who does not understand anything about the Western lifestyle and how the systems in London work, Uncle Amir takes responsibility to shape Salim into a pseudo Western citizen who can fit into the lifestyle and culture of London. For this reason, Uncle Amir dictates all of Salim's actions and duties, from choosing his clothes, fixing his personality when in public and also choosing what subject he studies. When Salim can no longer tolerate his Uncle Amir's disciplinary and authoritative behavior, he decides to leave the home of his uncle and auntie and find his own way in life by working and living independently.

The second matter which defines Salim's character is his constant residential displacement while living in London. In the novel, from the beginning till the ending Salim shifts his home from one place to another, from one shared room to another isolated apartment room as well as many other distinct living quarters. After severing ties with his Uncle Amir and Auntie Asha and moving out of their home in Holland Park, Salim at first shifts to a shared room in Guinea Lane in Camberwell in a house called the OAU (Organization of African Unity) House, where all the tenants as well as Salim's roommates are African (Gurnah 79-85). At his time living in the OAU House, Salim sometimes succumbs to his homesickness and loneliness which results in locking himself in his own room and weeping for hours (Gurnah 99). Later, after his college graduation, Salim moves to Brighton and finds a job at a cafe in Hove named Cafe Galileo and shifts into a room in his university campus which he describes as "silent and almost empty" and this accommodation lasts only for a short time (Gurnah 103, 109). Then, in summer, Salim moves in with a friend named Basil who he meets during his part-time job at the cafe. Basil had rented a flat with his girlfriend Sophie (Gurnah 110). Afterwards, when Basil and Sophie both leave for Athens, Salim moves into a shared room with five other foreign students in a large house in a place called Fiveways. Salim describes this particular accommodation as dirty, rotting, damp, dusty and like a disease (Gurnah 113-114). During the beginning of his final year, Salim shifts from his room in Fiveways and moves into a one-bedroom flat upstairs which "suffers from a problem of a leaking cistern that disturbs him during his sleep" (Gurnah 119). Later, he moves into a small studio flat in Brixton Hill where he becomes tormented due to the noisy argumentative neighbors and so moves again into a tiny sublet in Clapham Common and then lastly moves into a two-bedroom flat in Putney (Gurnah 127).

Homi K. Bhabha states in Chapter 9 “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern” that those who suffer throughout history based on the factors of domination, subjugation, displacement and diaspora can learn the most enduring lessons for thinking and living. It is the experience of social marginality within a culture which enables one to confront the concept of “culture as an incomplete and uneven production of value and meaning which is often accompanied by practices and demands which are produced for the art of social survival” (*Location of Culture* 172).

While it is a little difficult to properly address the reasons for Salim’s multiple acts of displacement from one location to another, it is quite possible to highlight that Salim feels a sense of alienation, isolation and homelessness in each of the locations where he stays. These characteristics can be the primary reasons for Salim’s decisions for his displacements. It is interesting and also strange that Salim does not decide to permanently settle in the OAU House where majority of the tenants were African including his roommates and his landlord Mr. Mgeni.

In their article “Postcolonial Dislocation and the Fragments of Belonging in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Gravel Heart*”, Meena S. Abarajedha and Pandia P. Rajammal highlight that Salim suffers from a kind of identity crisis due to experiencing a hybridization of two cultures. His previous life experiences from his Zanzibari homeland and his new experiences living in London are both contradicting with each other. Salim’s attempt at trying to live between both cultures simultaneously has caused him to develop a displaced identity where he feels he does not belong to either Zanzibar or London (97-98).

This emphasizes the case for Salim’s lack of a permanent lodging settlement in his new life in London. Perhaps he moves out of the OAU House for the sake of leaving behind the disgraceful fragments and thoughts of his past Zanzibari life which he might have unconsciously experienced in his mind while staying there. In addition, as he cannot adapt to the cultures and

norms of London while partially settling in several different rooms, flats and houses, he succumbs to feelings of loneliness and homesickness which in turn results in him constantly changing locations until he finally moves into his two-bedroom flat in Putney and later decides to purchase it. While he finally purchases a home after several displacements, he only does so for the feeling of security and permanent settlement as he expresses that “buying the flat makes him feel safe, as if he would not just float away into a vast, dark and unheeded nowhere” (Gurnah 150-151). Salim’s residential displacements portray that he feels as if he does not belong in London and perhaps it is for this sense of lack of belonging that he constantly switches locations, perhaps in an attempt to find a place where he can permanently belong.

