

A POSTCOLONIAL NARRATOLOGICAL STUDY OF SILENCE IN  
ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S *ADMIRING SILENCE* AND *BY THE SEA*

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## ABSTRACT

### A POSTCOLONIAL NARRATOLOGICAL STUDY OF SILENCE IN ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S *ADMIRING SILENCE* AND *BY THE SEA*

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This thesis offers a postcolonial and narratological study of silence in Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels *Admiring Silence* (1996) and *By the Sea* (2001). While presenting the protagonists with a focus on their individual traumas, Gurnah weaves their silence into larger political, social and economic contexts of colonization and post-colonization in Zanzibar and into migrancy in England. Emerging as an inevitable result of some individual, social and political pressure, protagonists' silence also becomes a tool of resistance against racially, ethnically or culturally discriminating attitudes they are exposed to in England. Narratological analysis of the novels offers an insight into their silence which covers the things they cannot or refuse to say. This study also examines the migrant experience in the novels questioning the meanings of home and identity for Gurnah's immigrant characters.

Key Words: Silence, Migrancy, Home, Identity

## ÖZ

### ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'NIN *ADMIRING SILENCE* VE *BY THE SEA* ROMANLARINDA SESSİZLİĞİN POSTKOLONYAL VE ANLATIBİLİMSEL ANALİZİ

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Bu çalışma Abdulrazak Gurnah'nın *Admiring Silence* (1996) ve *By the Sea* (2001) romanlarında sessizliği postkolonyal ve anlatıbilimsel açıdan inceler. Romanların ana kahramanlarını kişisel travmalarıyla karakterize eden Gurnah, sessizliklerini ise sömürge dönemi ve sonrası Zanzibar'ının siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik koşulları ve İngiltere'de göçmenlik durumuyla ilişkilendirir. Bir takım kişisel, sosyal ve siyasi baskıların kaçınılmaz sonucu olmanın yanında, karakterlerin sessizliği İngiltere'de maruz kaldıkları ırksal, etnik ya da kültürel açıdan ayrımcı tavırlara karşı bir başkaldırı haline gelir. Romanların anlatıbilimsel analizi karakterlerin sessizliklerinin altındaki söyleyemedikleri ya da söylemeyi reddedikleri şeylere ışık tutar. Bunların yanında bu çalışma göçmenlik deneyimini Gurnah'nın göçmen karakterleri açısından aidiyet ve kimlik kavramlarının anlamını sorgulayarak ortaya koyar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sessizlik, Göç, Ev, Kimlik

**To my dear brothers Utku and Asım who have taught me that life is a never-ending journey**

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Born in 1948 in Zanzibar, Abdulrazak Gurnah came to Britain in 1968 with his brother, in a “semi-legal way, as asylum seekers” (Allen 115) escaping in part from the political turmoils of the 1960s in Zanzibar. In most of his novels, those turmoils make up a background for the characters’ past together with the familial crises in their lives. Through his main characters, Gurnah also focuses on inter-ethnic relationships between different social groups who occupy the Indian Ocean littoral. Above all, he reflects the destructing effects of European colonial rule (especially in Zanzibar) on the characters’ lives, which later continues in the form of racial and cultural discrimination in contemporary Europe where East African characters emigrate. Migrancy and its side-effects such as displacement, alienation and in-betweenness are important themes that Gurnah employs in most of his novels. He presents immigrant characters coping with their feelings of isolation and lack of sense of belonging in their re-construction of an identity and a home for themselves. While doing this, he suggests storytelling as a tool by which his characters negotiate their past and present to build up a future for themselves.

Gurnah’s oeuvre covers eight novels, a two-volume-work of literary criticism titled *Essays on African Writing* (1993), and the edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Salman Rushdie* (2007). Also, he is the associate editor of *Wasafiri* a journal for writers of colour in England. Seven out of Gurnah’s eight novels are about departure, the main theme and a part of the title of his first novel being *Memory of Departure* (1987). Leaving his homeland behind the protagonist of *Memory of Departure* goes to Nairobi which becomes a country of disillusionment for him. He compensates his loss of home with memory and storytelling. Gurnah’s following novels *Pilgrim’s Way* (1988) and *Dottie* (1990) scrutinize racism and inter-racial marriage with a focus on migrancy in present day England, themes which resonate in Gurnah’s 1996 novel *Admiring Silence*. As it is later demonstrated in the third chapter of this thesis,

it is the story of an unnamed Zanzibari immigrant leading an unhappy life in England with his English partner Emma. In the novel migrancy is not something celebrated for the protagonist who escapes the politically suffocating atmosphere of Zanzibar; but it creates further conflicts in his life compelling him to get through discrimination by some white English people and the feeling of isolation. Gurnah's most recent novel *The Last Gift* (2011) is a sequel to *Admiring Silence* in that it tells the story of Abbas, the unnamed protagonist's father in *Admiring Silence*, who leaves his children in England a record of his memories about his life in Zanzibar that uncovers his secret story of his first marriage. Gurnah's sixth novel *By the Sea* (2001), the other novel to be discussed in this thesis, concerns the issue of starting a new life in England with the idea of home in mind as experienced by Saleh Omar, a sixty-five year old man again from Zanzibar. Only two of Gurnah's eight novels, *Paradise* (1994) and *Desertion* (2005), are mainly set in East Africa. Both novels deal with the communal relationships in colonial East Africa.

Gurnah lays much emphasis on narration in his novels. Storytelling is an important part of characters' lives in helping them cope with their troubles and in expressing themselves to the reader while making it easier to find themselves in life. On the other hand, Gurnah's novels are also much related to what the characters cannot, do not or refuse to say. The characters' silence expresses more about them than their utterances, thus becoming more important than articulation in the novels. However, Silence is not a much debated issue by the critiques of Gurnah's work. Issues discussed in relation to Gurnah's novels are mainly legal or illegal migrancy, diasporic life in a European country, dislocation, memory and ideas of home, and the limits of hospitality which arouses the questions of racism and otherness in Europe and especially in Britain (Chambers 116). Among the related studies on Gurnah fiction, Sissy Helff's "Illegal Diasporas and African Refugees in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea*" (2009) and John Masterson's "Travel and/as Travail: Diasporic Dislocation in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* and Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss*" (2010) take the condition of being a refugee as their central theme questioning the exclusivist point of view of the Westerner and the place of the African within the borders of the host country. Helff's article touches upon the "terms of hospitality" (Helff 68) and announces that it is the discourse of national identity that prevents that of hospitality, and therefore creates and consolidates the concept of the Other.

Masterson's, on the other hand, is a chronotopical study that mainly focuses on transgression of the national borders which he illustrates through "regulatory spaces" (Masterson 415) like the boarding house in *By the Sea* which hosts people from different cultures such as Saleh Omar or the elegant restaurant in *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) in which Indian workers serve American clients. Through his microcosmic spatial exploration, Masterson highlights the political and economic factors that layer people and "forestall any hope of transnational solidarity" (423-24). Another issue that some of the recent works on Gurnah's fiction address is the role of the multi-culturality of Zanzibar in Gurnah's works. Tina Steiner's article "Writing 'Wider Worlds': The Role of Relation in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Fiction" (2010) underlines the picture of heterogeneity of East African coastal regions that make up a background for many of Gurnah's characters. Accordingly, she purports, Gurnah places relational identity produced through the "network of relations without a sense of entitlement to filiation or projected territory" (ibid 127) against the root identity thus resisting both the hackneyed image of the African and the precolonial pictures of the homogeneity by postindependence nationalist politics of identity. Referring to such a "shortcoming of both a Euro-centric and an Afro-centric historiography" (Olaussen 65) and its representation in Gurnah's texts, Maria Olaussen's article "The Submerged History of the Indian Ocean in *Admiring Silence*" (2013) draws attention to Gurnah's narrative of heterogeneity and difference through its emphasis on the stock narratives of the colonial discourse repeated by the main character. In so far as Olaussen's study emphasizes, the stories that the protagonist makes up mocks the ironical optimism of the times before colonialism and the artificiality of the colonial past. It is the power of stories here and in many of Gurnah's novels that enables his characters to convey their ideas even if their efficiency is disputable. In her comprehensive discussion on the role of storytelling in Gurnah's *Admiring Silence* and *By the Sea*, Tina Steiner regards storytelling an act of translation between characters' past and present lives that helps them establish a future ("Mimicry or Translation?" 303).

In addition to these studies and with a different focus and technique than theirs, this thesis aims to explore Abdulrazak Gurnah's treatment of silence in his novels *Admiring Silence* (1996) and *By the Sea* (2011) with a narratological approach mainly in the light of Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*

(1983). It will be argued that in *Admiring Silence* (1996) and *By the Sea* (2001) silence is emphasized both as an effect of the oppressive power and used as a strategy that gives power to the oppressed. Furthermore, this thesis explores the treatment of migrancy in these novels in connection with silence. Thinking on the basis of social, material and textual constraints imposed by Britain in the post-colonial period on migrants from its former colonies, Gurnah opposes the tendency of fixing migrants as stereotypes through undifferentiated generalizations unrecognizing the “other’s” consciousness and right to speak for him/herself. That is why the stories of his characters are characterized by their individuality and multi-directionality in contrast to stereotyping. Employing migrants as his characters, each having an ambiguous personality and a specific traumatic case, Gurnah points out the heterogeneity of migrant experience, which is another means of challenging the process of silencing in “(hi)story” (Kaigani 129). In his article “The Idea of the Past”, in which Gurnah focuses on the issue of writing of the African past, he states that

I understood that the idea of the past which had become the legitimate African narrative of our times, would require the silencing of other narratives that were necessary to my understanding of history and reality. (291)

Other narratives Gurnah mentions are the Western ways of defining Africa, its culture and history, which, he suggests, should be silenced in order to understand the African past. In the same way, understanding the characters in the novels requires silencing of the Western stereotypes paradoxically through focusing on their silence which undermines the authority of the discourse of the West.

In line with this purpose, the first chapter centers on the theoretical background and methodology to be followed by the analysis of the novels. The theoretical basis will help me define where the novels stand, that is, explore what concerns they are fraught with as postcolonial pieces. Considering the importance of the narratives in the novels, some narratological terms to be used in this study will be explained in detail to diagnose lacunae, gaps and emphatical parts in the novels.

The following chapter concerning *Admiring Silence* compares the power of silence with the power of speech examining the unnamed narrator’s stories on the basis of

Genette's narratological approach. In this chapter I question the efficacy of speech through the stories which the narrator makes up in order to mock the stereotypical European discourse and underline the points where the speech fails. In the cases where he is exposed to such a discourse by the English characters around him, the narrator just keeps his silence, but imparts his derisive monologues at the same time. Except for these monologues, on the other hand, he is not an articulate person due to the fact that he has had some traumatic experiences in Zanzibar before and that he cannot find solace now in England. While the existence of two focalizers in *By the Sea* increases the reliability of the narrative, the unnamed narrator's continual circumlocution of some parts of his story decreases reliability and necessitates again a narratological exploration, which the second chapter undertakes.

Finally, the third chapter of this thesis focuses on silence in Abdulrazak Gurnah's another novel *By the Sea* examining Saleh Omar's and Latif Mahmud's stories in the light of narratological techniques as defined by Genette's, Rimmon-Kenan's, Mieke Bal's and Gerald Prince's works. Considering silence as a result of oppressive power, it will demonstrate how the narratological observations reveal the ideological dimensions in the novel. It is through external analepses, for instance, that the reader catches a glimpse of the colonial, independence and post-independence periods that prepare the ground for the narrators' traumas and ensuing silences. Exploring these two characters' relationship with people in England, the question whether they are really silent or not is also answered in this chapter. Saleh Omar's reticence in the face of British officials' efforts to communicate, but his confessions to Latif Mahmud indicates that he is not silent at all, which demonstrates the other dimension of silence, in that, it functions as a tool of resistance against British officials' discriminatory approach and the stereotypical notions. The fact that there are two narrators in the novel raises the question of the narrators', especially Saleh's, reliability. Through focalization it is displayed how Latif Mahmud's account fills in the gaps where Saleh Omar keeps his silence or vice versa.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

In “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak calls attention to silencing of the marginalized groups such as prisoners, men and women among the illiterate peasantry, tribals, and the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat, whom she calls the “subaltern”<sup>1</sup> (283) through colonial suppression and monolithic points of view. Employing the method of deconstruction, feminist theory, and contemporary Marxism dealing with the international division of labour and capitalism’s “worlding of the world (i.e, the ways in which we choose to represent the world to ourselves)” (Spivak, “Subaltern” 286), Spivak points to the historical and ideological factors that eliminate the possibility of the subaltern’s being heard. In the same article she also displays how some Western academic thinking supports Western economic interests. In relation to this point, she propounds that knowledge expresses the political and economic interests of its producers and seeks ways to study subaltern groups without collaboration with the colonial project. She concludes her study on the “subaltern” indicating how textuality is related to the notion of the “worlding of the world on a supposedly unscripted territory” (Spivak “Subaltern” 283 ) and connects this with the imperialist project, which assumed that the earth that it had territorialized was previously unscripted.

With regard to the elimination of non-Western ways of conceiving and knowing the world, Spivak uses the phrase “epistemic violence”, elaborating on Michel Foucault’s term “episteme”<sup>2</sup>. While exploring the agency of the gendered “subaltern”

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<sup>1</sup>In some later essays by Spivak, the term is extended to include several disadvantaged groups within the West, such as women and migrants, whom Spivak describes as “urban home-workers” (Gilbert 452).

<sup>2</sup> Episteme refers to the body of knowledge and ways of knowing which are in circulation at a particular moment (Mills 28). Accordingly, Spivak’s term epistemic violence refers to the violence of

in her work, she identifies such a “violence” which occurs as a result of some Western intellectuals’ desire for subjectivity. “Representing” those who are oppressed, these intellectuals represent themselves as “transparent” (“Subaltern” 276). She mostly blames them for “reintroducing the undivided subject into the discourse of power” (ibid 274). She objects to the West’s presenting and preserving itself as Subject (“Subject as Europe” as she calls herself) investigating the non-Western Object (or “Other of Europe” in her own terms) (ibid 280). Spivak discusses the need for the critic to “unlearn his or her privilege so as to see the itinerary of silencing” (Hawley 419).

In the last part of “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Spivak surveys an Indian case referring to Sati (immolation of Hindu widows) where she focuses on the double colonization of the silenced Indian woman as the third world subaltern. She demonstrates how the women are manipulated by the Western colonizers who prohibit the practice in a way to justify their colonial venture and by the native males defending the necessity of the practice as a custom, which Bart Moore Gilbert explains as follows while elucidating Spivak’s text:

At the heart of this competition to represent the colonized female’s “best interests,” (on the Sati tradition) between “progressive” colonialist males and “traditionalist” indigenous men who defended the custom as a symbol of the integrity of Indian (more specifically, Hindu) cultural identity, was the ascription of “voice” (again representing free will an agency) to the Indian women. In British discourse this “voice” supposedly cried out for liberation, thus legitimizing the colonial mission; according to the native male, by contrast, the voice allegedly expressed the subaltern woman’s attachment to tradition by assenting voluntarily to sati...Consequently one can never directly encounter “the testimony of the women’s [own] voice- consciousness”. (453)

In *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (2010), Rosalind Morris comments on the same issue referring to Bhubaneswari’s suicide in Spivak’s text:

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knowledge production. In “Subaltern” it is discussed more specifically as the violence of the subject constitution through the abusive use of epistemology (Spivak, “Subaltern” 280).

In reading this text, Spivak showed us how and to what extent historical circumstances and ideological structures conspire to efface the possibility of being heard . . . for those who are variously located as the others of imperial masculinity and the state. (10)

Considering Gurnah's novels from within the framework of such a perspective, one question arises: to what extent is Gurnah's employment of silence in his novels informed by Spivak's approach to the possibility of speaking and being heard on the part of the subaltern? Gurnah's novels suggest that he is aware of the "conspiracy" Morris points out and that is why silence in these novels is emphasized as an effect of the oppressive power; yet, he takes a further step and foregrounds, paradoxically, silence itself as a strategy that may give power to the oppressed. To elaborate on Gurnah's approach to silence as a strategy, one can look at Benita Parry's "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse" (1987), which is a very systematic analysis of Spivak's ideas on the issue of agency. In a similar vein of thought with Gurnah and speaking from the gaps in Spivak's study, she foregrounds the possibility of articulation on the part of the subaltern.

Like Spivak, Parry, too, takes a stand against the imperial discourse that she calls "The Literature of Empire" (32) and in it, the monolithic perception of the subaltern woman. However, she criticizes Spivak for "assigning an absolute power to the hegemonic discourse" (34) and emphasizing disarticulatedness of the native:

Spivak's deliberated deafness to the native voice where it is to be heard, is at variance with her acute hearing of the unsaid in modes of Western feminist thought. . .in her own writings [she] severely restricts (eliminates?) the space in which the colonized can be written back into history, even when "interventionist possibilities" are exploited through the deconstructive strategies devised by the post-colonial intellectual. (39)

In her article, Parry also challenges Spivak's argument in "Three Women's Texts" about Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*: according to Parry, in only recognizing Antoinette as playing "the part of the woman from the colonies" (38) who is silenced, Spivak misses the chance to hear Christophine, a "native" agent (35). According to Parry, in Spivak's account:



a black female who in WSS is most fully served, must be reduced to the status of a tangential figure, and a white Creole woman [Christophine] (mis)construed as the native female produced by the axiomatics of imperialism and sacrificed to them. (Parry 38)

In order to justify her point Parry underscores the power of the “counter-discourses” and “alternative traditions” (Parry 38-9) in response to the “worldling” (Spivak, “Subaltern” 286) Spivak points out. She interprets the figure of the dissenting black servant in the novel, Christophine, as a female source of a counter-discourse (Parry 38). Her articulatedness and defiant pose enables her with the courage to “speak” against the English husband as illustrated in her declaration of herself: “This is free country and I am free woman” (Rhys 146). In fact, Spivak, too, underlines Christophine’s defiance through her speech; she has no doubt as to her challenging stance as she states: “Christophine is the first interpreter and named speaking subject in the text” (“Women’s Texts” 252). On the other hand, Spivak argues, her resistant manner is not appreciated by the European text (i.e. the novel, WSS) and she is quickly silenced and is “simply driven out of the story” at the point where she speaks “with neither narrative nor characterological explanation or justice” (ibid 253).

While debating the issues of silence and silencing neither Gayatri Spivak nor Benita Parry sees silence as a way out. While Spivak mostly focuses on the issue of silencing and the ineffectivity of any resistance within the framework of hegemonic discourses, Parry asserts the possibility and effectivity of speech as a means of resistance. However, in her article “Shutting up the Subaltern: Silences, Stereotypes, and Double-Entendre in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*” (1999) Carine M. Mardorossian reviews Spivak and Parry’s arguments and assesses their approaches and the novel from a different perspective. She is well aware of the limitations of Western discourse and its tactics of silencing but, as in Gurnah’s novels, she emphasizes the notion of silence as a means of resistance on the part of “third-world” characters.

