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In-between Two Worlds: Time, Place and Language in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Selected Novels

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Abstract: Post-colonial reading looks at the description and analysis of literary works from a different window than the mainstream literature and science. From this theoretical approach, the works of Abdulrazak Gurnah contain important factors that represent and describe the two worlds of the West and the East in different ways. To examine these factors, five novels of Gurnah have been analyzed in this article. These stories are illustrative examples for the world of Gurnah's writing and stories. To analyze the texts, I have used the categories of time, place, and language as 'moments' that articulate this world. The analysis shows that these variables have affected the content and theme, of his stories in different ways, of course with differences in quantity and quality. Despite the difference in the description of the two worlds that Gurnah has dealt with, with the passage of time his stories have tended towards globalization. The attitudes of these texts are mainly placed in an 'in-between' space and are not necessarily placed on one side of the border. In general, despite the relatively more positive representation of the western world, Gurnah has fulfilled his mission in raising the voice of subalterns to some extent.

Keywords: East Africa literature; Exile Literature; Abdulrazak Gurnah; Postcolonial Reading; Subalterns.

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1. Introduction

At the outset of the play *The Second Trial of Socrates*, the editorial board of the Revolution newspaper engages in a discussion regarding the selection of the newspaper's title. Various topics are proposed, including "the sinking of an oil tanker and spilling of oil on the coast of Zanzibar" (Badiou 22). In response to this suggestion, a member of the board remarks, "Zanzibar is a very far place; A country with black people, where no one knows where they are, and no one cares" (ibid.). While Egypt may be recognized for its ancient history, Algeria for its films and stories, and South Africa for figures such as Nelson Mandela and the history of Apartheid, the awareness of Zanzibar was limited for many, including the author. This lack of familiarity is a common characteristic of many countries often referred to as the "rest of the world", as articulated by Stuart Hall (1992). Abdulrazak Gurnah has assumed the responsibility of shedding light on the history of this region and has accomplished this task admirably, as evidenced by his receipt of the Nobel Prize in 2021.

Gurnah's works are the story of the East African coast and also the story of his personal life. Born in Zanzibar in East Africa in 1948, he went to England at the age of 20 and received a doctorate in literature in 1982. For many years he has been the editor of "*Wasafiri*" magazine with the subject of post-colonial literature. From the very beginning, nostalgia of motherland motivated Gurnah to write about his experiences, which first resulted in *Memory of Departure* (1987). *Pilgrims Way* (1988), *Dotty* (1990), *Paradise* (1994), *Admiring Silence* (1996), *By the Sea* (2001), *Desertion* (2005), *The Last Gift* (2011), *Gravel Heart* (2017) and *Afterlives* (2020) are his other works. The chairman of the Nobel Committee for Literature called Gurnah "one of the most prominent post-colonial writers in the world" and the Nobel Committee also considered him worthy of receiving this award due to his "influential writings on the effects of colonialism and the fate of refugees". Literary critic Bruce King believes that his works broadened the world of East African heroes (Felicity). Maza Mengist, a novelist, considers Gurnah's works as sober and insistent stories on listening to the voice of the lives of those whose voices are not heard (Mengist). Gurnah's stories, as a whole, narrate a totality that has one end in Zanzibar and the other in England. A painful odyssey of sounds, colors, cultures, places, politics, and etc.; each of the stories has assumed a part of this literary journey. Therefore, in this article, we have discussed some of his works that represent these parts.

The issues of Gurnah's stories cannot be limited to a specific society. His problems are actually the problems of all human beings: Both the colonizer and colonized or those affected by pseudo-colonization. As Robert Young says, the postcolonial approach is not necessarily dependent on the colonization process itself (2011). And to beyond of all, real struggles should not be overshadowed by overly simplistic disputes over concepts. Moreover, these issues are discussed in newer ways such as superiority and inferiority, dominance and subordination, homeland and displacement and diaspora, centralism and pluralism or democracy, and in general, it includes any issue related to Singularity ('The Singular') and Universality ('The Universal'). In the political field, the structures of power and inequality and the experience of inferiority/superiority are not special phenomena of colonized societies. For example, nationalism or any kind of centralized political totality is unintentionally creating and reproducing quasi-colonial experiences. At the cultural level, there are characteristics such as hybridity or imitation, in-betweenness, and hegemony in all multicultural societies. Apart from all this, as we see in Persian (Karimi 2023) and English research background (Table 1), the migration and exile literature is a common global experience. Therefore, the discourse analysis of the works of people like Gurnah is simultaneously a kind of self-psychoanalysis.