The third factor which affects Salim in his life in London is related to his relationships with two of his female partners Annie and Billie. His first partner, Annie, works alongside Salim at the Cafe Galileo. Annie takes an interest in Salim and decides to partake in a consensual sexual experience for a short while as she “finds his body beautiful, likes the way he speaks softly and cares very gently”. Salim agrees to her proposal and spends time with Annie on several occasions in her flat in Fountain Road. Strangely, while partaking in these sexual experiences Salim keeps reminiscing about his mother and father back home in Zanzibar and feels guilty about getting involved in sexual relationships which he thinks does not seem right. Later, Annie explains her whole situation to Salim and how her boyfriend David would return after a certain time which would disrupt her relationship with Salim. Afterwards, Annie resigns from the Cafe Galileo and moves to Portsmouth with her boyfriend. After she leaves, Salim keeps “remembering her in his memory for many years and later realizes that perhaps she might have been too much to handle for him” (Gurnah 114-118).

Suraj Soni and Vipin Pal Singh discuss in their article “The Placeness of Place-Bound Identity: A Postmodern Reading of Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Gravel Heart* (2017)” about how the concept of “placeness” or “place-bound identity” does not only consist of geographical elements and the “place” can become a point of many material, social and human activities (6).

When Salim partakes in his sexual experiences with Annie, he mentions how “she took away his torment” and “felt as if these pleasures would continue on endlessly” and “she remained in his memory for many years”. These traits show that Salim feels a sense of love, compassion and belonging after a very long time in his life while living in London. To a certain extent, while it is not specifically mentioned in the novel, Salim probably wishes Annie could have been with him so that they could continue their relationship for longer. It is interesting to observe how Annie fancies Salim’s body by addressing it as “beautiful” and this is probably what makes Salim gain a small token of appreciation in realizing that he can find love and affection despite his life in London being affected by isolation, misery and displacements.

Unfortunately, Salim’s relationship with his second partner Billie would prove to be an even more catastrophic event for his life in London. Salim meets Billie at a wine bar during a theater show and establishes a stable relationship with her. Both she and Salim share their tragic past stories with each other and Billie is perhaps the first ever woman who genuinely loves Salim for his characteristics and personality. Billie, whose real name is Bindiya is from India and Salim is from Zanzibar and yet, their relationship consists of love, commitment and compassion. Billie moves into Salim’s flat and they stay together for several months until Billie’s mother interferes in their relationship. When Salim gets invited to meet Billie’s mother, the initial meeting feels rather simple and non-hostile where Billie, her mother, her brother Anand and Salim himself all engage in simple conversations. However, Billie is later forced to leave Salim on account of her

mother's orders where she threatens to commit suicide if Billie does not choose to end her relationship with Salim. Billie's mother even contacts Billie's other brother Suresh to come and persuade Billie to end this relationship and focus on her future. While discussing with Billie about ending her relationship, Billie's family states that "however nice he is, a nigger is a nigger" while referring to Salim. In the end, Billie leaves Salim and severs all contact with him and this severely shatters Salim's heart (Gurnah 136-151).

Homi K. Bhabha expresses in Chapter 3 "The Other Question" about how the elements of stereotyping become a primary point of subjectification for the case of colonial discourse. As such, "the desire for an originality can become threatened due to the differences of colour, culture and race" (*Location of Culture* 75). In addition, he also highlights how stereotyping plays a much larger role as an ambivalent text of displacement, guilt, determination and aggressivity. These traits enable a "kind of stereotyping ambivalence against the Negro or nigger based on the articulation of multiple or splitting beliefs and knowledge" (*Location of Culture* 81-82).

Based on how Billie's family reacts towards her relationship with Salim, it is possible to state that the main problem is related to Salim's skin color and cultural background. When Billie explains to Salim about how her family persuades her to end her relationship, she mentions that her mother contacts her brother Suresh to state that she (Billie) is "staying with a Muslim nigger from Africa" (Gurnah 147). Given the choice of words used in this statement in the novel, it can be examined that Billie's family rejects and despises Billie's relationship with Salim simply due to his dark skin and African origin. This offers an interesting viewpoint on this scenario because Billie's family members including Billie herself are of Indian origin. Even though they are from a colonized nation, they have a discriminatory racist attitude for judging Salim based on his skin color and country of origin. In this case, Billie's family members are acting like colonizers

themselves and discriminating against Salim. It is fascinating to hypothesize that maybe if Salim would have been of Indian origin with brown skin or maybe even of Western origin with fair skin, then perhaps Billie's family might have approved of their relationship.