Mardorossian disagrees with Spivak, defending the idea that Rhys’s novel does not, as Spivak argues, appropriate blackness in the service of Euro-Creole subject constitution. Referring to Spivak, she infers that although the black Creoles are indeed “doubly silenced, doubly marginalized, their complex interplay with colonial

strategies actualizes a resistance that effectively unsettles the colonizer's worldview and actions" (1077). She criticizes Parry, as well, for celebrating "an unproblematical articulation of the West Indian world from an 'authentic' black perspective and putting the defiant Christophine in the role of the self determining agent" (1074).

While examining the effectivity of speech like Spivak, Mardorossian infers that speech is not always an influential tool in explaining one's self and takes her argument a step forward suggesting silence as a potent tool for resistance. In relation to *Wide Sargasso Sea* she states: "The premises of the colonialist discourse do not falter and lose ground when the black subalterns speak but paradoxically when they are silenced and stereotyped" (1072). Mardorossian illustrates her argument about the effectiveness of silence through the treatment of the practice of "obeah" in the novel. As to the question of the power of magic, black characters remain silent in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which creates fear and paranoia in the main white male character of the novel, Antoinette's English husband. His reading an English text<sup>3</sup> which includes stereotypical notions about black magic adds to his fear. Mardorossian evaluates the role of the obeah in the novel describing it as something that cannot be fixed "as an object of knowledge" by the West. She claims that the uninterpretable disposition of obeah due to "the stereotypical notions of [the] Eurocentric text that Rochester cannot question" and the "native silences" accompanying it disarms Rochester (1081). She concludes :

The Afro-Caribbean characters' conspiracy of silence/ignorance surrounding the practice of black magic enhances [Rochester's] paranoia and undermines colonial authority from within in a way that their speaking up against injustice cannot. (1081)

According to Mordorossian, Rhys's novel defies the Western notion that speech is power<sup>4</sup> and displays that silence is not just an effect of "oppressive power", but it can also be a very influential "way of speaking" (1082).

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<sup>3</sup>*The Glittering Coronet of Isles* (Rhys, WSS 97).

<sup>4</sup>In his deconstructional analysis of "writing" Derrida also undermines the Western notion that sees speech as superior. While categorizing the world in terms of binary oppositions, Western philosophy defines speech as "immediacy, presence, life, and identity" whereas it designates writing as "deferment, absence, death, and difference" thus prioritising speech, which Derrida calls "logocentricism" (Johnson 43).

Apart from underlining “controlling processes” that silence the black subaltern, Mardorossian also points out the sites of resistance undermining colonial authority from within. The idea of two dimensional silence that Mardorossian points out in relation to *WSS* operates in a very similar way in Gurnah’s both novels in which silence, as in *WSS*, emerges both as an effect of “stereotype- informed discourses” and a way of resistance on the part of characters.

Among the latest scholarly work on silence displaying its potential as an influential way of resistance in a similar approach to Mardorossian’s piece is Kaigani’s article “At the Margins: Silences in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *Admiring Silence* and *The Last Gift*” (2013), which points to silence as a “constituent aspect of every utterance” (129) and as a medium that determines the limits of what can be articulated and what can be heard by a particular audience. For Kaigani, silence in Gurnah’s novels is a way of self-vocalization. On the other hand, he states that silence employed in the novels “highlights the limitedness of both language and story to provide a complete account of the complexity of migrant life” (133). Thus, he attempts to reveal his point by employing the notion of multiple focalizations since he thinks the term “focalization” is related to the notion of lens and thus enables a “frame of vision” which can modify the perception by sharpening as well as distorting it (Kaigani 130). Kaigani holds that in *Admiring Silence* the unnamed narrator’s father Abbas’s disappearance is an example of long silence: we cannot hear his story from Abbas’s mouth but Kaigani draws on the notion of multiple focalization by which we hear Abbas’s story from different characters who list possible reasons for his escape. Kaigani also indicates how in the novel “various perspectives compete with each other and defer meaning making” (130). Protagonists’ stories are retold by different characters and by each version it is emphasized how every telling is framed differently by its particular vision, therefore pointing out the partiality of knowledge and subverting the approach of homogeneity in “(hi)story” (ibid 130).

Abbas is also the main character of Gurnah’s novel titled *The Last Gift* (2011), as regards which Kaigani underlines another issue, that is, the migrant’s attempts to explain himself to overcome his traumas. In this case, the critic underscores the use of an omniscient narrator and interior monologues of the protagonist besides his wife’s and children’s accounts whereby the reader learns what is behind Abbas’s silence, even if partially. Abbas goes through a diabetic shock which causes a loss of

speech. Ironically, this event happens at a time when he decides to reveal his past to his family. Here, too, Kaigani stresses the difficulty in defining migrant experience by the immigrant himself. Also, he calls attention to the “limitation” of the omniscient narrator in telling Abbas’s story “comprehensively and with finality” (136). Kaigani holds that expressions of hesitancy such as “maybe”, “perhaps”, “whichever it was” by the omniscient narrator display its insufficiency in enabling a proper narration.

As Kaigani himself states, silences and narrative gaps might be necessary for emphasizing the peculiarity of the world of a migrant that “defies univocal approaches” and the impossibility of “absolute intelligibility of the migrant and through this foreclose an openness to the world and the other” (129). As a blend of personal traumas with that of migrancy, stories of the migrants in Gurnah’s novels do not lend themselves to any easy clear-cut explanations. Thus, those silences and gaps in the narration paradoxically make a ground to look for the migrant’s personal views, concerns, and dilemmas. Although Kaigani refers to narrative gaps, his work does not focus much on other narrative aspects. He mostly deals with the element of point of view in narration which lets a way into silences. However, there is more than that. Considering the fact that silence is a way of self-expression and that it is difficult for migrants to explain what they exactly think or feel, it is the task of the audience to give meaning to what characters themselves “do not, cannot, or refuse to say” (ibid 129). Thus, besides their utterances, such as inner monologues, the narrative itself is a ground to look for a further discussion on silence in Gurnah’s novels.

In the light of Gerard Genette’s *Narrative Discourse* and Schlomith Rimmon Kenan’s *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1989), the focus of this study will be on the parts where narrative, or “narrative text” in Genette’s words (26), speaks. By the “narrative text” Genette means “the narrative statement, the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or series of events” (25). He also differentiates between “text” and “story,” which refers to the “succession of events, real or fictitious” that the text undertakes to narrate (ibid 25). Lastly, by referring to the act of narration, that is, “someone recounting something”, he uses the word “narrating” (ibid 26). In his book *Narrative Discourse*, he details all the elements of a narrative discourse, by illustrating his points through the novels by some eminent

writers, some of which will help me analyze the narrative in *By the Sea* and *Admiring Silence*. I will make use of the terms, “ellipsis”, “pause”, “internal” and “external analepsis”, “paralipsis”, “frequency” and “focalization”.

While exploring the constituent parts of the narrative fiction in the light of Genette’s work, Rimmon-Kenan infers that since “of the three aspects of narrative fiction<sup>5</sup>, the text is the only one directly available to the reader” (4), it is through the text that the elements of the story and of the narration are revealed. Depending on this notion, she examines the element of time in relation to text while also revealing the text-story relation in terms of time factor. Making a differentiation between the story time and the narrative time in the analysis of a text, or “the temporal and the spatial time” as defined by Genette (84), necessitates the employment of Genette’s terms “ellipsis” (Genette 40) and “pause”<sup>6</sup> (ibid 99), which will be applied in this thesis. An “ellipsis” in the narrative refers to a non-existent section, or a lapse of time, within the text, which corresponds to some duration of the story in which an event takes place. Ellipses might be both definite or indefinite, that is, the duration of the elided part might be given or we, as readers, might infer it from the text. Genette also groups them as explicit or implicit ellipses according to the indication of the lapse of time. Whether the information about the duration is indefinite like “some years passed” (Genette 106) or definite like “two years later” (ibid 106), it is an explicit ellipsis as long as the elision is stated. In the case of implicit ellipsis, there is no indication of a lapse of time. However, it can be inferred from the gaps of time in the narrative line. Where these ellipses take place is important in terms of silences on the part of characters.

On the other hand, there might be some places where duration of the narrative becomes longer than the time of the story, which is called “pause” by Genette (99). Here Genette focuses on narrative descriptions where he stresses the characters’ perceptions rather than the object being described. While Genette examines Marcel Proust’s narration, he sees “Proustian description” (Genette 102) as more an act of contemplation than that of description:

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<sup>5</sup>She refers to “story”, “text” and “narration”.

<sup>6</sup>Genette examines these two terms separately in different parts of his work. However, I will use Rimmon- Kenan’s analysis here in which she explores both terms under the title of “text” , which is more applicable.

In fact, Proustian ‘description’ is less a description of the object contemplated than it is a narrative and analysis of the perceptual activity of the character contemplating: of his impressions, progressive discoveries, shifts in distance and perspective, errors and corrections, enthusiasms or disappointments, etc. (ibid 102)

Genette’s observation shows that indeed the characters are not always silent. However objective the description or the narration may seem, both Genette and Rimmon- Kenan imply it is very likely to find out what the subject thinks or feels through the text itself, thus opening a way to decoding of silences even if partially.

There are also deliberate omissions in the text staying out of the story-time and text-time relation which Genette calls “paralipsis” (Genette 52). Paralipsis is not a skip of time, but the “omission of one of the constituent elements of a situation in a period that the narrative does not cover”, that is, “sidestepping a given element” (ibid 52). Genette illustrates the concept as one’s keeping the existence of the one of the members of his family as secret while recounting his childhood. Genette states that paralepses, like ellipses, are open to “retrospective filling-in” (52), through analepses for example. An analepsis is a movement backward in time in the narration like the flashback in the movies. Since the text-time is linear and it cannot correspond to the multilinearity of “real” story-time, there occur some gaps or lacunae in the narrative. Analepses help the reader go back to the story-time and gather events, thoughts and feelings to fill those spaces of elision (as well as the parts of paralipsis) and thus to complete a picture. In addition, they might bring “an isolated piece of information which can illuminate a specific moment of the action” (Genette 59). While external analepses evoke a past which precedes the starting point of the first narrative (for instance, the characters’ past that covers the time of independence in Zanzibar in both novels), internal analepses conjure up a past which “occured” after the starting point of the first narrative but is “either repeated analeptically or narrated for the first time at a point in the text later than the place where it is due” (Rimmon-Kenan 50). Such analepses often fill in a gap created previously, sometimes a gap which is not felt as such until it is filled-in in retrospect. Taking the case of migrancy into account, and characters’ past and memories, analepses have an important function in the configuration of the characters’ stories.

In her analysis of text-time relation, Rimmon-Kenan highlights the issue of recurrency in narrative which Genette terms in his *Narrative Discourse* as “frequency” (11). Frequency, as Rimmon-Kenan defines it, denotes “the relation between the number of times an event appears in the story and number of times it is narrated (or mentioned) in the text” (59). Rimmon-Kenan draws attention to consistent narrations of events that happen only once in the story, which she defines as “repetitive” (57). I will focus on repetitions in this study in connection with the characters’ traumas. The main character Saleh Omar’s repetitive telling of the same events in *By the Sea*, for instance, is a sign of disturbance caused by his past traumas. In addition, repetitions will also be considered within the framework of resistance in this thesis. As an illustration, in the scene where the unnamed protagonist of *Admiring Silence* visits his doctor for a heart problem, his repetition of the doctor’s stereotypical phrases several times demonstrates his sarcasm of the European discourse.

Another tool that will be used in this study is “focalization”. To be able to make a distinction between the character’s and the narrator’s points of view, Rimmon-Kenan, following Genette, uses the notion “focalization” instead of “point of view” (73). Including the concepts of “vision” or “prism” , the term focalization draws a line between “seeing and speaking” in order to highlight the difference between the character’s and the narrator’s perceptions (ibid 73). While introducing focalization Genette proposes a three-legged categorization for the problems of point of view: the narrative in which the “narrator says more than any of the characters knows” (Genette 243) is the non-focalized narrative which Genette calls “zero-focalization” (ibid 243). If the “narrator says only what a given character knows,” the narrative has “internal focalization” (ibid 243). In this case, the characters, places, and events are presented by a certain character(s) and s/he is the subject of presentation. The third type is the narrative with “external focalization” in which the “narrator says less than the character knows,” (ibid 243) and the character is presented from the outside. In such a case the narrator presents the characters, events and places in the pictorial sense. On the other hand, revising and reinterpreting Genette’s focalization Mieke Bal sets a system consisting of two terms instead of Genette’s triple typology. She divides focalization into two: character-bound or internal (corresponding to Genette’s internal focalization) and external focalization (corresponding to Genette’s zero and

external focalization) (Bal “Focalization” 265). Also, she introduces the concept of the “focalized” and differentiates between two focalized objects as imperceptible (thoughts, feelings, etc.) and as perceptible (actions, appearances, etc.). In view of the importance of the object (whether perceptible or imperceptible) in the analysis of Gurnah’s novels, Bal’s typology of focalization will be of much use in this thesis in terms of her consideration of the focalized as well as the focalizer.

There is not a strict rule as to the position of focalization. The focalization and the narration can be attributed to the same person as in Gurnah’s novel *Admiring Silence*. In addition, there might be more than one focalizer throughout the narrative and focalization might pass from one focalizer to another. In view of the risk of unreliability that might result from the existence of sole focalizer, multiple-focalization enables us to look through a different prism. On the other hand, what the character or narrator focuses on is crucial in terms of the disclosure of the character’s or the narrator’s ideological stance. In relation to the role of focalization in a text Mieke Bal holds that: “The primary purpose, in the deployment in narratological analysis of the concept of focalization is to bring out the ideological self-evidences that the narratorial voice does not express” (“Silent” 10). In the light of this point of view, I will observe the points in Gurnah’s novels where the character’s ideology is not revealed at the narratorial level.



## CHAPTER 3

### SILENCE IN *ADMIRING SILENCE*

Set in contemporary Britain and Zanzibar, *Admiring Silence* (1996) tells the story of an unnamed man's migration from his homeland Zanzibar to England in an attempt to build a new life for himself while also addressing wider issues such as dislocation and marginalization as results of his migration from a formerly colonized country to England. The protagonist is a writer and a literature teacher at a secondary school in England where he settled a long time ago. It is only after seventeen years staying in England that he goes to Zanzibar for the first time since he left there. Through his retrospective story, he tells the reader his childhood and youth memories while commenting on the events from his adulthood perspective. However, he does not or cannot always communicate well with the reader or the other characters. His communication with his family in Zanzibar is only through letters that make it easier for him to hide some details about his life in England, which becomes a burden in time. Hence, his temporary visit to his homeland is an attempt to break his protracted silence and inform his family about his relationship with Emma, an English woman, and their daughter Amelia, whom he has kept as a secret since his first arrival in England.

His silences make him fail in his relationships: his family resents him for his never informing them about his relationship and he breaks up with Emma because of his introversion and remoteness that his secrets induce. Interestingly, his failure in maintaining healthy relationships with people turns out to be like that of his father Abbas, who left the narrator and his mother long time ago. Abbas whom the narrator introduces as his uncle at first has neither left any explanation about the reason of his departure nor called his family in Zanzibar even once. Emma thinks that the silence of the narrator's father is because "he had no dominion over his life" (AS 53). Emma's comment that silence is something related to being dominant or not in life

partly explains the reason why the protagonist keeps his silence both in most of his dialogues with the people around him and in his narration as a narrator. In his book *Manifesto for Silence* (2007) Stuart Sim divides silence into two categories: “silence as a condition” and “silence as a response” (14). In the light of Sim’s categorization, characters’ losing “dominion over [their lives]” (AS 35) in *Admiring Silence* emerges as a condition, something imposed on them by the people or the experiences that have more control on their lives than themselves. Conditions that lead up to silence respectively include acceptance of oppressive administrations and the tyrannical regimes by the Zanzibar society as well as the narrator’s familial problems causing feelings of hurt and shame in him. In England, it arises as a consequence of the segregating or ethnocentric attitudes migrants become exposed to. On the other hand, silence in this work can also be defined in terms of the other leg of Sim’s categorization; that is, it is a response, a kind of resistance, which becomes an effective tool in the main character’s hands in his taking up a position against those who treat him as an Other. In that case, his silences are the moments when he refuses to enter into a dialogue with somebody who utters a racially discriminating remark or whose worldview is founded on racist and/or Eurocentric assumptions. Silence does not mean acceptance or submission as his reaction is later revealed through analepses.

In accordance with the treatment of the issue of silence, the title of the novel *Admiring Silence* suggests a two-edged meaning in that as silence is displayed both as a condition and a choice in the novel, title itself can be evaluated through the same point of view. Through the title of his novel, Gurnah calls both the “Admirers of Silence”, those oppressive people who control and silence the others, as in the case of the tyrants of the Zanzibari government, and expresses the appreciation of silent pose taken as a reaction, a deliberate stance to be admired in the protagonist who refuses to enter into a dialogue with the ones who display discriminatory attitudes. Both sides will be analysed further in the rest of the chapter.

Sometimes, the narrator covers his silences with stories he tells for himself and for the other characters, especially Emma’s parents Mr and Mrs Willoughby. These stories can take the form of inventions to console himself in his alienation, of mocking pieces that mimick the stereotypical and discriminatory views about migrants from the ex-colonies and his re-tellings of some imperial adventure tales.

The tale of Pocahontas, for example, provides an insight into his life as a foreigner in England; as in the case of Pocahontas, who leaves her tribe marrying to an English man to live in England, he leaves his country and leads a life of isolation in England. The stories told by the narrator are closely related to his silences; therefore, they will be discussed in connection with his silence. Stories may be helpful in underlining the protagonist's silences, but not in every story does the protagonist give a message. Besides, the text itself is not so rich in stories as to deduce meanings. In this case, the text plays an important role as the main ground of analysis. When transferred directly into the narrative text, those silences will take no textual space although they fill some duration in the story. On the other hand, it is by virtue of the narrative text again that it becomes easier to reveal what really happens at those spaces where there is no articulation. To that end, some of Gerard Genette's narratological concepts including *ellipsis*, *paralepsis*, *analepsis*, *frequency* and Gerald Prince's concept of *the disnarrated* will be employed in this chapter.