2. Literature Review

Post-colonial discourse in the Persian language gained prominence in the early 21st century. Initially, it found a stronghold within English language and literature departments, subsequently permeating diverse academic realms, including sociology. The most important findings of these researches are: Europeanism, Western domination, cultural dialectics, hybridity, alienation, otherness, staring, inferiority, imitation, issues related to language and identity, resistance, sustainability and cultural revival. In terms of discourse, these studies have a more general common feature, which can be considered as a relatively one-sided view to the West. This feature, which is mainly derived from the texts themselves and not from their researchers, replaces "Orientalism" by "Occidentalism" and, in practice, instead of understanding the dialectic and complexity of the subject, it shifts the center of gravity of Superiority and domination (Karimi). There is only one research about Gurnah's works, whose characteristics are presented in Table No. 1, along with other related global studies.

According to the table below, global studies about Gurnah's works have mostly focused on works such as *Memory of Departure*, *Paradise*, and *Admiring Silence*. These studies, which are methodologically close to each other, are placed in fields such as

literature, psychology, and sociology. In terms of content, categories such as colonialism, nationalism, multiculturalism, border space and time, displacement, homecoming, exile, collective memory, and slavery are the main motifs of these researches, which seem to have influenced the narration and aesthetics of Gurnah's fiction. The most important difference between Persian and English studies is in the general approach and orientation of these two; While Persian studies are focused on the interactions between the two worlds, the West and the Rest, and categories such as colonialism, exploitation, and resistance, English studies have focused more on the inner world of stories, the narrative and aesthetics of stories, and analysis the impacts of categories such as colonialism, slavery and imperialism on them. This point may be due to the origin of the researchers. Because, for example, the ideas of the African writers are closer to Iranians than Europeans.

Table 1. Summary of Previous Researches

| Indexe Author | Main Question | Field of study | Method | Main Results |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Deckard 2010 | Paradise discourse, colonialism and Globalization | Multiple Text | comparative thematic reading | paradise myth functions in colonial literature/ Paradise as a double-edged sword: critique global imperialism and a fuller sense of the multi-cultural past/ the formal logic of fall and loss |
| Samuelson 2012 | Place and narration | Oeuvre | Narrative Analysis | Littoral locations and amphibian aesthetics/ in-between places/ ambivalent, dialogic representation |
| Kiagai 2014 | Body, Sexuality and Power | Memory of departure | Content/Narrative Analysis | How sexual practices become narrative sites/ bodies as sites for inscribing and decrypting social, political, and economic tensions & fragmentations. |
| Mustafa 2015 | Intertextuality in Gurnah's <i>Paradise</i> | <i>Paradise</i> | Content Analysis | Gurnah's intertextual incorporation and transformations of his 19th-century Swahili sources, primarily Chande (Journey Up-Country in Africa, 1901) & Bakari (The Customs of the Swahili People, 1981). |
| Newns 2015 | de-valorising displacement | <i>By the Sea</i> | Narrative Analysis | homelessness as a route to authorship/ domestic storytelling as an alternative restorative migrant aesthetic practice |
| Samuelson 2017 | Coastal form | oeuvres of Couto & Gurnah | Comparative reading/ themes and styles | inside-outside binary/ to decenter, extend and thicken constructions of world literature/ opening to a planetary perspective |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mondo 2021 | images of home | <i>By the sea</i> | Narrative/Themes Analysis | Discontinuous homecoming/ incomplete homecoming and community-forging by storytelling |
| Pujolràs- Noguer & Others 2021 | Interstices of Aging and Narration | <i>By the Sea</i> | Narrative gerontology | Ocean space. Narrations, history and memory, the uninhabited silence, unsettled colonialism/telling stories as the means of survival/power of narration from the perspective of narrative gerontology |
| Dadawala 2022 | Globalizing of Gurnah's fictions | Oeuvre | Historical/Content Analysis | Belonging of Gurnah to "English" language, literature and world/ importance of Arab and Indian presence on the Swahili coast beside the west Colonizers/ Literary Qualities of Gurnah's recent migrant fiction |
| Rockel 2022 | Review | <i>Paradise</i> | Content Analysis | connection between Islam and trade/ uncritical picture of 'pre-European colonial/ to present colonizer as amoral, ruthless and barely human |
| Karimi 2023 | Postcolonial reading | <i>Admiring Silence</i> | Content/Narrative Analysis | the painful odysseys of sounds, colors, cultures, places, politics/ ambivalent and shadowy whole based on homeland exile/ the voice of Subalterns/ expression of wound |
| Pujolràs- Noguer 2023 | Slavery and trauma of Displacement and Fiction | <i>Paradise & Afterlives</i> | Content Analysis | rhizomatic structure of African Indian Ocean traumatic experiences of displacement/ knotted memory acts as manifestations of historical and cultural and emotional entanglements |