The fourth and final factor which is studied is in regards to Salim's career. Initially, when Salim enrolls in university and begins his higher studies, he starts working at a cafe in Hove called Cafe Galileo supervised by an owner named Mark whose real name is Mousa as he appears to be of Arabian origin (Gurnah 108). After Salim graduates from his university, he continues to stay in Brighton as he feels he achieved nothing in all his years living in London and does not want to return home empty handed and financially insecure. Salim also does not want to return to Zanzibar and submit to the authority and guardianship of his mother's lover Hakim who might offer him a job and nurture him physically and psychologically. Salim secretly becomes a "miser" and keeps a record of every penny he earns and spends. He also buys cheap clothes and denies himself the luxury of spending money on his own materialistic and consumerist desires (Gurnah 121-122). In addition, Salim continues working for Mark at the Cafe Galileo as a fulltime employee while also applying for other jobs. He applies for positions in local newspapers, solicitors, the British Airports Authority, the University of Brighton, the University of Sussex, estate agents, banks as well as American Express and still remains unemployed (Gurnah 123). Fortunately, Salim finally finds luck in becoming employed as a local government officer in Lambeth. However, Salim expresses that his work at the Leisure Department does not feel satisfactory or fulfilling to him and he simply works in a mechanical manner to get through his work routine. Along with this, he also considers an idea of saving the money he earns and perhaps finding work in South Africa or the Gulf where he can find spare jobs that might hire people like himself or maybe even return home and see what opportunities he can find (Gurnah 125-128).

Homi K. Bhabha describes a strategy known as the “metonymy of presence” in Chapter 4 “Of Mimicry and Man” which highlights the discrimination by colonial discourse against identity based on differences on factors such as race and culture. This is correlated to the discriminatory identities which become constructed within traditional norms and cultures. These instances of metonymy contain multiple and contradictory beliefs which cross cultural boundaries and result in confusion of the cultural production of meaning. For the case of mimicry, the representation of traits such as identity and meaning are influenced by these features of metonymy which reflects the problems of colonial subjection. The metonymy of presence in relation to mimicry signifies a process of fixation which raises questions regarding the colonial authority for a subject’s racial, national and cultural representation (*Location of Culture* 90).

In the novel, Salim is an African Muslim from Zanzibar who migrates to London. As there is a significant difference in terms of culture, race, social norms, religion and mannerisms, Salim faces various instances of difficulty adjusting and adapting to London’s culture and norms. Thus, it can be inspected that perhaps he suffers from the same adjustment and adaptability issues in his job. After his university graduation, Salim applies for many different job positions in London and luckily manages to become employed as a local government officer in Lambeth. However, he states that he works in the office in a certain manner to simply get through his work routine and even considers migrating to the Gulf or South Africa to find jobs that would hire people like him. This might be an indication that Salim is not able to adjust and adapt to London’s work culture and work ethics and is struggling to find meaning in his work. It is interesting to perceive that despite becoming a local government officer in London, he wants to migrate to the Gulf or South Africa and find work there. The fact that Salim even decides to consider migrating out of London for work portrays that perhaps he is subjected to some form of cultural alienation or work-related

discrimination in his working environment. Although he never mentions anything regarding facing alienation or discrimination at work, it is possible to interpret that perhaps he is facing some form of judgement, alienation or social problems which is affecting his ability to adjust and adapt to his work as a government officer. Salim wants to believe that he can become part of London's culture and society by working in the companies available in London; unfortunately, it does not result in the outcome he expects. Instead, he struggles with adapting to the work culture and fails to find any meaning in his work. As a result, he probably constructs the idea that he might find success in working in the Gulf or South Africa and can adjust and adapt to the work cultures in these regions. Perhaps, as Salim believes himself unfit for office work in London, he thinks that he might be more capable of working in the Gulf or South Africa. This shows that Salim's attempt at mimicking the lifestyle and work culture of London ultimately results in him becoming culturally confused and losing meaning about his own culture and identity.