### **3.1. Silence As a Condition**

As stated earlier in this chapter, silence is treated as a condition in the novel emerging as a result of social, racial and familial complexities. Social dimension of silence is mostly observed in sections of the novel depicting Zanzibar as a society ruled by oppressive regimes. In the rim of the Indian Ocean and at the crossroads of mercantile activities Zanzibar witnesses different administrations like that of the Oman Sultanate and of the Arabs during which the power of politics and economy speak while silencing those Zanzibari citizens who are mostly vulnerable in the face of misgovernment. Arrival of the German or British colonial rule does not change anything for the good of people; on the contrary, especially during the rule of conservative British imperialism the colonial government promotes some communal groups who are already in power economically for the wealth of the Empire. The short summary below of the history of power changing hand in Zanzibar is also mentioned similarly in *Admiring Silence*, which is suggestive of the fact that common people who have been governed so far are just cogs in the great controlling machine, for history never mentions them while recording the procession of policies

of those in power. Nadra O. Hashim, in her historical analysis of Zanzibar during the colonial era, holds that

These policies. . .centralize political authority under British colonial rule, and cultivate an economic elite. . .This political strategy [of the British rule] modified existing social relations, maximizing economic control, and generating and extracting the greatest amount of revenue for the crown. To this end, Britain promoted Zanzibar as an Arab state and Arabs the sole governing power. Establishing Arabs as their political representatives was an easy choice for the British as local Arabs were already wealthy from their transnational maritime trade routes and were the dominant economic ruling class. (8-9)

It is the history of the powerful in Zanzibar told and written while we can never hear the voices of those who are excluded from such kind of records (i.e. the common people). Colonial venture is just a phase in the shift of power, for it was the Omani government making rich Indians the dominant economic class and powerful Arabs the dominant ruling class before colonization, which indicates that there is no space in history for the ruled. In the novel, *Gurnah* draws a picture of Zanzibar after the independence a time when nothing has changed for both the ruler and the ruled. The country is still governed by the “homegrown bullies”, “the lawmakers and the bullshitters, squatt[ing] over everyone’s faces and issu[ing] their wastes on them” (AS 41). This symbolical expression of the act of silencing is ironically connected to the narrator’s criticism of the broken sewer system of Zanzibar on the following pages.

Existence of a variety of ethnic groups in Zanzibar makes the issue of power and control also interrelated with language because in Zanzibar it is language that defines ethnicity. Taking political or economical power in hand means the control over language, which in turn means the control of speech:

the true sources of conflict in Zanzibar are largely economic and linguistic; they are a function of the grave disparities that characterize plantation economies. Like most plantation economies, Zanzibar’s singular oppression of the working class included a suppression of subordinate languages, and the imposition of a political system that

limited access to education and social advancement. In this closed system the only individuals who had full access to the elite educational system were Zanzibar's linguistic elite. (Hashim 2)

“Suppression of subordinate languages” (ibid 2) is an act symbolic in that it denotes to silencing by those who have the control of speech in hand. Such an act has further negative dimensions like manipulation of education for the good of social improvement. While examining the ethnicity, political, social and economic precessions Nadra O. Hashim argues that apart from being “a struggle against foreign rule”, Zanzibar's 1964 revolution is “a movement toward the formal institutionalization of the indigeneous Creole culture and language” (2). Thus it is a fight for the right to speak in a language that is their own. Social oppression that operates as the denial of self-expression is an act that can be named as an “admiration of silence” that is practised by the oppressors themselves, those admirers of silence that Gurnah exemplifies in his reference to one of them called Tembinok. Part one of the novel starts with an epigraph from Part IV, Chapter II of Robert Louis Stevenson's posthumous book *In the South Seas* (1908) titled “The King of Apemama: Foundation of Equator Town”: “he is an admirer of silence in the island; broods over it like a great ear; he spies who report daily; and had rather his subjects sang than talked” (qtd. in AS 1). In 1888, Stevenson's setting sail for the South Seas to find good health enables him with enough material to write his book (Ambrosini 211). Apemama is an atoll in the Gilbert Islands, in the North of the Equator. Tembinok, the king of Apemama, has greatly influenced Stevenson in that he portrays him as “the last tyrant, the last erect vestige of a dead society” (206). As Gurnah's epigraph indicates, he is a lover of silence like all tyrants who control and silence. Through the title of his novel *Admiring Silence* Gurnah alludes to those who use their power to silence people subject to their will. For instance the narrator's depiction of “tyrants” that admire silence is close to Stevenson's portrayal of Tembinok:

We keep silent and nod - for fear of our lives - while bloated tyrants fart and stamp on us for their petty gratification. It is tyrants who commend muteness in their subjects, like the ayatollah with his fatwa - another admirer of silence. (AS 134)

Here the narrator refers to Khomeini's fatwa on the execution of Salman Rushdie for his book *Satanic Verses* (1988). Khomeini's is an act that imposes silence on his subjects through fear, which makes him an admirer of silence according to the narrator.

An important task that this chapter assumes is the examination of silence within the context of migrancy, as another condition in which silence is displayed, since most of Gurnah's novels focus on migrancy and migrant characters who find themselves within long-settled hierarchies of power in the host country in a post-colonial setting. *Admiring Silence* is no exception in this case in that, the main character being an East African migrant is exposed to marginalization and alienation in England, which imposes silence on him. He leaves his family in Zanzibar long before he migrates to England and establishes a life with Emma. On the other hand, life has not been easy since the moment he arrives in England where discrimination is still a problem for people like him. In the first years of his arrival, during which he earns his living by working at a restaurant, he is reproached by the owner Peter, who is angry at him for flirting with a white woman, Emma. He glares at Emma and "with a sharp motion of his head [sends] her away" (AS 58). His anger at the narrator's behaviour is indeed motivated racially, which he makes clear: "That's the kind of idiot country we have become. . . Thousands can just walk off the plane and live off us, but you're not doing that in my kitchen, young man" (AS 58) and adds that the narrator can "doss on the State" if he wants, but he cannot "doss on" Peter (58). As later revealed on the same page by the narrator, by thousands "dossing on the State" Peter means immigrants like Indians or Pakistanis, whom he sees responsible for "passport frauds", "rising crime and drug overdoses", and as "bogus fiancées" or as "people from coloured lands" that will bring "the end of civilization" (AS 58-9). For Peter, the protagonist is just one of them, somebody that can be a "bogus fiancée" for Emma. Also, for Emma's parents, especially for her mother, he is not different from a stranger who intrudes into their lives, which makes him silent in their presence. He confesses to the reader: "in her [Emma's mother's] presence I often felt like a third person, as if I was absent and the conversation was being reported to me later" (AS 72). Neither Emma's father nor her mother is happy that she is together with a black man. Furthermore, Emma's giving birth to their baby-girl, Amelia, adds to her parents'

feelings of disgrace. After facing the “hatred” (AS 85) in Mrs Willoughby’s eyes and Mr Willoughby’s “lustreless looks” (AS 85), the narrator attempts to read their mind:

I could feel the stirrings of a tragic story: confused offspring of mixed parentage (meaning European and some kind of *hubshi*<sup>7</sup>) doomed to instability and degeneration as the tainted blood cursed through generations, waiting to surface in madness, congenital bone weakness, homosexuality, cowardice and treachery (AS 86).

He is well aware of the discrimination he is subjected to and the Westerner’s fear of the return of the Other. Apart from being a threat to the Self, the narrator’s inferences reveal the cost the children of intermarriage will have to pay. It is assumed that they will taint the pure European blood, will create a decayed civilization and suffer from what are seen as the diseases of the age like homosexuality or infidelity. His current state makes it difficult to explain himself and almost impossible to articulate what he really feels among those people who see him as the bearer of a curse for their race. He expresses the results of his attempts at utterance:

At times, I felt invisible to them. My voice sounded strange when I spoke in their midst, as if I was speaking in an incomprehensible tongue. I found myself losing track, confusing words, and becoming tongue tied. When they talked about me (or even to me), it felt that they were pitying me, that I was a victim of unavoidable natural forces, a cyclone or a cholera epidemic or an inherited deformity. (AS 30)

Their existence establishes a control on him that silences and isolates him. His own voice has been estranged to him because of his continuous silence among the English. All those feelings he mentions above are reflections of his inferiority complex created by exclusion from the society. While his life is dominated by the English people like Emma’s parents, he is given no space to utter his voice, which reminds one of Spivak’s conviction that “there is no space from which the (sexed) subaltern can speak” (“Subaltern” 307). Spivak’s criticism of Western colonial entrepreneurs and post-colonial intellectuals who ignore existence and the voice of the subaltern people while seeming to support them turns in Gurnah’s novel into a

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<sup>7</sup> A derogatory Indian term for African blacks.

conspicuousness of the act of silencing of an immigrant by the 20th century English society who deprive him of an individual identity and a voice. The narrator's words also resonate Fanon's "alienating gaze" in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) in his analysis of the discrimination of black people by white Europeans. Following Sartre's thoughts on gaze, Fanon argues that it is the white man's gaze that fixes the black imposing a burden on him and reminding him of his blackness: "And then the occasion arose when I had to meet the white man's eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me" (83). The gaze becomes so suffocating that it creates a desire to escape in the black man: "All round me the white man...Where shall I find shelter from now on?" (ibid 86) In the narrator's case, it is Mr and Mrs Willoughby's looks, white Europeans' looks, that make him feel alienated since those looks remind him of his otherness. Those fixing looks of the Self strip the black man of his individual identity putting him in the category of the Other. This may also explain the protagonist's unnamedness: he is not a member of the English community with an accepted name or identity. However, his being unnamed attests to his being one out of many, one of those marginalized people such as migrants, exiles, "hubshis, abids, bongo-bongos, say-it-loud-I'm-black-and-I'm-proud victims of starvation and tyranny and disease and unregulated lusts and history, etc." (AS 10) in the narrator's words.

Another reason of the narrator's forced silence is his individual traumas created especially by his familial problems that start long before he comes to England. Some intriguing facts about his life such as his father's leaving the narrator and his mother and his growing up with a stepfather cause feelings of shame and hurt which is reflected in his sentences of regret: "Age breeds aches. I could have told her ages ago- that my father was Abbas and he left my mother before I was born" (AS 215). This is the reason why he keeps his silence about the truth related to his father, his stepfather and his mother in his narration, which creates a point of paralipsis in the narrative. Genette defines paralipsis as a temporal gap, "sidestep[ping]" one of the "constituent elements of a situation in a period that the narrative does generally cover" (52). He calls paralipsis a kind of "lateral ellipsis" and indicates that like ellipsis it is open to "retrospective filling-in" (52). He later reveals to the reader that Abbas whom he presents as his runaway uncle is indeed his father and Hashim whom the narrator introduces as his uncle and father earlier in the story is actually his stepfather. Furthermore, for some time he withholds from the reader that the



daughter of the businessman Nassor Abdalla whom Hashim marries is in fact his mother and their marriage is a traditional solution to the disgrace brought by Abbas's departure. It is through parts of analepses that the contents of the silences are revealed: return-backs to those unrevealed or skipped parts through narration make up "analepses" in the narrative text. Rimmon-Kenan states that analepsis constitutes "a temporally second narrative in relation to the narrative onto which they are grafted and which Genette calls 'first narrative' (47). Then it is not wrong to say that silences belong to that second narrative and in the novel the narrator's return-backs to the story he has told partially or not mentioned at all make up another narrative. Genette also divides analepsis into two as internal and external analepses. Internal analepses are those which go back to a time coming after the beginning of the first narrative. External analepses, on the other hand, refer to a time before the starting of the first narrative as in the narrator's confession about his father:

I am going to have to go to an earlier history. It can't be helped, because I will now have to tell this story differently. My father died before I was born. That is what I was used to saying, even thinking, though I knew it was not true (112).

### **3.1.1. Storytelling, Exile and Migrancy**

Indeed, it is through storytelling that the narrator covers such kind of traumas in his life. The function of the storytelling, however, is not limited to whitewashing of unwanted memories. In the novel it takes different forms and functions according to the narrator's needs, for he is the only character telling stories. His stories can be grouped as inventions to present his life better than it is with the aim of acceptance by the circle of Emma's English friends and in an effort to escape the burden of his past, as empire stories mimicking the colonial discourse, and as tales to comment on his situation as a foreigner in England. In the beginning, the narrator's telling stories derives from a wish to escape the burden of his past and the predicament of his marginalization since, he believes, stories can provide him with a way out of his troubles:

There were stories, in the first place, stories to fill the hours and the mind in the contest with life, to lift the ordinary into metaphor, to

make it seem that the time of my passing was a choice in my hands. .  
.That is what stories can do, they can push the feeble disorders we live  
with out of sight. (120)

His stories become tools to fix the disorders in his life, to make his life bearable and to control it in the face of experiences life has forced upon him (his disconnection from homeland and isolation as a result of migrancy). In addition to this, his concern to be accepted by Emma and the other people around him in England prompts him to invent stories about himself. All he wants is to be one of those English people around him without feeling estranged: "I imagined that I looked as they did, and talked as they did, and had lived the same life that they had lived, and that I had always been like this" (AS 62). According to Edward Said, the narrator's envying of the English people in terms of belonging to a fixed place is a peculiar behavior of the exiles in a different land from their country of origin. In his study "Reflections on Exile", Said holds:

Exiles look at non-exiles with resentment. *They* belong in their surroundings, you feel, whereas an exile is always out of place. What is it like to be born in a place, to stay and live there, to know that you are of it, more or less forever? (143)

The narrator's feeling of estrangement both in his homeland (since he has long broken his ties with Zanzibar) and in England is a feeling he shares with exiles, which opens up the relationship between exile and migrancy for a discussion and helps us explore where Gurnah's novel can be placed. In her article "From Literature of Exile to Migrant Literature" (2002) Carine Mardorossian examines the relationship between exile and migrant literature in the light of Caribbean writers Julia Alvarez's novel *Yo!* (1997) and Edwige Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994). Mardorossian states that recently "some exile postcolonial writers have reconfigured their identity by rejecting the status of exile for that of migrant" ("From Literature of Exile" 16). Before evaluating such a reconfiguration and defining the relationship between exile and migration, she reflects on the status of exile itself. She states that according to the high modernist tradition exiled writers are thought to be better in providing an "objective" view of both their home and host societies. On the other hand, their in-between status which is perceived as a privilege prepares a

ground for constructing the “binary logic” between “an alienating ‘here’ and a romanticized ‘homeland’ “ (ibid 16). Mardorossian explains what it means to change from exile to migrant in terms of this binary:

The shift from exile to migrant challenges this binary logic by emphasizing movement, rootlessness, and the mixing of cultures, races, and languages. The world inhabited by the characters is no longer conceptualized as ‘here’ and ‘there.’ Because of her displacement, the migrant’s identity undergoes radical shifts that alter her self-perception and often result in her ambivalence towards both her old and new existence. She can no longer simply or nostalgically remember the past as a fixed and comforting anchor in her life, since its contours move with the present rather than in opposition to it. Her identity is no longer to do with being but becoming. (ibid 16)

As the quotation makes clear, there is no strict line between the world migrant departs and the one s/he arrives. His/her straddling between the home and the host countries creates an ambivalence in terms of his/her identity which is configured by instability instead of fixity. The concept of ambivalence is not included in the case of exile which separates between the old and the new countries, and therefore between the old and the new identities.

Besides redefining exile and migrancy in opposition to each other, Mardorossian also traces the way how these terms diverge from their original meanings. While exile meant an “unwilled expulsion from a nation” resulting from “imprisonment, execution, or some other coercive physical response” (Mardorossian, “From Literature of Exile” 17), migrant connoted “a relatively voluntary departure with the possibility of return” (ibid 17). However, from the point of view of contemporary Euro-American critics, migrant literature offers an interactive relationship “between the past and present” and the “impossibility of return” while the “discourse of exile” includes the “possibility of return” with an emphasis on the past (ibid 17).

In the light of Mardorossian’s analysis, it can be held that Gurnah’s presenting a character with the feeling of ambiguity in terms of his identity, the protagonist’s in-betweenness and the constant feelings of alienation and displacement make the novel more a writing of migrancy than of exile. The narrator could not leave Zanzibar

behind since his memories mostly belong there. However, his past life does not give him comfort because of the familial and social turmoils which he escapes. His visit to Zanzibar years later makes it clearer that he has already broken his ties with his family and the homeland long before he arrives in England. It has been very long since he settled in England and established a life there with his partner Emma and their daughter Amelia. On the other hand, he still cannot feel he is a part of the life in England because of discrimination he is subjected to, which makes him feel isolated and marginalized. Thus, his movement between two identities with a sense of displacement and the lack of comfort in the past make this novel an example of what Mardorossian calls migrant literature.

Although it cannot be said that the narrator feels included in the English society, it is, paradoxically, his “alienness” (AS 62) and mainly the stories he makes up about his life in Zanzibar that contribute a great deal to his “inclusion” in their society:

For my alienness was important to all of us-as their alienness was to me. . .It adorned them with the liberality of their friendly embrace of me, and adorned me with authority over the whole world south of the Mediterranean and east of the Atlantic. . .It was from these beginnings that it became necessary later to invent those stories of orderly affairs and tragic failure. I was allowed so much room that I could only fill it with invention. . .In my stories I found myself clarifying a detail, adjusting it so that its impact was unobscured. . .I found the opportunity to rewrite my history irresistible, and once I began it became easier and easier. (62)

Even if they are not true, his stories put him in the center of those who listen to him even if only temporarily. These are stories about “[his] parents, [his] friends [and] his country” (62) in which he “suppress[es]”, “change[s]” and “fabricate[s]” (62) some details about his life. Considering Gurnah’s allusions to colonial times through the main character’s stories, his (the protagonist’s) rewriting his history suggests that history is just a construction that might take a very different shape in each character’s hands, which underestimates the reliability and thus the authority of official history. The question of authority that the narrator mentions ironically in the quotation above is also an important subject discussed in relation to the issue of “representation” in

postcolonial writing, a duty which may become a burden on the “ethnic” and “transnational” author’s shoulders. In his article titled “Literature/ Identity: Transnationalism, Narrative and Representation” (2002) Arif Dirlik analyses the issue of identity construction in “transnational literatures” questioning the possibility of the “transnational” author’s having an autonomous identity independent from his cultural identity. However, he concludes, it is not possible for the “ethnic” and “transnational” writer to have an identity of her/his own because of the “racialization and culturalization” that s/he is subjected to “in the dominant ideology of the larger society” (219). Whatever the author’s point is, his/her work will be shaped and evaluated according to and in relation to his cultural identity, which Dirlik underlines as follows:

As literature has been placed at the service of exploring ethnic and transnational (or diasporic) identities, the construction of identities in literary work has been confounded with the ethnography of culture, subjecting the writer to pressures that subvert the economy of creative work. (210)

Through creation of “an ideological environment that favors ethnicization”, Dirlik adds, the writer’s culture is “dehistoricized”, “desocialized” and “blended imperceptibly with supposedly racial traits” while the writer is taken as the “embodiment” of an “abstract” culture (219). Dirlik calls this process “cultural reification” (220), an act that presents the individual culture through “erasure of the spatial and historical distance” (221) for some political and ideological motivation that separates, say, Afro-Caribbeans from their society of origin. There comes a culture far from its real history without its certain time and place, that is, the one constructed by the ideological point of view. To this end, which Dirlik severely criticizes, the ethnic writer is racialized, culturalized and assigned as the representative of his culture regardless of his authorial motivation and his affinity to his original culture:

the racialized body or any other marker of race or foreignness, such as names, is taken to authorize the writer (or anyone else for that matter) to stand or speak for the group of which s/he is allegedly a member by virtue of physical appearance or some other trait, regardless of how

remote the connection of the author to the society of origin, or how complicated the composition of the group. (219)

Through his narrator, Gurnah exemplifies the case above: in the eyes of Emma's friends, as he states before, the protagonist is "a victim of historical oppression" (AS 61) escaping from a formerly colonized country and a "black African" that cannot be thought separately from his culture. Their way of looking at him is shaped by the preconceptions of the Other's culture and they expect the protagonist to tell one of those culturally framed stories, which the protagonist duly performs. Therefore, his autonomy, which he sarcastically refers to as the capacious "room", is something constructed since he cannot go out to tell what is required of him (AS 62).