3. Theoretical Framework

The origin of postcolonial theory is the critical, psychoanalytic and deconstruction theory. The theoretical approach and the research process in these three approaches, including the opinions of thinkers like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Spivak, are different, but their problematics are similar. These theories problematize the issue of colonialism and post-colonialism, and finally, each of them provides a description, analysis, and solution for the main problem, i.e., the domination of the Western world. It can be said that these efforts have formed theoretical "Constellation" that can be called post-colonial discourse. In the theoretical field, one can count the elements on which the articulation of this discourse is based. Also, the methodology of postcolonial studies has a specific relationship with its theoretical aspect, which can be interpreted as a kind of decolonization of the method (for example, see Green and Lebihan; and Smith). The main figures of the post-colonial discourse have not paid much attention to methodological details, and the existing methodological elements are mainly the result of the work of later researchers in this field. According to the limitations of this article, some of these elements are presented in Table No. 2.

Table 2. Theoretical and Methodological Dimensions of Postcolonial Reading

| Dimension | Categories / Thinkers | Approaches |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Theoretical | West/East, strategic formulation, strategic position (Said) Inverted Orientalism, Subalterns, Western individualism, Dramatic de-discrimination (Spivak) Imitation, Hybridity, in-betweenness, Ambiguity, Gaze, resistance (Bhabha) Native Intellectual, Racism, Incomplete Identity, Triple stages of Integration, Return and Struggle (Fanon) Postcolonial reading: colonial consequences in the Creation of literary, anthropological, historical and scientific texts (Ashcroft) Invisible man (Ellison) | Discursive Deconstructive psychoanalytical |
| Methodological | Aestheticizing, Denying, Monitoring and Investigating, Classifying, Confirming, Defunding, Idealizing, Illusionizing, Eroticizing (Spurr 1993) Mythologizing, Exoticism, Desynchronization, Naturalization (essentialism) (Mills 1997) Narratology: angle of view, focus of view, narrator, time and place, distance between subject and text, role of characters, volume of each topic (Prince 2005) | Analysis of Discourse, Narration and Content |

In general, the methods and categories of analysis of post-colonial works are different depending on the field of study. For example, literary works have been examined from different sociological, psychological, aesthetic perspectives, etc., and using different methods of content analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, etc. My current analysis tends from text analysis to discourse analysis, and because of the intertwining of discourse theory and method, it relies on its theoretical concepts and methodological categories. Here, the presentation of theoretical and methodological dimensions does not mean their exact and complete application in the analysis, because this application depends above all on the capabilities of the analyzed text. Methodological techniques help to examine the text elements in a methodical way and clarify their relationship with macro-discursive frameworks and historical realities.

The following analysis is based on all the elements of the stories. In other words, with the assumption that the analyzed texts are descriptive of two different worlds and the story progresses in exchange between these two worlds. I try to find these features in the text and formulate them. This sociological analysis seeks to understand the whole or the discourse of this literary work, and does not deal much with the literary features in the text. In fact, it pursues the main question of the research more in the content than in the formal and structural features. I've tried to examine how language, place and time affected and represented the world of the Gurnah's fiction. Like any other qualitative research, the theoretical models and details and evidence provided in the text analysis section will guarantee the reliability of the findings.

4. Analysis, Discussion, and Findings

In this article, five novels of Gurnah have been analyzed, that their features are listed in the table below. The primary reason for choosing these novels was their translation into Persian language. However, these titles are among the most important works of the author, and in terms of time, they almost cover the beginning of writing period and the last work of Gurnah. In addition, the internal time of the story is also meaningful. In terms of the historical time of the narrative within the selected stories, a suitable period from the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century has been examined in these works, which is suitable for providing a clear picture of colonialism and post-colonialism as the main context of these stories.

Table 3. Sample texts of Study

| Title | Year | Story Time | Story Place | Main themes |
|----------------------------|------|------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Memory of Departure</i> | 1987 | + 1961 | East of Africa/ Kenya | Social & Political |
| <i>Paradise</i> | 1994 | + 1885 | Coastal East Africa to Indian Ocean | Social & Economic |
| <i>Admiring Silence</i> | 1996 | 1990s | Britain & Zanzibar | Social & Cultural |
| <i>The Last Gift</i> | 2011 | + 2000s | Britain | Social & Cultural |
| <i>Gravel Heart</i> | 2017 | + 1950 | Britain & Zanzibar | Social & Political |
| <i>Afterlives</i> | 2020 | 1900-60 | East Africa, India, Germany | Cultural & Political |

4.1. Time and place

According to the above table, an interesting path and trend can be seen in the story location column. Based on the date of their writing and publication and even the time of narration, these stories are mainly placed in African lands at the beginning, in the middle of the way they are more concentrated in England and at the end they once again turn to the mother lands in Africa. This process itself expresses the complexities of the subject of Gurnah's stories and his going back and forth between the two worlds of himself and the other. Which maybe for Gurnah/narrator, it is not possible to choose between them. And as it will be explained at the end, there is a kind of non-boundary or in-betweenness in his work.