Hence, the analysis and study of these four aspects allows for understanding how Salim's delusional expectations and interests about migrating from Zanzibar to London for living a new and opportunity-filled life is tarnished by the cruel realities he faces both physically and mentally in terms of the issues and situations he experiences culturally, racially, sexually and financially.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Both Amitav Ghosh's *Gun Island* and Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Gravel Heart* portray how the realities of migration are vastly different in comparison with the delusional beliefs. The characters Tipu, Rafi and Palash from *Gun Island* as well as Salim from *Gravel Heart* all make choices to migrate to a foreign Western or European country in hopes of living and experiencing a better life. Unfortunately, their delusional beliefs, misconceptions and misunderstandings of an imagined better quality of life and wellbeing in Western and European cultures are tarnished when they experience the cruel realities after migrating. Based on their respective experiences from each of the two novels, these four characters suffer from issues of extortion, abuse, harassment, violence, unemployment, uncertainty, identity crisis, racial discrimination, isolation and alienation.

Referring to the literature review section in this research paper, the article "Twenty-First-Century Globalization and Illegal Migration" by Katharine M. Donato and Douglas S. Massey along with the book chapter "Illegal Migration in Modern Society: Consequences and Problems of National European Migration Policies" by Michael Bommes highlights the reasons and motivations for international migration by people for acquiring opportunities and advantages in sectors such as labor markets, healthcare or educational systems. The article and book chapter also reflect on the restrictions, prohibitions and limitations on migration that are set in place by European and international policies which obstruct or control the flow of international migration movements as well as freedom of migrants. In addition, these limitations and restrictions on legal migration are what influence individuals to partake in illegal migration methods for crossing international borders and slipping into foreign countries. The four characters from the two novels choose to legally or illegally migrate to a Western or European country for obtaining opportunities

which they believe to be unattainable in their own native countries. However, Tipu, Rafi, Palash and Salim do not contemplate or consider the issues and consequences they might experience after migrating to a foreign country. Their respective differing problems which they experience are reflections of the Western and European policies which are covertly and overtly restrictive and prohibitive against both migration and migrants. Referring once again to the article and book chapter, it is important to note that while there are certain limitation policies for legal migration, there are more severe restriction policies for illegal migration and unauthorized international border crossings which can have drastic consequences for illegal migrants who choose to partake in such journeys. Therefore, while legal migration might have certain consequences authorized by international policies, illegal migration might have more extreme and rigorous consequences.

The utilization of Homi K. Bhabha's theoretical concepts and ideas from his book *The Location of Culture* allows this research to establish a foundation for understanding how delusional beliefs, expectations and misconceptions in regards of migrating to Western or European countries can cause one to fall into uncertain or even life-threatening situational realities. Bhabha's concepts on cultural hybridity, racial discrimination, cultural rejection and alienation as well as cultural mimicry provides a framework for understanding how Tipu, Rafi, Palash and Salim experience their respective situations in the two novels and what outcomes they ultimately reach towards the end.

As mentioned in the beginning, the limitation of this research is that it solely focuses on the migratory experiences of only the male characters from the two novels and what issues they experience while present in their respective foreign nations. As such, for constructing a more sturdy foundation for analyzing the delusions and realities of migration, it is applicable to incorporate more novels or texts related to themes of migration which also focus on the

characteristics of cultural hybridity, cultural mimicry as well as cultural isolation and alienation. In addition, it is also applicable for incorporating novels or texts which focus precisely on the female experiences of migration. Furthermore, it can be possible to include more academic texts, research papers or journal articles which discuss the matters of international migration, illegal migrants and migration policies as well as reflect on diasporic, refugee and displaced migrants in international countries. All of these textual, thematic and informative additions can significantly strengthen the framework and foundation of this research paper.

This research highlights how migration to Western and European countries is a complicated and problematic system as a whole which contains several issues and consequences. Many migrants believe in delusional dreams of success, opportunities and luxurious lifestyles which are thought to be attainable only in Western or European countries and so they are willing to risk their lives to achieve such dreams. However, when these same migrants experience several issues of racial discrimination, violence, extortion, unemployment, isolation, alienation, identity crisis and uncertainty; they begin to have doubts about their reasons for migration and ultimately reach an unpredictable and unsettling outcome which can negatively impact their lives. The situations and experiences of Tipu, Rafi and Palash from *Gun Island* as well as Salim from *Gravel Heart* are a portrayal of how delusional beliefs do not align with factual realities for the case of migrating to Western and European countries.

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