Although stories give the narrator a temporal comfort from his troubles in his life deferring his concerns about the past and the present life, they do not really cure the problems in his life because hiding some facts about his life and making up stories instead just prevent him from facing up the truth about his life. He is not aware at first that his relationship with Emma has deteriorated. Emma understands that he lies to her because she catches his "inconsistency" (AS 63) and, as the narrator himself puts it, "Then after a while she stopped paying such intense attention" to his stories. He thinks that Emma's fondness to narratives (because she studies narratives for her PhD project) makes her understand that his stories have been "adjusted to reward and satisfy [the narrator] in the telling" (33). According to the narrator, after some time, Emma decides to "complete the stories for herself" and "switch[es] the lights off" (33). The narrator's words imply how Emma takes the control in hand in their relationship and slowly cuts her ties with the narrator. Of course, his unreliability in his narration is not the source of his problems, but just a failed attempt to make things better in his life. Source of his troubles lies in his marginalized condition as a migrant and the troubles of his past that in turn prevent him from recreating a home and a self which are interrelated. As far as the novel suggests, the (re)construction of a self is closely related to creating a space where the self can feel at home. This space becomes symbolic in *Admiring Silence* which suggests it is the family that represents home rather than being part of a national culture. During his visit to Zanzibar years later, the protagonist feels homesick and expresses what "home" means for him: "It wasn't England that was home (so you can roll back the red carpet, or file away, if you care, reproaches against the alienated native), but the life I had known with

Emma” (AS 170). His idea of home makes it clear that the concept of home can change in different contexts as Rosemary Marangoly George explains in her book *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-century Fiction* (1996):

Today the primary connotation of “home” is of “private” space from which the individual travels into the larger arenas of life and to which he or she returns at the end of the day. And yet, also in circulation is the word’s wider significance as the larger geographic space where one belongs: country, city, village, community. Home is also the imagined location which can be more readily fixed in a mental landscape than in actual geography. The term “home-country” suggests the particular intersection of private and public and of individual and communal that is manifest in imagining a space as home. (11)

For Gurnah’s unnamed narrator, Zanzibar ceases to be home long before he leaves there since he loses his father. After a while, he thinks that he has also lost his mother’s love and care, which gives him the sense that there is not much left to cling to on the island of his childhood and youth (AS 117). After he leaves Zanzibar, he never goes there for a long time and his communication with his family is only through letters in which he never mentions Emma and Amelia, for he thinks that the difference between Emma’s and his culture, history and religion will be a problem for his family. In addition to the lack of proper communication with his family, he is not happy in England which has always been far from being a new home for him. Thus, in view of George’s categorization, home is just a mental space for him where he re-connects with his “home-country” Zanzibar through reconstructed memories and lives in peace without feeling alien among the English although he knows the feelings of home and belonging are just parts of a fiction:

As if I was not already lost and stolen and shipwrecked and mangled beyond recognition anyway. As if home, belonging were anything more than a willful fiction when there was no possibility (at that time) of them being real again. As if they were anything more than

debilitating stories that turned everything into moments of reprise that disabled and disarmed. (AS 89-90)

Home and belonging are far from being real for him; they are just weakening stories that disable and disarm and make him powerless. Since he is burdened by the memories of a troubled past in Zanzibar and by the feeling of isolation and alienation in England neither country can become a home for him. That is why they are “debilitating stories” (AS 90). As we also see in Gurnah’s novel *By the Sea*, Gurnah’s characters are characterized by the lack of a sense of rootlessness and their status as migrants, exiles or members of diasporic communities prepares an appropriate ground for this. The feeling of belonging is obtained only temporarily as in *Admiring Silence*.

In view of the fact that the narrator is not articulate enough to express his feelings openly to the reader, he places a narration within his own narration to point out his case as an alienated and isolated migrant in a society that is unfamiliar to his own, which makes up the last group of stories in the narrative. His embedded narration is a tale which can be considered within the frame of Gerald Prince’s term “the disnarrated”. In his study of narratology, Prince underlines all the events in a narrative text “that do not happen but, nonetheless, are referred to by the narrative text” (299) and calls these “the disnarrated” (299) by differentiating them from the unnarrated or nonnarrated<sup>8</sup> events. Prince places “purely imagined worlds, desired worlds, or intended worlds, unfulfilled expectations, unwarranted beliefs, failed attempts, crushed hopes. . . errors and lies” (ibid 299) in the category of the disnarrated. Drawing upon Prince’s notion of the disnarrated, Marie-Laure Ryan analyzes “virtual embedded narratives” by which she means “any story-like representation produced in the mind of a character” and “sometimes- but not always- having an equivalent in the narrated world” (qtd. in Prince 299). Whether called the disnarrated or the virtual embedded narratives, these unrealized events have been thought to have the function of emphasizing the actualized events in fiction “imply[ing] its narrative significance[,] call[ing] for a detailing of (some of) its (many possible) functions” and “play[ing] a similar or equivalent to that of descriptive or commentarial information” (Prince 300). In the narrator’s case this is

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<sup>8</sup>The unnarrated or nonnarrated refers to “what is left unsaid because of ignorance, repression or choice” (Prince 30) while the disnarrated can be inferrable through retrospective filling-in or from lacunas in the chronology.



an imperial adventure tale that he re-tells to the reader about the Algonquian princess, Pocahontas, someone whose destiny leads her to be an exile in England like the narrator himself. When she is the eleven-year-old daughter of the Algonquian King Powhatan, her path crosses with that of an Englishman named John Smith who directs the operation of “planting of the English colony in Virginia, in the days of Good Queen Bess and her successor Jimbo Stuart” (AS 6). In the narrator’s words when he is captured by the Algonquians, John Smith is “out on reconnaissance-checking out the odds on a small ethnic- cleansing project he had in mind” (ibid 6). Pocahontas’s sacrifice of herself to prevent Smith’s execution by her people goes around as “a story of imperial adventure: the beautiful native princess is smitten senseless by the European knight and recklessly risks everything for love” (AS 6). Her crossing over to the English colony is through her abduction at the age of eighteen during which she informs the English against a forthcoming Algonquian attack. Her devotion is rewarded with baptism that changes her name as Rebecca and with marriage to an Englishman who takes her to England. While the “native” princess is “saved” from her primitive society by being baptised and included in the European culture, her story is turned to be a colonialist tale of heroism. This is an example of the case what Spivak calls “white men saving brown women from brown men” (“Subaltern” 297). Spivak uses this expression to criticize the British who abolish the religious ritual of Sati in the time of colonization of India in 1829. She holds that the British ban the Sati practice to justify their colonialism of India, not to do a favour to those widows. In the same way, Pocahontas tale is used to illustrate the fair rule of the British state. When Pocahontas goes to England, she is received as “a noble native curiosity” (AS 6) and dies in Kent after a while. The narrator thinks that “perhaps she would have done better to stay at home instead of inserting herself into stories of Empire” (AS 7). Having a commentarial function, Pocahontas’s tale casts light upon the narrator’s case in that she is an exile in England, away from her native country and is an Other like the narrator himself. Also, like Pocahontas who is taken as a “native curiosity” in England even though she changes her name, the narrator is always considered a stranger especially by Emma’s surroundings, which pushes him to a marginal position in the English society. His exhortation that it would be better not to leave her native land indicates that he sympathizes with her because of his status as a dislocated man far from home.

### 3.2. Silence As a Response

So far, silence of the narrator has been discussed as a condition produced as a result of both social and personal factors. Stuart Sim discusses silence also as something deliberate, a conscious act that can become a tool of communication. According to Sim, “not to say something becomes as meaningful as saying something when there is a conscious decision to refrain from communicating verbally” (13). The narrator in *Admiring Silence* performs silence as a form of resistance. This time, it is a powerful weapon in the narrator’s hands which he uses as a response to criticize, judge and question the people and the situations he comes into contact with. Thus, the protagonist’s silence becomes an act to be admired, as also suggested by the title.

Being a black man in 1990’s England from an ex-colonised country, the narrator is mostly seen inferior by the white English: he has to tolerate Mr and Mrs Willoughby’s uninviting manners and pretend not to have heard discriminatory remarks on TV about people like him. When Emma takes him to meet her parents at the beginning of their relationship, she warns him against them: “Don’t tell them those kind of stories. They’ll just lap them up and start up on their racist filth. . .they fatten up on that kind of thing. . .They get enough of that off the TV” (AS 72). Despite the discriminatory attacks from all quarters including the media and the father and mother-in-law, the protagonist is not as vulnerable as he seems. His narration of what he lives in the earlier days of his arrival in England makes it clear that following the moment of Peter’s reproach, he intimates his thoughts to the reader. After this insulting speech, his long looks at Peter make the point of ellipsis corresponding to some duration of his story during which something happens on the side of the protagonist, but which appears in the text as just the silence of couple of minutes that would be expressed maybe as “for a while”. Gerard Genette calls this incongruity between the story time and text time “ellipsis” in which an event that happens in the story is absent from the narrative (40), which refers to points of silences in the case of the novel. It is through analepses which fill in the moment of silences, on the other hand, that we see those couple of minutes include the narrator’s internal answers to Peter. In the novel inner monologues are mainly written in italics in order to underline that the protagonist is articulate as his reaction to Peter makes

clear: “*Chin-up, old Phut-Phut, they are not really as many as they look, and they come here full of love for you*” (AS 59). However, it is only when he goes back in his narration that he tells what he was thinking at the moment while Peter was making his derogatory speech. Speaking on behalf of all those migrants, he is really sarcastic about Peter’s concern with the *thousands* (italics is mine) such as Indians, Pakistanis and Africans who migrate to England and with the narrator himself. As one of those immigrants, the narrator reminds Peter in an inner monologue that people like him (the narrator) are forced by harsh political conditions to migrate to England; they do not come just for their “love” of the English people.

Another scene demonstrating that the narrator’s silence is just a reaction is his visit to a doctor for his heart problem. After examination, the doctor decides that his heart is “buggered” (AS 8) as is commonly the case, according to the doctor, in people “like” him:

Afro-Caribbean people have dickey hearts. . .and they are prone to high blood pressure, hypertension, sickle-cell anaemia, dementia, dengue fever, sleeping sickness, diabetes, amnesia, cholera, phlegm, melancholy and hysteria. (AS 9)

It is ironic that even the narrator’s disease is diagnosed in relation to one’s ethnicity although the doctor knows nothing about the patient’s ethnic identity. While the doctor lists the diseases that the Afro-Caribbean are usually exposed to, the protagonist listens to him without any interruption or comment. On the other hand, although it is not voiced at that moment, through the analepsis it is indicated that he has a detailed response to the doctor’s long diagnosis, which the doctor turns into a drama through self-styled consolations. It is specifically directed at the doctor’s over-generalizations which make his condition “perfectly predictable” (AS 91):

Of course, after all this drama I did not have the heart to tell him that I was not Afro-Caribbean, or any kind of Caribbean, not even anything to do with the Atlantic- strictly an Indian Ocean lad, Muslim, orthodox sunni by upbringing, Wahhabi by association and still unable to escape the consequences of those early constructions. I swallowed all those incurable diseases with a stoical gulp and an inward sneer at his smug ignorance. (9)

His detailed map of lineage undermines the doctor's labelling that uncaringly places the narrator in the category of the "Rest" different from the "West" disregarding his actual ethnic identity. In his introduction to *Writing Across Worlds*, Paul White criticizes the fixation of migrant identities through "external labelling"(4) assigning them to a general category that eliminates their individual cultural identities:

Externally driven categorisations can be over-rigid, with a great deal of over-generalisation so that, for example, all people of Afro-Caribbean origin in Britain are thought of as "West Indians", ignoring the facts of individual island identity that are of great significance to the people concerned, or in France labelling all North Africans as "Arabs" when some are Jews and others are Berbers rather than of Arabic cultures. (4)

Besides his assignment to a wrong ethnic community, as White's argument explains, the narrator is angry at the doctor's hackneyed phrases which make one think that some diseases are only peculiar to African people. The narrator sarcastically completes the doctor's list: "He didn't mention Aids, for example, which has its headquarters in our part of the world, probably because we seem unable to restrain ourselves from having relations with monkeys" (AS 10). The narrator's criticism seems to suggest that the doctor treats his patient not according to certain symptoms in his patient, but according to some "stock diseases" peculiar to the patient's "race". In his analysis of the stereotype, David Huddart defines the term in relation to the issue of identity:

Normally the problem with a stereotype seems to be that it fixes individuals or groups in one place, denying their own sense of identity and presuming to understand them on the basis of prior knowledge, usually knowledge that is at best defective. (25)

After the event, the narrator repeats in each occasion the doctor's diagnosis in a sarcastic tone. His turning back to the same scene with the doctor labelling him in a generalizing way is an example of "repetitive" narration in Rimmon-Kenan's terms (57). In his narratological approach, Genette remarks the relation between the number of times an event occurs and frequency it is narrated in the text under the title of "frequency". In his formulation repetition is "narrating *n* times what happened

once” (ibid 115). According to Rimmon-Kenan, repetition is a “mental construct” in which “repeated segment of the text [is not] quite the same” because “its new location puts it in a different context which, necessarily changes its meaning”(57). Indeed in Gurnah’s novel, in each of its location in the text, the repetition serves for the same aim: it underlies the doctor’s stereotypical lecture and undermines it dryly. While mentioning the problem with his heart to Emma he repeats the doctor’s words as they are: “he told me my heart was buggered” (AS 91). He does not paraphrase the slang expression while he could have used the words “faltering”, “mulfunctioning” or “weak” to reveal his heart problem. It is also on his return to England from Zanzibar that he refers to the same event with the doctor. When in conversation with a woman passenger from Nigeria, he wants to tell her (though he cannot actually say it): “I have developed a heart problem. A buggered heart, no less, with unstated consequences which I’ll hear about in due course upon my return to civilization” (AS 180). It is ironic that he uses the word “civilization” instead of England. His use of the word civilization seems a kind of degradation since he relates it to his visit to the doctor who makes generalizations about his identity without actually knowing it. His being diagnosed according to his ethnic identity underlines the way he uses the word civilization ironically.

Considering silence in the context of response, the narrator’s stories play an important role as meta-narratives in unsettling Eurocentric worldviews and actions. Ironically the narrator’s stories “mimic” the colonial discourse that still reigns in the modern-day England in the novel. His empire stories also enable him to communicate with Emma’s parents even if it is not a proper communication since he mimicks what they already know. It seems that where the empire speaks, the protagonist keeps his silence. However, his manipulation of these stories through mocking exaggerations indicates that stories become a ground from which he utters his voice indeed. What makes his stories effective weapons is the way they undermine the Western discourse through its own hackneyed images of the Other, which is illustrated by the exotic picture of Zanzibar of colonial times: “I said that in my father’s house all the beds were made of gold, and until I was sixteen, servants bathed me in milk and then rinsed me in coconut water every morning” (AS 22). This falsely wealthy picture of the narrator’s house that he draws for Mr Willoughby describes what the Western discourse calls “exotic” in order to define something

“strikingly, excitingly different, unusual” (Merriam Webster “Exotic”). He adds to his parody through another misguided definition of the “African people” (emphasis is to underline the generalization of identity as seen in the doctor’s treatment) remaining from colonial times: “In the end I told him [Mr Willoughby] that the [Zanzibari] government had legalized cannibalism” (AS 21). In this way, the narrator’s portrayals refer to a larger picture created by the Western discourse for all colonized communities by exposing and denying its authority. According to him, tenets that create the infrastructure of the modern British civilization are indeed based on a false history:

The stories they tell, so many accusations! The claims they make, for Heaven’s sake! . . . History turns out to be a bundle of lies that covers up centuries of murderous rampage around the globe-and guess who the barbarians are supposed to be. (AS 7)

The narrator holds that the barbarity attributed to those who are colonized actually is what the colonial venturers have displayed decades ago in the name of creating civilization. In his analysis of mimicry in *Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha points out the textuality of reality and thus constructedness of history:

What emerges between mimesis and mimicry is a writing, a mode of representation, that marginalizes the monumentality of history, quite simply mocks its power to be a model, that power which supposedly makes it imitable. (87-8)

While referring to “writing”, Bhabha uses the word in the Derridean sense: he means that history, like any kind of text, is a construct and can be re-constructed. He also points out the textuality of Western discourse based on some false assumptions. Here Bhabha puts mimicry in the center in disclosing these assumptions believing that it can be transformed into a strategy of resistance and become a means of agency.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha defines the colonial mimicry as the “desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (86), which, he believes, creates an “ambivalence”, “an indeterminacy” as to the construction of the colonial discourse itself. Such an ambivalence (of mimicry) explained by the desire of an Other as both the same with and different from the “white body” (92) undermines the colonial authority when it is

displayed by the Other. This “partial presence” assigned to the black becomes a threat to the colonial discourse because by mimicing such a partiality, the Other displays the partiality of the Self, too, which Bhabha expresses as the colonial discourse’s disrupting its own authority through an “articulation [of] disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference” (of the colonized) (ibid 92). That is why he sees it as a menacing weapon in the Other’s hands.

In a similar way, and even if in a different context and setting, the narrator of the novel mocks the discourse of the White man in a way to underline the false definitions of the Eurocentric discourse of those which it labels as Others. Such a declamation by Gurnah’s character suggests that even if not on the extreme, Gurnah holds a position in the name of defending all those who have been tortured, exploited and isolated. In his “Cultural identity and diaspora” (1990), Stuart Hall states: “We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always in context, positioned” (223). However Gurnah’s is not a bigoted partialism like chauvinism. While making a critique of the history and politics he directs his judgements to all sides where he sees something has gone wrong.