Time and place of birth, life, youth, middle age, and old age are the "moments" that can articulate elements of an individual's life or mentality. A generation that lived on the seashore with a coastal position, and a generation that grew up in the mountains, or someone living in the center of a society and someone living on its borders, will have

two different views of world. Topics related to returning home, memory and individual and collective memory that have been proposed in previous studies are all due to the importance and influence of the categories of place and time. Abbas has the feeling of coming from a small place in *The Last Gift*, he is still afraid of his vast world. This sense of men from small places trying to find a home in the world is a theme that runs through Gurnah's novels (Lamba 2021).

As we saw in the research literature review, even the aesthetics of people or writers are also affected by such moments. Also, in the analysis of literary works, Edward Said focused on the place and time of the event in the novel instead of themes and literary categories. It is important for him to find the geographical signs in the work. The way of narration and the attitude of the narrator/writer to places can also be the basis of analysis. The main structure of the story in the *Admiring Silence* is formed by dualities based on time, place, language, character, etc. The time of the story is divided between past and present based on location: A place in England (West) and Zanzibar (East) which signifies the colonizer and the colonized. Culture (including language, rituals, etc.) always fluctuates between two categories, Eastern and Western. In the third part of this story, the issue of place-based identity is highlighted. At the first level, the narrator is the "self" and the hostland is the "other". A fugitive from his homeland, in that safe airport, he describes England as a "plagued land" (213). In the conversation with his Indian fellow traveler, they feel like two compatriots in exile, and moments later, the narrator sarcastically calls England "the land of civilization" (217); A society that may have made him a "bad-tempered, emotionless and dishonorable barbarian" or "An enemy" (219). At least the narrator's family thinks so.

In the *Memory of Departure*, Gurnah loved composition classes as a child, but only after immigrating to England did he turn to professional writing. Migration basically reminds people of what they have lost, and those who pursue their nostalgic feelings may be able to return to their past world in the world of literature and art. According to him, at the ceremony of awarding the Nobel Prize for Literature, only in England, he could think about the issues of the past.

In *The Last Gift*, the story takes place in England, and the author and all the characters in the story are somehow involved in a bipolar world. Although their way of facing these poles is not the same and it is different based on generation and cultural situation. The past time and place does not leave the characters. The father is originally an immigrant from Zanzibar and the mother is the result of the marriage of an immigrant and an

Englishman and their children are also the result of this immigrant couple. In everyday life and in the field of job, the circle of migration does not leave them. The son of the family (Jamal) is writing his PhD thesis on "immigration trends and policies of the European Union". The mother has found a job in a migrant center. The girl (Hana or Anna) is also involved in the issue of being a migrant in her daily life. His wife, Nick, also writes an article about the activity of the Missionary Society of the Church in Eritrea. Jamal's girlfriend also has a relationship with immigration, because her father is Italian. Therefore, the issue of immigration, race, origin, etc. has become a family issue. Whenever Abbas's wife asks him where his homeland is, or who are you? he answers "A monkey from Africa" and only in the last days he says Zanzibar. Whenever he asked, he generally said East Africa. Abbas says harshly about the "Fenesi" fruit that was special to his childhood village and he is surprised by all the scientific materials and old poetry that "were presented to our ugly and stupid Fenesi" (181). He contemptuously calls his homeland "that little Zanzibar" and falsely says that he does not remember anything from the past. He hates the past because he doesn't remember anything good about it. For Jamal, the most important feature of their old neighbor is the dark color of his skin and the painting of the barn, which according to Jamal is "an unknown cultural movement" (113). Just as his uncles tried to lighten the dark stone walls of England. His exotic and negative view of Africa stands out. Anna still can't convince herself that when she says the word English, she "uses the word homeland or thinks of the word foreigners without feeling sympathy" (ibid.: 71). Nick's father (son-in-law of the Abbas family) finally speaks of "European and African national character". He calls it a cultural thing that Africans seem to get used to oppression.