In the narrator’s visit to Zanzibar after the political turmoil of the time of independence changes, he sees a society where non-existent and malfunctioning services and infrastructures reign. The new government is not better than the administration of the time of colonialism because it is involved in corruption. The novel makes a harsh criticism through the sewer system which becomes the symbol of political filth and corruption on the side of both British and Zanzibari governments. Disturbed by the blockage of the sewer system in Zanzibar, the narrator decides to join an evening course on plumbing on his return to England since he wants to “get to the bottom of the blocked toilets” (AS 212). Before he starts the course, he makes a deep analysis through history that goes to the invention of toilets. The first water-closet with a trap was proposed in the sixteenth century by an Englishman named Sir John Harington, which makes him think that “any idea of any value” first stroke to an Englishman, “especially in the era of Good Queen Bess” among which he includes “ale pie”, “the slave trade”, “colonialism” and “the flush toilet” (AS 213). His mentioning the slave trade and colonialism with something as “valuable” as the flush toilet is a sarcastic attitude which he develops further:

It [the flush toilet] had been an ongoing concern for centuries, of course, what to do with it all, but it took an Englishman to come up with the goods. He had plenty of time on his hands, it's true, but so do orangutans, and you wouldn't expect them to come up with a plan for a water-closet with a trap. Give the man some credit. (AS 213)

His mocking exaltation of such an invention and coupling it with the slave trade and colonialism among the essential requirements of being a civilized society further suggest that slavery and colonialism are corrupt enterprises ending up with filth as the toilet metaphor points at. The fact that toilet is a colonial export to the African Island refers to the inheritance of the political corruption by the new government in Zanzibar that is manifest in the breakdown of the sewer system.

In this chapter, I have looked at the way silence is employed in Gurnah's *Admiring Silence* through a narratological analysis of the novel. Besides being a condition experienced socially and individually in the colonial as well as post-colonial periods presented in the novel, silence also emerges as a powerful stance in the face of oppression and discrimination. I have also discussed the meaning of home, belonging and identity, terms that can become more complex when migrancy is in question. Also, I have demonstrated the potential of silence in the dialogue between the Self and the Other: when silence becomes just an acceptance, Self imposes its own being on the Other; while, refusal of a dialogue with the Self through silence may empower the Other.



## CHAPTER 4

### SILENCE IN *BY THE SEA*

In an interview about his personal life and his career as a writer, Gurnah mentions the political situation in England during the first years of his arrival when there was still an intolerance against those who migrate to England from different parts of the world:

I . . . came at a bad time, in 1967-8, when Enoch Powell and others were stirring up craziness about “race”. Immigration was an issue that seemed to frighten everybody. In the newspapers, Idi Amin<sup>9</sup> was beginning to expel or pressurize Asian Ugandas into leaving, so to some extent the fear of hundreds of thousands of foreigners coming to England was understandable. (Chambers 122)

The first troops of West Indian and Caribbean immigrants’ setting foot in Britain after the second World War (on 22 June 1948) marked the starting point of Britain’s development into a multicultural country. Then immigrants from South East Asia, Africa and from New Commonwealth countries were to follow in greater numbers especially during the years between the 1960s and 80s changing Britain’s welfare system in terms of the allocation of “housing, employment, health” and “education services” that were already scarce for the citizens of the host country (Julios 16-7). This meant a hostile attitude against those immigrants by their fellow British counterparts and many politicians like Enoch Powell, Conservative Shadow Defence Spokesman. In his discriminatory “rivers of blood” speech he mentioned the destructive results of continuous immigration to Britain, which, together with the

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<sup>9</sup> In the first years after the independence of Uganda, Idi Amin came to power as the President of Uganda. He ruled the country in terror and cruelty. After three months of reign, Amin gave the army authority to arrest and punish, and established a military court to try political criminals [including] a group of exiled Ugandas. (Buckley-Zistel 64)

public hostility, led to “tightening border controls” while at the same time promoting “equal opportunities at home” by the government (Julius 17).

It is against such a background of migrancy and tense atmosphere of hostility in Britain that Gurnah sets his sixth novel *By the Sea* (2001) telling an entangled story of reconciliation between two Zanzibari men in England who negotiate the problems about their common past in Zanzibar after thirty two years. In pursuit of an asylum in England with a fake name and keeping his silence for fear of safety, elderly Saleh Omar needs a translator who can communicate with him in Swahili. The translator is Latif Mahmud, Omar’s fellow countryman from Zanzibar, who now works as a lecturer and a poet at the University of London. To Latif’s surprise, Saleh Omar uses the same name with his father Rajab Shaaban Mahmud, which arouses curiosity in him about the man’s real identity before meeting.

As in *Admiring Silence*, silence is two dimensional in *By the Sea* again as both an inevitable consequence of some troubles resulting from the main characters’ past and a way of resistance, which is the main argument of this thesis. Silence occurs as a morbid result of the atmosphere of the post-independence political strifes in Zanzibar that takes Saleh Omar to the borders of England, of the common familial problems that bring suffering to Omar and Latif, and of marginalization again because of being a black immigrant in England from Africa. It is again within the context of encounter between the main characters and the white English who treat them as Others that silence of the main characters emerges as a tactic to resist or protest. They use their silence as a wall that aims to prevent intrusion in their lives by the English people. Within this context of Self and Other, a discord between nationalism and migrancy takes place bringing the concepts of home, identity and belonging into question. While Britain opens the doors to the citizens of its ex-colonies, there is a strict control on the borders, in a way to promote the cultural unity of the country with a nationalist spirit, that makes entering Britain difficult for the victims of misrule from other countries. Furthermore, racialization and exclusion in the host country reinforces the clash between nationalism and migrancy that comes into prominence in *By the Sea*.

Through a narrative divided into three sections (“Relics”, “Latif” and “Silences” each of which contains two chapters), Gurnah presents two separate stories by two

main characters- Omar and Latif who offer their own versions of their partly common history as the homodiegetic narrators of their own narratives. The fact that there are two narrators in the novel is an advantage in that each narrator completes what is missing in the other's narrative as well as enabling a different perspective. In this respect, Mieke Bal's *focalization* is a useful tool that reveals how each perspective shapes the same event and how the narrators see and judge each other through their narrations. Since *By the Sea* is a novel rich in descriptions (by the narrators), Genette's concept of (*descriptive*) *pause* is also employed to cast a light to the narrators' thoughts behind their silences. In addition to these, concepts of *ellipsis-analepsis* will be used to underline the lacunae in the narrations as in *Admiring Silence*.

#### **4.1. Silence As a Condition**

The event that indirectly causes both narrators' silence and introversion is the conflict between Saleh Omar and Rajab Shaaban Mahmud that brings grievance to both Omar and Mahmud families. It starts with Saleh Omar's making a deal with a furniture merchant named Hussein when he is a furniture seller in Zanzibar. It is three years before the independence of Zanzibar in 1963 that he meets Hussein, which starts his affliction. Before Hussein leaves the island, he asks Omar for loan and as a security he offers the deeds of Rajab Shaaban's house which he has acquired the previous year in return for a loan that Shaaban has taken from him. This explains how Omar gets into contact with Latif's family. When the time of need comes, Omar has to take Rajab Shaaban's house including all its furniture despite all the objections and pleas of the Mahmud family who, as a result, nurse a long lasting grudge against Omar. Latif's mother, who becomes a mistress to one of the powerful ministers at the time of the 1964 revolution in Zanzibar, uses the new post-independence regime for her benefit ensuring Omar eleven years of island imprisonment and detention in three different camps. It is only after eleven years that he learns his wife and one-year old daughter died a year after his imprisonment. His going on with his life will not be easy since Latif's brother Hassan, who travels and trades with the merchant Hussein, returns to take his family's vengeance, like his mother, by threatening Omar for further persecution through the power of politics. Hassan and his mother's act

demonstrates the degeneration of politics in the hands of those who come to power; it can easily be manipulated for the people's self-interests.

Latif is somehow misled by his parents into believing that Omar is the man that devastated their lives. His last sight of Omar is when he is sent by his mother to ask for an ebony table that Hussein gives as a gift to Latif's brother Hassan to seduce him. However, his demand is refused by Saleh Omar whom Latif talks about as a "notorious licker of British arses, for whom he rifled through other people's belongings to find trinkets for them to take home as booty of their conquests" (*BTS* 101). Indeed Latif is inwardly aware of the fact that his family has already been shattered because of his father's weakness, his mother's love affairs and the merchant Hussein's sexual abuse of Hassan. His father is an alcoholic and his mother has lovers. While he sees his father as a "shameful failure", he is embarrassed by his mother's affairs, which causes him to be insulted by people at school who make fun of him and by girls on the streets "shout[ing] mocking innuendos at [him]" (*BTS* 80). But his grievance is mostly because of the sexual abuse of his brother by Hussein, for he loves his brother so much. Kate Houlden holds that "Gurnah's maligned homosexuals operate from a position of power in contrast to those passive women and men over whom they exert control" (*ibid* 92). Hussein is a rich powerful merchant who can easily "exert control over" Hassan and Shaaban family. Although Latif is aware of his brother's corruption by Hussein, he cannot do anything for him since he is just a young boy then. His memory of the room where Hussein occupies during his stay at Shaabans' house reflects his childhood perception of this cruel man:

it had a pungency that made me think of the musim, dhows rocking in the harbour and sailors smelling of dried fish and sunbaked skin and ocean spray. It made me think of parced and stony places, of sailor grime and sweat-stained rags. (*BTS* 83)

Latif's memory is an example of descriptive pause which makes the duration of his narration longer than the story time. Apart from evoking scenes from the Indian littoral, his memory of the room is shaped unpleasantly by his impressions of Hussein. "Pungency", "smell of dried fish and sunbaked skin", "sailor grime and sweat-stained rags" are unpleasant expressions that connote filth and corruption.

Hussein's corrupting Hassan makes him a part of these repellent images in Latif's eyes. His loss of Hassan and their house leaves him no more reasons to stay in Zanzibar. Because of the burden of all these afflictions in his life he leaves Zanzibar for his education, like the narrator in *Admiring Silence*, at the time of political conflicts after independence.

In England, which seems a country of opportunities for both Omar and Latif to get rid of the troubles of their former lives, they are exposed to a process of othering by the English who condemn them to silence through the supposed superiority of speech without knowing the potential of silence as an effective strategy. Omar's tribulation starts even before entering England, at the borders when he is taken into custody at the Gatwick Airport. Receiving acceptance into England as a refugee is a kind of challenge for a man like Saleh Omar at the age of sixty five and without any English. His documents are scrutinized by the passport officials one of whom, named Kevin Edelman, asks Omar many questions about his reasons to come to England. There is no reply on Omar's part who does nothing but to gesture at himself and repeat the words "refugee", "asylum" (*BTS* 9) as he apparently does not know English, which provides Edelman with an opportunity to make an unhindered speech that warns Saleh Omar about the hardships of being a black migrant in a European country:

My parents were refugees, from Romania. . .what I mean is, I know something about uprooting yourself and going to live somewhere else. 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. (*BTS* 12)

Edelman's speech that seems to be offering a solace at the beginning turns out to be a discriminatory one that draws a line between being part of Europe or not on racial terms. According to this passport officer, it is his parents' right to live as immigrants in England because "they are part of the family" that he calls Europe. It is also what gives Edelman supremacy to speak, judge, include or exclude those who are not part of the family but request asylum. He reminds Omar of this by pointing out the dangerous circumstances in England that Omar could find himself in; this time, the line he draws between being and not being from the family becomes sharper:

People like you come pouring in here without any thought of the damage they cause. You don't belong here, you don't value any of the things we value, you haven't paid for them through generations, and we don't want you here. We'll make life hard for you, make you suffer indignities, perhaps even commit violence on you. (*BTS* 12)

Edelman does not state clearly what he means by “damage”, but he probably points out the breaking up of the white Europe-which he believes in firmly since he considers it a family- by the ones like Omar who do not belong. Disparity between being a European and an outsider is emphasized in Edelman's using the pronouns “we” and “you”. In addition, his cautioning Omar about what he might be exposed to in case of being accepted as a refugee in England also sounds like a threat against those causing “damage” including Omar. In other words, his speech foreshadows that silencing of the immigrants will continue in England.

Interestingly, Latif's marginalization by the white English still continues even after all those years of residence in England. In one case, he is insulted on the way to school by an “older man in a heavy and expensive black coat” , a man looking like “one of those tucked-in Englishmen you see in fifties British movies, a banker or civil servant of that cinematic era, wracked by a moral dilemma he cannot resolve” (*BTS* 72). He calls Latif a “grinning blackamoor in the street, speaking out of a different time” (*BTS* 71). It is when Latif comes across the man on the same pavement and tries to make way for him that the man hisses and insults him. Latif finds that the man's hissing has a kind of “strange, menacing and medieval” tone, which explains why he thinks it is as if the man speaks “out of a different time” (*ibid* 72). Although there is no eye-contact, dialogue or touch between the two, the Englishman is disturbed by Latif's smile and thinks that he has the right to scorn the black man on the street.

#### **4.2. Silence As a Response**

Saleh Omar and Latif Mahmud's social exclusion lead to their maintaining a stance against discriminatory speeches through a silent reaction. There is no difference between being a newcomer in England (as Omar's case illustrates) as an African and

being a well-established immigrant there with an African origin as in Latif's situation, for in each case they are subject to racialization.

The protagonists' stance in the face of exclusive attitudes is not of acceptance. Their silence is a firm response which also consists of a stream of thoughts. Their judgements that fill the moment of silences in the diegesis are missing in the immediate recounting, which makes up ellipses. Analepses, on the other hand, demonstrate that the protagonists return back to the missing points in their narration to express to the reader what they were thinking at the moment of silences. In Omar's case, his using silence as a strategy is more explicit since he does not mention that he knows English. Indeed, he knows the language so good as to express himself, but since he is cautioned in Zanzibar to pretend not to know English and believes that the "advice [has] a crafty ring" (*BTS* 5), he does not give out that he can speak English. When he finally confesses that he does not need a translator to Rachel, the legal adviser of the refugee organization, long after he is accepted as a refugee, he states that he has enjoyed the trick he plays on the officials:

‘I don't think I need an interpreter,’ I said. I was silently gleeful as I said this, of course. Even when you get to my age you can't resist such petty triumphs, and at that moment my glee was no different from that I had felt as a child or the hundreds of other times later when I had been sensationally and unexpectedly knowledgeable. (*BTS* 64)

For him, keeping his silence is a triumph since it is his strategy that takes him to the end he wants to reach, that is, he becomes an immigrant in England. He takes great pleasure from this play like a child who astonishes his superiors by demonstrating that his nescience is just on the surface as he knows English, thereby proving them to be wrong in their approach to him like an irresponsible child to be taken care of. This resonates the approach by the colonizer to the colonized who are defined in colonial discourses as childlike people lacking in understanding and need to be kept under constant control. When Rachel asks him why he said that he could not speak any English, he answers: "I preferred not to" (*BTS* 64) like, as he later explains, Herman Melville's character Bartleby in the tale of *Bartleby the Scrivener*. Scriveners are people copying law and one day Bartleby, one of those copyists, refuses to copy by also refusing the law burying himself into a deep silence. Bartleby's "limited

capacity for speech” (Cooper 91) contributes to his preference of not to speak, which makes him similar to Saleh Omar in his determined manner. In her article “Returning the Jinns to the Jar: Material Culture, Stories and Migration in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s *By the Sea*” (2014), Brenda Cooper establishes a similarity between Saleh’s attitude and the colonized Indians’ treatment of an English book in Delhi which Homi Bhabha mentions in his “Signs Taken for Wonders” (1985) as a symbolic act of the denial of colonial authority:

In “Signs Taken for Wonders”, Homi Bhabha describes the English book arriving in Delhi where it is received as a marvel, but only at first sight, as the wily, crafty colonial subject, appropriates this book and turns it against the master via the back door; thus Bhabha underscores the entwined complexity of domination and resistance. Now this English Book has been packed and returned whence it came, in a new era of late twentieth-century globalization. (80)

What the colonized Indians did in Delhi during the British colonial rule echoes in Saleh Omar’s attitude in the modern day England. Indians’ returning the English Book is a refusal of the colonial rule since the book, as Bhabha puts it, is “an insignia of colonial authority and a signifier of colonial desire and discipline” (102). Accordingly, by refusing to speak the English language, Omar stands out against the dominancy of the white English; an act which Brenda Cooper likens to the return of the English Book.

Omar’s refusal to speak, like Bartleby’s, is also the result of a desire to “to be left alone” (*BTS* 199). He wants no one to intrude into his life during his stay in detention center and in the pension because he had a difficult time in Zanzibar. That is why he is not happy with Rachel’s visits at first:

I don’t want her turning up in the deep hours of the night, shattering its pregnant silences with a racket of explanations and regrets, and blurting out plans to take away more of the remaining hours of darkness. (*BTS* 1)

Omar’s silence arouses a curiosity in Rachel about his past life and thoughts on his experiences, which makes Omar a different case for her. She often visits him and tries to communicate with him till the time Omar starts to talk to her. It is not until



Omar decides to speak that they can start a dialogue and Rachel learns to listen to him, which helps Rachel get to know him. Although Omar cannot understand why Rachel so much cares about him, he considers their relationship turns out to be one between a father and daughter: “her visits have done me good, and have made me love her like the daughter she reminded me of the first time I met her” (203). Nevertheless, Rachel is the only English person he develops a good relationship with.

Omar is indeed so much aware of the racializing attitude he is subjected to, which is later demonstrated through his responses that constitute analepses in the narrative. Elided parts of the diegesis that make up moments of silences are filled up later mostly by external analepses since the narrator goes back to a time before the start of the first narration. One of that analeptical moments is with Kevin Edelman at the airport, a time long before his taking up residence in England. The novel, on the other hand, opens up with Omar’s waiting for Rachel after he has already taken up residence in England, which explains why the analepsis is external. His first response comes when he retrospectively criticizes Edelman for seeing himself a member of Europe and accusing people like Omar for not giving any value to the “things [Europeans] value” for which Edelman and his “family” has paid too much:

Edelman, was that a German name? Or a Jewish name? Or a made-up name? Into a dew, jew, juju. Anyway, the name of the owner of Europe, who knew its values and had paid for them through generations. But the whole world had paid for Europe’s values already, even if a lot of the time it just paid and paid and didn’t get to enjoy them. (*BTS* 12)

His sarcastical etimological speculations about the name Edelman points to his doubts about the unity of Europe questioning what makes Europe a Europe deriding Edelman for his hollow assumption. He alludes to colonization while commenting on the sacrifice the whole world has made for the values of Europe. It is through the colonial venture that Britain, Germany or France have got what makes them a civilization. His criticism of the colonialization of the European countries becomes clearer in his wry imagery of Europe as a family courtyard and of Edelman as the doorman that keeps the Gates:

Kevin Edelman, the bawab<sup>10</sup> of Europe, and the gatekeeper to the orchards in the family courtyard, the same gate which had released the hordes that went out to consume the world and to which we have come sliming up to beg admittance. Refugee. Asylum-seeker. Mercy. (BTS 31)

While European countries that are depicted as hordes could easily go out to exploit the parts of the world including Africa, the Gates are almost closed to those colonized who are exploited for a long time by the “hordes”. That explains why people like Saleh Omar have paid a lot, but could not get anything for their deeds like their labour force. Gurnah illustrates the exploitation or the usurpation through his symbolic use of the casket of ud-al-qamari, a kind of incense, that Omar takes with him as the only reminder of his past. Ud, in Omar’s definition of it, is a “resin which only an aloe tree infected by fungus produce[s]” (BTS 14). For him, this little object means a lot; it is “like a fragment of a voice or the memory of my beloved’s arm on my neck” (ibid 14). Brenda Cooper sees the casket as a “fragment. . .from the past, a treasured thing, a metonymy, a part for the whole of his life in Zanzibar” (80). Kevin Edelman’s appropriating the casket without asking Omar’s permission resonates what the European colonizer did years ago, an act that Omar remembers among his memories in Zanzibar in the time of British colonization. It is part of Omar’s job to sell exquisite things in his furniture shop and his customers are mostly “European tourists and resident British colonials” (BTS 20). Once a British official tries to buy a “silver-studded Malacca mirror” (BTS 21) and Omar comments on his attempt: “He would have taken it at his price, or no price at all, as a right of conquest, as a reflection of our comparative worth in the scheme of things” (21). According to the “scheme of things” (21) in the colonial world, it is colonizer’s right to have everything without atonement. He thinks Kevin Edelman’s taking ud-al-qamari is a very similar act to the colonizer’s: “It was something like that that Kevin Edelman had done with my casket of ud-al-qamari. It is not that I don’t understand the desire” (BTS 21). According to Omar what Edelman does is a “plunder” (ibid 31) of “all the luggage from a life departed” (31). Edelman’s allocating the casket described as a “metonymy” of Omar’s whole life also symbolizes his taking control of Omar’s life since it is in his power to accept Omar as a refugee.

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<sup>10</sup> Doorman.

While migrants “pour in” England to seek asylum relying on the British government’s promise to give shelter to “those who claim that their lives [are] in danger” (*BTS 10*), they face tight border controls that make it hard for them to enter England. Omar’s explanation gives a clue about the reason of the inconsistent behaviour of the government:

British government had decided, for reasons which are still not completely clear to me even now, that people who came from where I did were eligible for asylum if they claimed that their lives were in danger. The British wanted to make the point to an international audience that it regarded our government as dangerous to its own citizens, something both they and everyone else has known for a long time. (*BTS 10*)

His stating that he is uninformed about the reasons why British government offers shelter is a criticism since he implies that the government has reasons to do so, that is, such a promise is part of its politics. This politics includes blackening Britain’s ex-colonies as dangerous, which seems to be a justification in front of an “international audience”. Selective and exclusive attitude of the officials in the border controls makes it clear that the Britain’s promise is just a facet; it is not really helping those looking for residence. What the government offers serves to its aim of justifying its colonial and imperial politics by underscoring the oppressive regimes in the ex-colonies. In the external analepsis above, Omar indicates that bad regimes in the colonies is something that the world already knows; it is not something unheard of.

Exclusive politics that is visible on the borders and in the attitudes of the white English to the immigrants pushes one to ask the question why. To be more specific: Why are the east African immigrants excluded from the British society? Leaving the question of racial, physical or religious differences aside, Edward Said, in his *Orientalism* (1978), makes a simple analysis about how boundaries (that are concretized as the geographical borders of a country as in *By the Sea*) are formed between peoples:

A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory

beyond, which they call “the land of the barbarians.” In other words, this universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is “ours” and an unfamiliar space beyond “ours” which is “theirs” is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. (63)

It is in Omar’s imagery of the “family courtyard” (*BTS* 31) that Said’s concept of borders becomes explicit. While Edelman’s “we” represents those within the courtyard, that are Britons, “you” refers to ones who are from the “territory beyond”. In view of nationalist and racist attitudes that people like Enoch Powell display against immigrants, the British government’s drawing lines by employing gatekeepers like Edelman have the same nationalist motivation behind. Interestingly, by identifying himself and his family as a part of Europe, Edelman carries the same motive that makes him consider Europe a great community. In his book *Imaginary Communities* (1983) Benedict Anderson emphasizes that the nation is an “imagined political community” (6) which is “limited” and “sovereign”:

it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each is the image of their communion. . .The nation is imagined as *limited* because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. . .It is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the . . .hierarchical dynastic realm. . .[and] when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions. . .Finally, it is imagined as a *community* because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. (6-7)

In the light of Anderson’s analysis, Britain’s exclusive politics is based on such an imaginary ideal of being a nation. With a delusion of living in a “courtyard” with people similar to them in sharing the same code of loyalty and religion and with

equal conditions in the societal strata, the point of view that Edelman represents defines national borders that is inclusive only of white Europeans while keeping African or Asian immigrants out as illustrated through Omar's case.

In her analysis of immigrant literature, Rosemary Marangoly George holds that immigrant literature problematizes national projects by crossings across the borders that frame the notions of home and identity (171). In Gurnah's fiction, too, those notions stand out as ones floating or elusive demonstrating disfunctionality of clear-cut lines like that of nationality which define their limits. In *By the Sea*, the idea of home rises to prominence so that the illusion of "feeling at home" can be blurred. In other words, it is not presented as unproblematical in the novel. Gurnah employs home in its connection with a place, that is, in the novel places are given in their relation to abstract notions of belonging and identity. In this respect, the title *By the Sea* becomes symbolic in reflecting this relationship. "By the Sea" points to a differentiation between Omar's former life in Zanzibar and the current one in England as he expresses:

I live in a small town by the sea, as I have all my life, though for most of it it was by a warm green ocean a long way from here. Now I live the half-life of a stranger, glimpsing interiors through the television screen and guessing at the tireless alarms which afflict people I see in my strolls. (*BTS* 2)

Home by the sea in England is not a place that could offer Omar the chance of socializing with people since he is an immigrant who is seen to be a stranger. While his depiction of home by the sea in Zanzibar evokes warmth and peace, home becomes just a psychic space in his mind since we know that Zanzibar was a place of troubles for him which led him to escape from the pressures of a government that "gaoled", "raped", "killed" and "degraded its citizens" (*BTS* 10). Thus, "feeling at home" is something imaginary, in the characters' minds, that they return at the moments when they feel their marginalization. For Omar, the boarding house run by an old English lady called Celia where he stays for a short time after the detention center does not make him "feel at home" although it hosts refugee people like him. Far from having the peace and comfort of a home, the boarding house stirs in him the feeling of contamination through its physical dirtiness: "I daren't even sit on [the

bed] out of an irrational fear of contamination, not just fear of disease but of some inner pollution” (*BTS* 56). Interestingly, he finds comfort on the towel that an Angolan refugee called Alfonso has given him in the detention center. He sits and sleeps on the towel that he calls “Alfonso’s magic carpet” (*ibid* 57). It is just a piece of towel that opens him a psychic space to make him peaceful as if at home; as the magic carpet of tales it distances him far from the place he does not feel at ease in.

Months later, when he makes peace with Latif, who takes him to his apartment in London for a few days, Omar finds that Latif’s house is too dirty to live in. On the other hand, it does not give more disturbance than the feeling of loneliness it recalls. Through a descriptive pause Omar depicts his first impression of Latif’s home:

it made me think of the room in my store where I had spent every night on my own for fifteen years. That room too had reeked of loneliness and futility, of long silent occupation. The living-room light was too bright. The walls were bare, no pictures or decoration or even a clock. The furniture was cheap and sparse, except for a large chair in front of the television. (*BTS* 244-45)

Every physical detail Omar gives points out a life of loneliness and isolation for all the years Latif has spent there. There is no difference, for Omar, between the little room in his store where he stays for a while after being released from prison and Latif’s house. Stark light, walls without pictures and furnitures here and there gives the sense of lack of belonging. In his review of *By the Sea*, J.A. Kearney highlights the similarity between Celia’s boarding house and Latif’s flat:

the state of the younger man’s flat so closely resembles that of the sordid English boarding house where Omar was originally taken to live, that he is prepared once again to resort to his own clean towel as a night-time cover. (57)

While there is no implication that Saleh Omar “resorts to” his towel, similarity between the boarding house and Latif Mahmud’s flat points out the same feeling: loneliness. Life Latif leads in England is of isolation and marginalization, which again necessitates the discussion of borders in terms of Latif’s life.

For Latif, borders are within the country, imaginary borders that isolate people like him and leave them out of the social relations. On the other hand, they do not prevent Latif taking a critical stance against the discriminatory attitudes as when he is insulted by an Englishman who calls him a “grinning blackamoor” on his way to school, which prompts him to look for the meaning of the word “blackamoor” in “Concise Oxford Dictionary” (*BTS* 72). In the beginning, he can find little for the compound word: “Negro, black+ moor” (*ibid* 72). So, he looks up black, and is disillusioned to find so much word beginning with black:

blackhearted, blackbrowed, blacklist, blackguard, blackmail, Black Maria, black market, black sheep. . .so that by the time I finished reading through them all I felt despicable and disheartened, smeared by the torrent of vituperation. Of course I knew about the construction of black as other, as wicked, as beast, as some evil dark place in the innermost being of even the most skinless civilised European, but I had not expected to see so much black black black on a page like that. Stumbling on it so unprepared was a bigger shock than being called you grinning blackamoor by a man who looked like a disgruntled, dated movie persona. . .This is the house I live in, I thought, a language which barks and scorns at me behind every third corner. (*BTS* 73)

That English dictionary is full of discriminatory remarks consisting of the word “black” is something more disappointing for Latif than being insulted by a man on the street. Meanwhile, by listing stereotypical definitions of the black as “other”, “wicked” or “beast” attributed by the European, Latif bitterly derides the European discourse that feeds such thoughts about the black people. In addition, he is insulted by the very language he speaks portraying it through the metaphor of a dog that barks behind his back. It is because of the perfidiousness of the language he is closely interested in that his disappointment is profound. Also dissatisfied he goes to library to look up for the word in detail in OED (Oxford English Dictionary) which he calls “the big mama” (*BTS* 73). He probably alludes to English language as the “mother tongue”, but does so in a contemptuous manner. He finally finds the word in its compound form and learns that it has been in print since 1501, which makes him realize something:

since then [the word blackamoor] has slipped from the pen of such worthies of English letters as the humane Sydney, the incomparable W. Shakespeare, the prudent Pepys and a host of other minor luminaries. It lifted my spirits. It made me feel that I had been present in all those strenuous ages, not forgotten, not rooting or snorting in a jungle swamp or swinging naed from tree to tree, grinning through the canon for centuries. (*BTS* 73)

With a bitter irony, he expresses his seeming happiness for taking place in English dictionary and in the works of great literary figures of the times through a word attributed to black people like him. 1501 is an important date in the history of British imperialism since it denotes to the beginnings of colonialism, a time when the “native” people in the colonized territories start to take their place in the European discourse which serves to the aim of justifying colonialism and exploitation by demonstrating “natives” as primitive or barbaric as implied in the narrator’s speech. He highlights one of those stereotypical definitions of the colonized Africans as ape-like naed creatures jumping “from tree to tree”. His harsh criticism later resonates in his narration; as in the sentence: “Let me describe the house we grinning blackamoors lived in” (*BTS* 82), while he is referring to his family, and as introducing uncle Hussein as “a man of appetite and relish, a proper grinning blackamoor” (*BTS* 87). His narration is what Genette calls “repetitive” in which he refers to an event more than once that happens once in the diegesis, each time underlining his criticism of the word that points out to their marginalization through a racist motive.

Through his satirical comments, Saleh Omar, too, draws attention to the stereotypical definitions in Eurocentric discourses which fix east Africans separating them from their historical and social reality. He marks the points where defects or lacunae occur as the disparity between their reality and European definitions becomes clear. Here Genette’s concept of focalization helps us underline the change of perspective in Omar as he grows up and realizes what he is taught to be a paper tiger. As explained earlier in the part of methodology of this thesis, it is Genette who brings forth the term “focalization” differentiating between the one who sees from the one who speaks. Moving further on from this distinction, he suggests concept of internal focalization, which is applicable in Saleh and Latif’s cases, in which “the narrator



says only what a given character knows” (186). Genette states that internal focalization is “fully realized only in the narrative of ‘interior monologue,’ where the central character is limited absolutely to. . .his focal position alone” (“Mood” 245). Saleh Omar’s and Latif Mahmud’s narrations could be identified as internal focalization since they are the focalizers of their own narrations. In Saleh’s case, his critique shows that from his childhood perspective what he is taught to be real by the colonial education becomes hollow from the point of view of his adulthood. In that case, firstly the focalizer is Saleh in his childhood:

In their books I read unflattering accounts of my history, and because they were unflattering, they seemed truer than the stories we told ourselves. I read about the diseases that tormented us, about the future that lay before us, about the world we lived in and our place in it. . .The stories we knew about ourselves before they took charge of us seemed medieval and fanciful, sacred and secret myths that were liturgical metaphors and rites of adherence, a different category of knowledge which. . .could not contest with theirs. (*BTS* 18)

From Saleh Omar’s childhood perspective, indigenous culture seems superstitious and far from reality in comparison to the colonial education. On the other hand, as his perspective changes into adulthood and is changed by the “realities” of the times, he finds inconsistency in the colonizers’ narration:

But they left too many spaces unattended to, could not in the nature of things do anything about them, so in time gaping holes began to appear in the story. It began to fray and unravel under assault and a grumbling retreat was unavoidable. Though that was not the end of stories. There was still Suez to come, and the inhumanities of the Congo and Uganda and other bitter blood-lettings in small places. (*BTS* 18)

He implies that stories are made up by the colonizers to justify their deeds, to demonstrate they are right in their venture which is disguised as bringing civilization to those places exploited. He states that such stories later continues because there will always be other crises European countries face such as the Suez crisis, which requires further stories to cover the desire to control space. In addition, they can

justify themselves further by comparing their peaceful administration to the “inhumanities” practiced in African countries.

Focalization in the novel also enables the reader to see how the same event is shaped differently through the perspectives of characters. Omar’s and Latif’s ways of looking at the problem in Rajab Shaaban Mahmud’s house is very different from each other. In his account, Saleh indicates that his intention is good in the beginning. In need of money for his business, he cannot reach the merchant Hussein to take the loan he has given him before and invites Rajab Shaaban to solve the problem to fulfil his need. Saleh Omar’s aim is to let him know that Hussein has given the deeds of the house to him (Saleh Omar) in return for the loan he has taken. He wants to offer Rajab to take another loan from the bank together through mortgage on the security of the house, which will help both him and Rajab Shaaban, therefore, Shaaban will not lose his house. Rajab’s refusing to make a deal with him forces Saleh Omar to sell the house and take the furniture. From his adulthood point of view, he explains that it is the “malice of younger years” practiced through a “sinful and wicked” motives (*BTS* 145). Latif’s former idea of Saleh is motivated by his family’s greed and the neighbours’ prejudices against Omar “about whom [he] heard[s] endless stories of callous deceit and depravity and shameless greed” (*BTS* 101). Kate Houlden argues that gossip in Zanzibari society is a determinant in the relationships in that far from being real it might “engender real life consequences” (96) as the gossips about Saleh Omar’s character increases Latif Mahmud’s rage against Omar which was instigated by Latif’s family. Latif will understand only years later in England that his indignation is actually for his parents. When they finally meet in Saleh’s house in England, both Latif and Saleh find a chance and time to explain themselves, which leads to reconciliation between them. The novel ends with Latif’s bringing Saleh for the weekend to his home thinking that it is a “crime that [Saleh] [has] been in England for nine months and [has] never been to London (*BTS* 244). After his stay, Latif will put him on the train and Rachel will meet him at the station, on which he comments: “as if I was a decrepit old father that they shared between them” (*ibid* 244). Kearney considers that the relationship between Saleh and Latif turns out to be the one between a father and son: “[Saleh’s] exploitation of Latif’s father’s name thus takes on a quasi-scriptural significance in which Omar becomes a

new father to replace the real one of whom Latif, like his mother, felt ashamed” (*BTS* 57).

Reconciliation between characters demonstrates that they can be articulate and develop good social relations when they feel comfortable as in the case of Saleh, Latif and Rachel. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, *Gurnah* does not depend on the assumptions of ethnic or national boundaries as conditions to construct an identity or a home since in migrants’ condition these are fluid terms that cannot be explained by fixed conceptions. Through a narratological approach to their narratives, I have also laid bare the migrant characters’ reactions to boundaries when reminded by the white English in the novel. As in *Admiring Silence* silence becomes the basic determinant of their responses as well as their afflictions.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This thesis offers a postcolonial narratological reading of Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels *Admiring Silence* (1996) and *By the Sea* (2001) with a focus on the subject of silence which emerges both as a side-effect and a strategy in the novels. While the protagonists' silence indicates a recession in the face of social and psychological afflictions they cannot cope with, it is also used as an effective tool by them to resist racial and cultural segregation they are subject to as black immigrants in Britain. In a similar vein with Spivak's argument, the novels underline the historical and ideological factors that silence the individuals with colour and from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Through his novels, Gurnah suggests a kind of what Benita Parry calls "counter discourse" (38) pointing out the gaps in the hegemonic discourse of the West. While doing this, he tells his stories in the context of migrancy in the 20th century and provides an insight to the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial politics in Zanzibar and in England.

The first chapter of this study includes a comparative analysis of theoretical arguments of different literary critics such as Gayatri C. Spivak, Benita Parry and Carine M. Mardorossian in a way to examine the use of silence and speech as attitudes in literary texts that have an important place in British literary canon. Except from Mardorossian's study, none of the arguments offers silence as a strategy for resistance or as a constituent part of "counter discourse" (Parry 38). While Spivak focuses on the process of silencing on the textual base (in hegemonic discourses) by also referring to historical structures like British colonization, Parry suggests speech as an indicator of power. It is in Mardorossian's study that silence is seen as a way of expression by the black subaltern in the face of colonial authority, an inimical stance which is suggested as one of the main arguments of this thesis.

Mieke Bal holds that no text is innocent since every text is a product of some ideology which can be observed in the text through focalization. In view of this argument, this study has offered a narratological reading of Gurnah's two postcolonial novels for the analysis of silence. The ideological stance of Gurnah's novels lie behind the protagonists' silence since they react through their silence. Another point emphasized by this study is that Gurnah's characters are mainly immigrants who emigrate to England from Zanzibar leaving some political terror and familial conflicts behind. Circumstances they find themselves in in England are not any better since they are exposed to ethnic or racial discriminations and lead a life in periphery which make it difficult for them to re-build a home with a new identity. These factors prevent them from offering unproblematical accounts in which they lie, hide or refuse to tell some facts about their lives and thoughts in their dialogue with the reader. Challenging what happens at the level of story, narrative text becomes an arena to make some inferences about the characters' judgements necessitating employment of some narratological conceptions offered by Genette, Rimmon-Kenan, and Mieke Bal.

The second chapter analyses the issue of silence in the novel *Admiring Silence* with regard to the condition of silence as both recession and resistance by the protagonist-narrator. As in *By the Sea*, there is a retrospective narration in the novel, which enables the protagonist to go back to his past in Zanzibar and cast a light to the familial, social and political structures and institutions, from which he takes flight for a better life. Gurnah demonstrates, through his unnamed protagonist, that life in England is burdensome for the black immigrants since these people are forced live at the margins and not given a space to express themselves as individuals. This part of the thesis also debates the process of Othering which is started by the European colonizer and continues in contemporary Britain in the form of racial, ethnic or cultural discrimination of immigrants. The narratological analysis carried out in this chapter aims to uncover a subtext that lies under the surface narration of the narrator and display his critical attitude against the pressures of social and political authorities in Zanzibar and in Britain. The function of the stories are also studied in this part: they provide the narrator with temporary comfort in his life making him forget the real-life story he leads; they become symbolic pieces in casting a light into his ideas and most important of all, they draw attention to the constructedness of hegemonic

discourse which has been created for some economical and poli for some economical and political motives of the colonization and “marginalize the monumentality of history” in Bhabha’s words (1994).

Home and identity are two interrelated ambiguous concepts when migrancy is in question, for most of the immigrants cannot feel a part of the life they left behind in Zanzibar and of their current life in England. In chapter three as well as in chapter four, home is emphasized as a mental space. While in *Admiring Silence*, the narrator creates home through his romantic stories, in *By the Sea* home is rebuilt by Saleh Omar through some objects such as his casket of ud-al-qamari and a clean piece of towel. On the other hand, analyses in both chapters present identity as ambiguous in that without home, an embracing society and the feeling of belonging, the protagonists cannot re-constitute a stable identity. They are always in-between. The unnamed narrator of *Admiring Silence* cannot cope with this feeling and he fails in both his relationship with his family in Zanzibar and his partner in England, whereas *By the Sea* offers a reconciliation between Saleh Omar and Latif Mahmud, which suggests that in a hostile environment such as the English society represented in the novel, cultural and racial affinity brings about a power and purpose to keep on.

In *By the Sea*, as in *Admiring Silence*, Gurnah weaves the protagonists’ silence into larger political, social and economic contexts of pre-colonization, colonization and the time of independence in Zanzibar and into migrancy in England in a post-colonial setting. Through the employment of some narratological elements, again, individual, social and political factors that silence the protagonist-narrators and their responses covered by silence are examined. Social criticism comes into prominence in highlighting the degeneration of colonial and post-independence Zanzibari society in which Muslims make up most of the population.

The relationship between migrancy and nationalism is given as uncompromising in that national borders of Britain eliminate any idea of inclusive policy which can remove borders and open the gates to, say, Asian or African immigrants. Through Saleh Omar’s satirical and derisory comments Gurnah undermines the hollow assumptions based on nationalism and cultural or racial purity that exclude those who come from the ex-colonies. In addition, silence underlined as a tool of power questions the authority and the limits of language in the fourth chapter. Thus, the

authority of the English language is denied by the narrators of *By the Sea*, for they do not speak English for a while. Omar pretends that he cannot speak English and Latif Mahmud prefers to speak Swahili instead of English while talking to Omar. Lastly, this study shows that through employment of focalization multiple perspectives are celebrated in *By the Sea*, which points out the partiality of knowledge and denies the sole authority of one text written from a singular point of view.

Throughout this study, it is demonstrated that silence in both novels operate in the same way, that is, it becomes a gesture of both acceptance and resistance in two novels. The narrator-protagonist's keeping his imposed silence for a long time in *Admiring Silence* results in deterioration in his relationship with his family since, through his lack of community, he betrays his partner's, his daughter's and his mother's trust. On the other hand, his silence that becomes a protest when he is subjected to discrimination underlies the inadequacy of speech in telling what a man in his condition can thought and feel and it undermines the supposition that speech is power. Accordingly, such kind of a protest resonates in *By the Sea* in the main characters' counter arguments against those segregationist attitudes they are exposed to in England, which highlights their initial silence as a powerful tool. Contrary to the situation in *Admiring Silence*, silence in *By the Sea* succeeds in both ways, that is, as well as being a way of resistance, silence becomes an effective mediator in the characters' relationships. It is Saleh Omar's silence that starts a friendship between him and Rachel. Through this way, he coincidentally finds Latif Mahmud and there happens a reconciliation between them. In addition, Mahmud's initial reticence makes Omar feel more sympathy for him.

### **A Suggestion for Further Research**

In his analysis of the place of migration in literature, Paul White states that fragmentation, dislocation and alienation, which emerge as the results of migration, are common themes in modernist writing (5). Furthermore, White holds, motifs of alienation, indeterminacy and pluralism in postmodernist works "apply to cultures and societies" (6) as well in the case of migration. In view of Paul White's discussion, I suggest that Gurnah's novels can be studied in the scope of modernism

and postmodernism since they include aforementioned themes and motifs of modernist and postmodernist writing as well.



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## APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY

### 1. GİRİŞ

Bu çalışma Abdulrazak Gurnah'nın *Admiring Silence* (1996) ve *By the Sea* (2001) romanlarında sessizliği postkolonyal ve anlatıbilimsel açıdan inceler. Romanların ana kahramanlarını kişisel travmalarıyla karakterize eden Gurnah sessizliklerini ise sömürge dönemi ve sonrası Zanzibar'ının siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik koşulları ve İngiltere'de göçmenlik durumlarıyla ilişkilendirir. Birtakım kişisel, sosyal ve siyasi baskıların kaçınılmaz sonucu olmanın yanında, karakterlerin sessizliği İngiltere'de maruz kaldıkları ırksal, etnik ya da kültürel açıdan ayrımcı tavırlara karşı bir başkaldırıdır. Romanların anlatıbilimsel analizi karakterlerin sessizliklerinin altındaki söyleyemedikleri ya da söylemeyi reddettikleri şeylere ışık tutar. Bunların yanında, bu çalışma göçmenlik deneyimini Gurnah'nın göçmen karakterleri açısından ev ve kimlik kavralarının anlamını sorgular.

Hindistan'lı edebi kuramcı ve düşünür Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1988) adlı makalesinde madun (subaltern) durumundaki insanların seslerinin duyulmasını engelleyen tarihsel ve ideolojik etkenlerin altını çizer. Spivak'a göre, mahkumlar, köylü sınıfından okuma yaza bilmeyen kadın ve erkekler, kabile insanları, işçi sınıfının en alt tabakasında bulunanlar, genel olarak kadınlar ve göçmenler madun grubunu oluşturan sınıflardır. Aynı çalışmasında bu insanları da temsil etme görevini üstlenmiş Batılı kuramsal düşüncenin aslında nasıl Batı'nın ekonomik çıkarlarına hizmet ettiğini de açıklar. Zira Batı bilimi onu üretenlerin siyasi ve ekonomik çıkarları doğrultusunda şekillenir ve bu çıkarlar sömürge ülkelerinde olduğu gibi karşıt bir duruş ortaya koyamayan madun grupların sessizleştirilmesini gerektirir. Spivak'ın "madun gruplar" (subaltern groups) çalışmasını inceleyen ve yine Spivak tarafından edebi bir eleştiri olan "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985) adlı makalede Jean Rhys'in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1999) romanının susturulmuş kadın kahramanları üzerine olan fikirlerinin de altını çizen Carine M. Mardorossian, sessizliği "üçüncü dünya" (third world) karakterleri tarafından bir direniş olarak kabul eder. Özellikle siyahi madun grupların kontrol ve baskı otoriteleri tarafından sessizleştirilmelerinin yanında,

sessizliđi bu grupların smrge otoritesine karřı direniř yollarından biri olarak grr. Mardorossian'ın Rhys'in romanı ile ilgili olarak altını çizdiđi iki ynl sessizlik, Gurnah'nın *Admiring Silence* ve *By the Sea* romanlarında da her iki ynyle, yani hem basmakalıp bilgilerle donanmıř baskın sylemlerin (stereotyped-informed discourses) ve genel olarak baskının bir sonucu hem de karakterler tarafından bir karřı duruř olarak sergilenir. Gurnah iki romanında da ana kahramanlarının sessizliđini smrge dnemi ve sonrası Zanzibar'ının siyasal, sosyal ve ekonomik kořullarıyla ve 1990'ların İngiltere'sindeki gçmenlik durumuyla iliřkilendirir. Karakterlerin gç ettiđi gnmz Avrupa'sında ırksal ve kltrel ayrımcılık biçiminde devam eden, Dođu Afrika'daki ve zellikle Zanzibar'daki Avrupa smrgeciliđinin karakterlerin hayatları zerindeki yıkıcı etkilerini ele alır. Gçle gelen yerdeđiřim (displacement), yabancılařma (alienation) ve aradalık (in-betweenness) konularına odaklanan bu iki roman, gçmen karakterlerin İngiltere'de yeniden bir ev ve kimlik edinme srecinde dıřlanmıřlık ve aidiyet yoksunluđu duygularıyla bařa çıkma çabalarının da yansıtır. Gurnah, kendi kiřisel travmalarının yanında kimlik bunalımı ve tekileřtirme (Othering) gibi gçn kaçınılmaz sonuçlarına maruz kalan karakterlerin hikayelerini analiz etmenin zorluđuna dikkat çekmektedir. Karakterler, sessizleřtirilmelerinin yanında, yalan syleme, kendileri ve yařadıkları hakkında birtakım řeyleri gizleme eđilimindedirler. Ayrıca, maruz kaldıkları ırksal ve etnik ayrımcılıđa karřı bir silah olarak sessizliklerini kullanmaktadırlar. Btn bunlar gz nne alındıđında ve sessizliđin aslında karakterler iin bir nevi ifade biçimi olduđu da dřnldđnde, karakterlerin sylemedikleri ya da syleyemediklerini anlatıları yoluyla anlamlandırmak okuyucuya dřen bir grevdir. Bylelikle, imonologlarının ve anlattıkları yklerin yanında, anlatı metni, kahramanların grřleri, kaygıları ve ikilemelerini sorgulamak iin uygun bir zemin haline gelmekte ve anlatıbilimsel bir analizi zorunlu kılmaktadır.

Bu çalıřma, Gerard Genette'nin *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1983) ve Schlomith Rimmon Kenan'ın *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1989) adlı eserlerinin ıřıđı altında, deyim yerindeyse anlatı ya da anlatı metninin konuřtuđu noktalara odaklanmaktadır. Genette'nin "anlatı metni"nden (narrative text) kastettiđi, bir olayı ya da olaylar serisini anlatan szl (oral) ya da yazılı (written) sylemdir. Genette ayrıca "metin" (text) ve gerek ya da kurgusal olaylar dizisine karřılık gelen "hikaye" (story) arasında bir ayrım yapar (25). Bunlara ek olarak, tez boyunca

“anlatış” (narration) biçiminde kullandığım anlatma eylemini (narrating) de anlatı metninden ayrı tutar. Hikaye zamanı ile anlatı zamanı arasındaki ilişki sonucunda ortaya çıkan “eksilti” (ellipsis) ve “durak” (pause), romanların her ikisinde de karakterlerin sessizliklerinin altını çizmek açısından sıkça değinilen kavramlardır. Anlatıdaki eksilti, hikayede olayların meydana geldiği belirli bir zaman sürecine karşılık gelen ama anlatıda atlanan kısımdır. Bu eksilteler, ana kahramanların sessizliklerini örtmeleri açısından önemlidir. Diğer yandan, metin içinde anlatı süresinin hikayeninkinden daha fazla olduğu “durak” (pause) yerleri oluşabilir. Genette burada tasvir edilen nesneden çok karakterlerin algılarını ön plana çıkaran “betimsel duraklara” (descriptive pause) odaklanır. Genette’ye göre, hikaye ve anlatı zamanı ilişkisinin dışında kalan, metine dahil edilmeyen bölümler “önemsiz olarak dikkat çekme” ya da “atlama” (paralipsis) kavramıyla ifade edilir. Sözü geçen, zamanda bir atlama değildir; sadece bir durumu meydana getiren parçalardan birini anlatıda göz ardı etmek ya da hiç bahsetmemektir. Bakıldığında sessizlik anları olarak görünen, ama aslında karakterlerin düşünce ve duygularını barındırabilen metindeki eksilti ya da atlama noktaları “geriye dönüş(ler)” (analepsis) yoluyla doldurulabilir. Anlatıda geriye dönüşler, okuyucunun hikaye zamanına geri dönmesini ve eksilti ya da atlama noktalarının oluşturduğu boşlukları dolduran olayları, duygu ve düşünceleri bir araya getirmesini sağlar. “Dışsal geriye dönüş” (external analepsis) ilk anlatımın başlangıç noktasından öncesindeki geçmiş bir noktaya karşılık gelirken (her iki romanda da romanların başlangıç zamanından önce gerçekleşmiş Zanzibar’daki devrim dönemi gibi), “içsel geriye dönüşler” (internal analepses) ilk anlatımın başlangıç noktasından sonra gerçekleşen, geriye dönüşler yoluyla tekrar eden ya da olayın gerçekleşmesinden sonra ilk kez anlatılan kısımlardır. Geriye dönüşler metinde oluşan ve geriye dönülene kadar farkedilemeyen boşlukların doldurulmasını sağlar. Göçmenlik durumu ve ana kahramanların geçmişleri göz önüne alındığında, bu dönüşler kahramanların hikayelerini biçimlendirmede önemli bir işleve sahiptir.

Genette’nin *Narrative Discourse* adlı eserini analiz ederken, Rimmon-Kenan Genette’nin “sıklık” (frequency) olarak ifade ettiği, anlatıda tekrar konusuna dikkat çeker. Rimmon-Kenan’ın tanımıyla, sıklık bir olayın gerçekleşme sayısı ile anlatılma sayısı arasındaki ilişkidir (59). Eleştirmene göre, sadece bir kez olmuş bir olayın pek çok kez tekrar edilmesi “yineleme” (repetitive)’dir (57) ve karakterlerin travmaları



açısından önemlidir. Bu tezde kullanılan başka bir anlatıbilimsel öge de “odaklanma” (focalization)’dır. Karakterin bakış açısını anlatıcınıninkinden ayırt edebilmek amacıyla “bakış açısı” (point of view) yerine “odaklanma” (focalization) kavramını kullanır. Karakterin ve aktarıcının algıları arasındaki farkı vurgulamak açısından, odaklanma terimi görmek ve aktarmak (seeing and speaking) eylemleri arasına bir sınır çizer (Rimmon-Kenan 73). Tek bir “odaklanıcının” (focalizer) anatımıyla oluşturabileceği güvensizlik riskine karşı, “çoklu odaklanma” (multiple focalization) farklı bir prizmadan bakmayı sağlar. Bununla birlikte, karakterin ya da anlatıcının ideolojik tutumunu ortaya çıkarması açısından, odaklanılan insan, fikir ya da nesnenin (focalized) önemi de büyüktür.

## **2. ADMIRING SILENCE ROMANINDA SESSİZLİK**

1990’ların İngiltere ve Zanzibar’ında geçen *Admiring Silence* (1996) romanı isimsiz bir adamın kendine yeni bir hayat kurma umuduyla ülkesi Zanzibar’dan İngiltere’ye göçünün öyküsüdür. Bunun yanında roman, sömürge geçmişi olan bir ülkeden İngiltere’ye göçün sonuçları olarak yerdeğişim ve ötekileştirme gibi daha büyük sorunlara da değinir. Romanın anlatıcısı ve ana kahramanı uzun süredir yaşadığı İngiltere’de bir yazar ve aynı zamanda bir ortaokulda edebiyat öğretmenidir. İngiltere’de geçirdiği on yedi yılın ardından ilk defa Zanzibar’a seyahat eder. Hikayesinde geriye dönerek, orta yaşlı bir adamın bakış açısıyla olayları yorumlarken okuyucuya çocukluk ve gençlik anılarını aktarır. Öte yandan, okuyucuyla ya da diğer karakterlerle iletişim kurmada pek de iyi değildir. Zanzibar’daki ailesiyle sadece mektuplar yoluyla görüşmektedir ve bu da ona zamanla büyük bir yük haline gelen hayatıyla ilgili bazı detayları gizleme olanağı verir. Aslında Zanzibar’a kısa süreli seyahati uzun süren sessizliğini bozmak ve Emma isimli bir İngiliz kadınla olan birlikteliğini ve bu birliktelikten olan kızları Amelia’nın varlığını ailesine bildirmek amacıyla.

*Admiring Silence*, *By the Sea* gibi sessizliğin romanıdır. Sessizlik, bir yönüyle karakterler üzerine uygulanan, kontrol edemedikleri bir baskıdan doğan kaçınılmaz bir sonuçtur. Zanzibar’daki baskıcı yönetimler ve tiranlık rejimlerinin yanında ana kahraman için üzüntü ve utanç kaynağı haline gelen ailevi problemler sessizliği hazırlayan durumlardır. İngiltere’de ise, sessizlik göçmenlerin maruz kaldıkları

ayırıcı ve budun merkezli tutumların bir sonucudur. Diğer yanıyla sessizlik, romanda ana karakterin ellerinde onu ötekileştirenlere karşı kullandığı etkili bir araç, bir direniş biçimi ve bir yanittir. Bu durumda, sessizlik anları ona karşı ırkçı ve kültürel olarak ayırıcı tavırlar sergileyenlerle diyaloga girmeyi reddettiği zamanlardır. Hikayedeki geriye dönüşler (analepsis) yoluyla da belirtildiği üzere, karakterin tepkileri sessizliğinin her zaman bir kabuleniş ya da boyun eğme anlamına gelmediğini ortaya koyar.

Sessizliğin sosyal boyutu çoğunlukla baskıcı rejimlerle yönetilen ve uzun süre sömürge yönetimine tabi olan Zanzibar toplumu yoluyla gözlemlenir. Zira, bugüne kadar yönetilen sıradan halk büyük bir kontrol mekanizmasının dışlıları gibidir; tarih iktidarda olanların politikalarını kaydederken, yönetilenlerden hiç bahsetmez. Sıradan halkın sesinin duyulması imkansızdır. Bir bireyin öyküsü olarak ele alındığında ise, roman karakterin ailevi ve kişisel sorunlarıyla sessizliğe gömülmüş bir adamın hikayesidir. Zanzibar ana karakter için kötü anılarla dolu bir yerdir. Babasının evi terk edişi ve üvey babanın gölgesinde büyümek, kahramanda üzüntü ve utanç yaratan durumlardır. Bu nedendir ki, ilk başlarda okuyucuya babası ve üvey babası ile ilgili gerçeği anlatmaz ve bu, romanda bir “atlama” (paralipsis) noktası oluşturur. Anlatıda geriye dönüşünün (analepsis) ortaya çıkardığı gerçeklerden biri, evden kaçan amcası olarak tanıttığı Abbas’ın aslında babası olduğudur. Amcası olarak tanıttığı Hashim ise gerçekte üvey babasıdır.

Ana karakterin bu durumlarla başa çıkma yöntemi anlattığı öykülerdir. Başlangıçta, uydurduğu öyküler, sıkıntılı geçmişinin yükünden ve ötekileştirilmesinin zorluğundan kaçmak, hayatını daha çekilir kılmak ve dayattığı durumlar karşısında kontrolün kendisinde olduğunu hissetmek içindir. Bunun yanında, İngiltere’de Emma ve çevresindeki diğer insanlar tarafından kabul görmek ve yabancılık çekmeden onlardan biri olabilmek isteği onu kendi hakkında hikayeler uydurmaya sevk eder. Anlattığı öyküler karaktere geçici bir rahatlama sağlasa da, hayatındaki sorunlara gerçekte çözüm getirmez. Öykülerin diğer bir fonksiyonu da karakterin aşına olmadığı bir toplumda yabancılaşmış ve dışlanmış bir göçmen olması durumuna ve bu durumla ilgili hislerine ışık tutmalarıdır, çünkü karakter bu duyguları açıkça ifade edemez. Gerald Prince, bu tür öyküleri “söylenmeyen” (the disnarrated) olarak adlandırdığı hayali dünyalar (purely imagined worlds), arzulanan dünyalar (desired worlds), gerçekleşmemiş beklentiler (unfulfilled expectations), hatalar (errors) ve

yalanlar (lies) gibi anlatım içinde anlatımlar kategorisinde değerlendirir (299). Örneğin, Algonquian Kabilesi'nin Prensesi Pocahontas'ın öyküsü karakterin kendi durumuna bir göndermedir. Pocahontas kabilesini sömürmek amacıyla gelmiş bir İngiliz askerine yardım eder, zira ona aşık olmuştur. Sevdiği adamla evlenip kendisine tamamen yabancı olan İngiltere'ye yerleşir ama buradaki hayata tutunamaz. Bir süre sonra da ölür. *Admiring Silence* romanının ana kahramanı Pocahontas'ın yaptığını büyük bir hata olduğunu, aslında İngiltere'ye hiç gelmemesi gerektiğini söylerken aslında kendi pişmanlığını dile getirmektedir (AS 7).

Romanda karakterin yeni bir kimlik yaratma serüveni vurgulanan konulardan biridir. Bu süreç aynı zamanda kişinin kendini evinde hissedeceği bir boşluk (space) yaratmakla yakından ilgilidir. Bu boşluk *Admiring Silence* romanında semboliktir çünkü bir ulusun parçası olmaktan ziyade, ailenin parçası olmak kendini evinde hissetmenin (feeling at home) gereğidir. Romanın isimsiz kahramanı erken yaşta babasız kaldığından Zanzibar onun için bir “ev” olmaktan uzaktır artık. Ailesi ile doğru dürüst bir iletişim halinde olamamasının yanı sıra, kendini yabancı hissettiren İngiltere'de de mutlu değildir. Dolayısıyla, İngiltere de onda evinde hissetme ya da aidiyet duygusunu uyandırmaz. Ev sadece zihninde yarattığı, yeniden kurduğu anılar yoluyla onu ülkesi Zanzibar'a yeniden bağlayan bir yerdir (mental space). Gerçek olmadığını bilmesine rağmen, bu kurgusal yerde İngilizler arasında hiç de yabancı hissetmeden yaşar. Bu nedenle karakterde aidiyet hissi (feeling of belonging) de sadece geçici bir süre uyanır.

Romanın neden sürgün edebiyatı (literature of exile) kategorisinde değil de göçmenlik yazını (writing of migrancy) olarak değerlendirildiği konusuna gelince, karakterin kimlik belirsizliği, iki aradalık ve yabancılık hislerini bir arada yaşaması Mardorossian'ın tanımına göre romanın daha çok göç yazını olarak değerlendirilmesini gerektirir. Karakter'in kopamadığı hatıraları, ülkesi ve evi Zanzibar'ı geride bırakmasını engeller. Diğer yandan, ailevi ve sosyal sıkıntılardan kaçtığı Zanzibar kötü hatıralarla da doludur. İngiltere'de ayrımcı tutumlara maruz kalması ve sürekli sessizliği burada da sosyal ve ailevi açıdan sıkı bağlar kurmasını engeller. Karakterin iki kimlik arasında gidip gelişi ve aidiyet hissi yoksunluğu, romanı göç yazınının bir örneği yapar. Halbuki, sürgün edebiyatında belirsizliğe (ambiguity) yer yoktur. Sürgün edebiyatında eski ülke ve göç edilen ülke, dolayısıyla eski kimlik ve yeni kimlik arasında gel-gitlere pek rastlanmaz.

Romanda sessizlik diđer yanıyla karakterin tepkisini ya da direnişini simgeler. Bir şekilde karşı karşıya geldiđi insanları ve durumları eleştirmek, yargılamak ve sorgulamak için güçlü bir araçtır. Geriye dönüşler (analepses) ve içmonologlar yoluyla okuyucuyla çođunlukla iletişim halinde olan karakterin aslında hiç de sessiz kalmadığını öğreniriz. Sessizlik bir yanıt olarak ele alındığında, anlatıcının hikayeleri meta-anlatı, diđer bir ifadeyle birincil anlatıya dikkat çeken “anlatı içinde anlatı” olarak önemli bir rol oynar. İronik bir biçimde anlatıcının hikayeleri günümüz İngiltere’inde etkisini devam ettiren sömürge söylemini (colonial discourse) taklit eder. Ancak bu yolla Emma’nın anne babasıyla iletişime geçebilir, çünkü onlara duymak istedikleri şeyleri anlatır. Bununla birlikte, hikayelerini alaycı bir abartıyla şekillendirmesi karakterin hikayeleri bir ifade biçimi olarak kullandığını gösterir. Deđiştirdiđi hikayelerle İngiltere sömürge girişimcilerinin Zanzibar’da yaptıklarını sözde büyük bir lütuf olarak anlatması aslında tarihin her bireyin elinde farklı bir kurgu olarak biçimlenebilir bir metin olduğunu gösterir. Bu da Batı söyleminin kurmaca bilgiler üzerine kurulduđunu vurgular. Vurgu ve dikkat çekme amaçlı olarak, bu hikayeler aynı zamanda Rimmon-Kenan’ın tekrar (repetitive) durumunu örneklendirir.

### **3. BY THE SEA ROMANINDA SESSİZLİK**

*By the Sea* (2001) İngiltere’de otuz iki yıl sonra karşılaşılan ve ortak geçmişlerinin problemlerini çözmeye çalışan iki Zanzibar’lı adamın dolambaçlı öyküsüdür. Sahte bir isimle İngiltere’de sığınma arayan ve güvenlik endişesiyle sessizliğini koruyan yaşlı Saleh Omar’ın ihtiyacı kendisiyle Swahili dilinde iletişime geçebilecek bir çevirmendir. Bu kişi şimdi şairlik ve Londra Üniversitesi’nde okumanlık yapan, Omar ile aynı ülkeden olan Latif Mahmud’tur. Mahmud’u şaşırtan ve daha buluşmadan bu adamın gerçek kimliği ile ilgili merak uyandıran şey Saleh Omar’ın Latif Mahmud’un babasının ismi olan Rajab Shaaban ismini kullanmasıdır. Roman, her biri iki kısımdan oluşan “Kalıntılar” (Relics), “Latif” ve “Sessizlikler” (Silences) adlı üç bölümden oluşur. “İç anlatıcı” (homodiegetic), yani hem roman kahramanı hem de anlatıcı olan, Saleh Omar ve Latif Mahmud kısmen ortak geçmişlerinin hikayelerini her biri kendi bakış açısıyla anlatır.

*Admiring Silence* romanında olduğu gibi, *By the Sea* romanında sessizlik, hem ana karakterlerin geçmişiyle ilgili birtakım sıkıntı ve baskıların kaçınılmaz bir sonucu hem de bir karşı koyma biçimidir. Sessizlik, Saleh Omar'ı İngiltere'nin sınırlarına getiren Zanzibar'da bağımsızlık sonrası dönemdeki siyasi çekişmelerin, Omar ve Mahmud'un hayatlarında büyük sıkıntı yaratan ortak ailevi sorunların ve İngiltere'de Afrikalı siyahi bir göçmen olarak ötekileştirmenin bir sonucudur. Omar ve Mahmud'u bir araya getiren ve dolaylı olarak her ikisini de sessizliğe götüren olay Saleh Omar ve Latif Mahmud'un babası Rajab Shaaban arasındaki anlaşmazlıktır. Olay Zanzibar 1963'te bağımsızlığını kazanmadan üç yıl önce, Saleh Omar'ın mobilyacılık yaptığı zamanlarda Hussein isimli mobilya tüccarı ile yaptığı anlaşmayla başlar. Husseyin adadan ayrılmadan önce Omar'dan borç ister ve karşılığında Rajab Shaaban'ın evinin tapusunu teklif eder. Bu tapuyu daha önce Shaaban'a verdiği borç karşılığında garanti olarak edinmiştir. İşleri kötü gidince, Saleh Omar Mahmud Ailesi'nin bütün yalvarmalarına rağmen evi ve içindeki bütün eşyaları alır. Mahmud Ailesi Omar'a uzunca bir süre kin besleyecektir. Zamanın hatırı sayılır bakanlarından biriyle ilişkisini sürdüren Latif Mahmud'un annesi, bu adamın gücünü kendi yararına kullanır ve Omar'ın bir adada on bir yıl hapsine ve üç farklı kampta göz altında tutulmasına sebep olur. On bir yılın sonunda Saleh Omar karısını ve kızını kaybettiği haberini alır. Ancak Omar'ın sıkıntısı bununla bitmez: Tüccar Hussein ile uzun süre seyahat eden Latif Mahmud'un ağabeyi Hassan ailesinin intikamını almak niyeti ile adaya dönmüştür ve annesi gibi, siyasetin gücünü kullanarak Omar'ı tehdit eder. Bütün bu durumlar, Omar'ı İngiltere'den daha önce başlayan bir sessizliğe ve içe dönüklüğe sevkeder. Hassan ve annesinin hareketi, iktidara gelenlerin elinde siyasetin nasıl dejenere olduğunu gösterir; siyaset, insanların kendi çıkarları uğruna kullanabileceği bir oyuncak gibidir.

Aslında, Latif Mahmud'u sessizleştiren sebep Saleh Omar olayı ile sınırlı değildir. Babasının zayıflığı ve zaafı, annesinin başka adamlarla olan ilişkileri ve Tüccar Hussein'in Hassan'ı cinsel olarak istismar etmesi yüzünden ailesinin çoktan parçalandığının farkındadır. Babasını alkol bağımlısı bir ezik olarak görürken, annesi onun için bir utanç kaynağıdır (*BTS* 80). Sokakta insanların alayı ve hakaretlerine maruz kalır. Ağabeyinin durumu ise onu büsbütün üzer. Betimsel duraklar (descriptive pauses), Latif'in öfkesinin aslında Saleh Omar'dan çok Hussein'e yönelik olduğunu gösterir. Hussein'in kaldığı yeri tarif ederken "acılık" (pungency),

“kurutulmuş balık ve güneş yanığı ten kokusu” (smell of dried fish and sunbaked skin), “denizci kiri ve ter lekeli paçavralar” (sailor grime and sweat-stained rags) gibi kirlilik ve bozulmuşluk çağrıştıran ifadeler kullanması Hussein’e duyduğu tiksintiyi anlatmaktadır (*BTS* 83).

Ailevi travmalarının dışında, karakterleri suskunluğa iten bir başka durum da her iki karakter için de fırsatlar ülkesi olarak görünen İngiltere’de maruz kaldıkları kültürel ayrımcılıktır. Burada, geldikleri ülkelere ve renklerine göre muamele görürler. İngiltere’de hava alanı görevlisi sözde Avrupalı ama aslında Romanya göçmeni Kevin Edelman Saleh Omar gibi Afrika’dan göçen insanların Avrupa’nın zor kazandığı değerler için yeterince fedakarlık göstermemesinden ve önem vermemesinden yakını; Edelman’a göre bu insanlar Avrupa’nın deenerasyonuna sebep olmaktadır (*BTS* 12). İngiltere’de çok uzun süredir yaşamasına rağmen, Latif Mahmud hala renginden dolayı hakarete hakarete maruz kalmaktadır.

Bir karşı duruş olarak sessizlik, yine ana kahramanların kendilerine “Öteki” (Other) olarak muamele eden beyaz İngilizler’le karşılaşmaları bağlamında ortaya çıkar. Sessizliklerini birtakım İngiltereli insanın hayatlarına müdahale edişlerini engellemek amacıyla bir duvar olarak kullanırlar. Esasında, dışlayıcı tavırlar karşısındaki tutumları bir kabulleniş değildir. Sessizlikleri, düşünceler zincirinden oluşan sert bir yanıttır. Hikayede sessizlik anlarını dolduran yargıları aktarımda kayıp gibi görünür ki bu da Genette’nin eksilti dediği durumu oluşturur. Geriye dönüşler (analepses) göstermektedir ki karakterler suskunluk anı olarak görünen yerlerde aslında ne düşündüklerini okuyucuya ifade ederler. Saleh Omar’ın İngilizce bilmiyormuş gibi davranması ayrıca anlamlıdır: tavrı, aslında İngiliz otoritesine de bir nevi başkaldırı niteliğindedir. Latif Mahmud ise eleştirisini İngilizce sözlükteki “siyahı” (black) sözcüğünün çokluğu üzerinden yapar (*BTS* 73). Öz ve Öteki (Self and Other) konusu bağlamında kimlik ve aidiyet sorunlarını da beraberinde getiren milliyet ve göçmenlik (nationality and migrancy) ilişkisi tartışması ön plana çıkar. Saleh Omar’ın durumuyla örneklendirdiği üzere, İngiltere Hint, Pakistanlı ya da Afrikalı göçmenleri kabul etmek konusunda pek de misafirperver bir ülke değildir. Sadece sözde kalan göçmenleri barındırma vaadi Omar’a göre İngiltere’nin kendini dünyaya iyi göstermek amaçlı yürüttüğü bir politikadır (*BTS* 10). Kapılarını eski sömürgelerinin vatandaşlarına açarken, ulusçuluk ruhuyla ve ülkedeki kültürel birliği korumak amacıyla, ülkelerinde gördükleri kötü yönetimin kurbanı bu vatandaşları

sınırlarda sıkı kontrollere tabi tutar. Bu durum Saleh Omar'ın eleştirilerinin odağı haline gelir. Romanyalı Kevin Edelman'ın aslında ne kadar Avrupalı olduğunu sorgularken İngiltere'nin milliyetçi tutumunu alaya alır. Benedict Anderson'ın *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983) adlı eserinde ifade ettiği gibi bu tutum “hayali bir ulus” (imagined community) ülküsüne dayanmaktadır (6).

Saleh Omar'ın İngiltere siyasetini eleştirisi çocukluğuyla yetişkin bakış açısı arasındaki değişim yoluyla da ortaya çıkar. Genette'nin odaklanma (focalization) kavramı, diğer bir ifadeyle algılayanla aktarıcı arasındaki ayrım, Saleh Omar'ın çocukça algısıyla yetişkin aktarımı arasındaki ilişki yoluyla örneklendirilir. Çocuk Omar Zanzibar'da aldıkları İngiliz sömürge eğitimini batıl inançlarla dolu İslami ada kültürünün üzerinde tutarken, yetişkin Omar İngilizlerin anlattıklarının sadece siyasetlerine hizmet eden bir düzmece hikayeden başka bir şey olmadığını düşünür (BTS 18).

#### 4. SONUÇ

Bu çalışma Abdulrazak Gurnah'nın *Admiring Silence* ve *By the Sea* adlı iki romanında sessizlik konusunu postkolonyal ve anlatıbilimsel bir bakış açısıyla ele alır. Sessizlik romanlarda hem bir yan etki hem de strateji haline gelir. Ana kahramanların sessizlikleri başa çıkamadıkları sosyal ve psikolojik sıkıntılar karşısında bir geri çekilmeyi ifade ederken, siyahi göçmenler olarak İngiltere'de maruz kaldıkları ırksal ve kültürel ayrımcılığa karşı bir direniş sembolüdür. Spivak'ın argümanına paralel olarak, romanlar farklı renklere ve farklı etnik kökene sahip bireyleri sessizleştiren tarihi ve ideolojik faktörlere vurgu yapar.

Gurnah karakterlerinin sessizliklerini sömürge dönemi ve öncesi Zanzibar'ının politik, sosyal ve ekonomik koşullarıyla ve sömürge sonrası bir dönemde İngiltere'deki göçmenlik durumuyla örgüler. Birtakım anlatıbilimsel öğeler yoluyla kahramanları sessizleştiren bireysel, sosyal ve politik etmenler ve sessizliklerinin altındaki ifadeleri ortaya çıkar. Her iki romanda da hem bir geri çekilme hem de bir karşı koyma biçimi olarak ele alınmasına rağmen, sessizlik iki romanda da farklı sonuçlar doğurur. Direniş yöntemi olarak başarılıdır: *By the Sea*'de karakterlerin İngiltere'de karşılaştıkları ayrımcı tutumları iğneleyici bir yolla eleştirmeleri

başlangıçtaki sessiz kalma eylemlerinin başarılı bir araç olduğunu kanıtlar. Bu eleştiriler yoluyla karakterler Batı söylevinin farazi birtakım değerler üzerine kurulduğunu ve bu değerlerin işlevsizliğini vurgular. *Admiring Silence* romanında ise isimsiz karakterin sessizliği konuşmanın yetersizliğini ve her zaman bir güç olmadığını gösterir. Dolayısıyla sessizlik karakteri bir nevi güçlü kılar. Diğer yandan, ilişkilerinde bozulmaya sebep olan, annesi, hayat arkadaşı ve kızının güvenini sarsan, kahramanın birtakım olaylar sonucunda ortaya çıkan sessizliğini uzatmayı tercih etmesinden kaynaklanır. Bu yönüyle *By the Sea* romanı farklılık gösterir. Saleh Omar sessizliği sayesinde mültecilik hakkı alır. Yine sessizliği sayesinde Latif Mahmud ile yeniden bir araya gelir ve aralarında bir çeşit baba-oğul ilişkisi başlar.



## APPENDIX B: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enformatik Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü	<input type="checkbox"/>

### YAZARIN

Soyadı : Arslan  
Adı : Özlem  
Bölümü : İngiliz Edebiyatı

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce) : A Postcolonial Narratological Study of Silence in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Admiring Silence* and *By the Sea*

**TEZİN TÜRÜ**: Yüksek Lisans  Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**