A clear distinction is therefore made between the English "We" and the African "They". Another situation occurs in another party with Nick's family. where Nick's uncle, the pastor, asks Anna, "Where are you from?" Nick says Ana is English. Uncle says "Yes, of course Anna is English, but where was she before she became English?" (146). Anna says "East Africa". This generalization about East Africa expresses the shame that Anna has from her father's homeland. And Uncle Digby's final narration is remarkable: "Now that I look at you closely, I think your father is also from the same side of the coast" (147). After returning home, Anna sits at the computer and types: "I am English" (150), but as a result of Uncle Digby's words, "a dog in shorts" comes to her mind. Nick also mocks the refusal of the Eritrean witches to accept the advanced version of 19th century Christianity instead of the 5th century Bible and sees it as a missed opportunity to join the modern world. The interesting thing is that he thinks that even religion, which is

basically a matter of the past, has a more valid version that arose from the modern European society. They have reconciled with the past and most likely return to Zanzibar, this "imaginary and real" place, and Jamal writes a short story similar to his father's stories with the "predictable theme of migration" and wants to call it: A monkey from Africa.

Gurnah writes family stories. He does not interact with non-immigrants except in relation to his family. While in African stories (in *Paradise* or the Memory of Departure) or fictional situations, we are faced with long journeys and different social and geographical situations, *Gravel Heart* is the story of a family in Zanzibar whose son goes to England and studies there and returns home when his father dies, but eventually returns to England. The relationships within the family, people and government, and Africans and Europeans provide the background of the story. In a letter to his mother two years after his visit to London, Salim considers his first visit to England a form of displacement that took many things from him. And he calls his dreams and fantasies about "England or the land of opportunities" a handful of lies. He regularly writes to his mother about his longing for "familiar faces and old buildings and streets". Mark (Moussa), a Lebanese Arab, in response to that the narrator is from Zanzibar, said: "It is right in the heart of Africa... it is completely below the equator, on the other side of the world... the blackest point of Africa" (151). On the other hand, the narrator's mother believes that every disaster that befalls them in the homeland is "the result of the drinking and anger of European youth" (213).

Also in *Afterlives* the story takes place from 1900 to 1960, mainly in Africa, with a brief time in India and Germany. Life in war and in the shadow of war is the main theme of this novel. German Lieutenant's image about history and levels of knowledge is based on geography. He attributes certain characteristics to the inherent nature of Africans and believes that they will never learn mathematics because it requires "a special mental discipline that you people are not able to understand" (108). The priest is also friendly with Hamzeh, but he considers this period of African history to be worthless, which "can be torn from the history of humanity" (202) and there will be no problems.

There are two types of stories in Gurnah's work. One is that it happens mostly in Africa and the other is that it is mostly in Europe or is divided between Europe and Africa. These geographical platforms have made a difference in the orientation of the novel, the relationship between the narrator and the author, and the issues of the story. For example, in *Paradise*, which generally takes place in African lands, the narrator is

somewhat sympathetic to the African society, although he ends up joining the European/German soldiers. Also, the image of Europeans is negative. In contrast, in *Admiring Silence*, which takes place in England and Zanzibar, the narrator and in other words the author has a more positive view of the West/England. At the same time, it also has a critical view. Therefore, the place and time of the story have been influential in its content.

This point is also related to the "returning home" arguments that have been examined in the research background. For example, Newns believe that there is a link between "metaphorical uses of displacement or "homelessness" and "the material and historical experiences of refugees" which are completely pushed out of the aesthetic realm through rhetorical actions. While valorising being away from home as a path to creative production can be appropriate with a privileged form of displacement, there is a need to revalue home for those who have been forcibly displaced (Newns 510).

4.2. Language

Eagleton separates two concepts "**English** literature" and "English **literature**" by referring to the symmetry of the stabilization of English literature with the period of "the rise of imperialism in England" and the British need to spread national identity (40). In the first term, being English and in the second term, literature is prominent. One of the manifestations of this type of literature is "Empire Stories" which is used for works such as "The Tempest, Robinson Crusoe, Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, The Picture of Dorian Gray, Sherlock Holmes stories, and..." (Perry 72). The authors of these works were all Europeans, but the change in the reality of colonialism and the emergence of periods known as post-colonial led to the emergence of works by non-European authors, which can be called the literature of migration or exile. These English works were later known as "English literature". They were in the language of the colonial countries, but they were different from the canon literature of English/European writers in the content and theme, narratives, events and historical facts, style and even in the type of use of the English language. In addition, criticizing these works requires certain criteria and methods (Ahmad). The stories of Abdulrazak Gurnah are included in this literary genre.

On another level, language is something on which power is engraved, and in other words, language carries power. Perhaps it was with this logic that Aimé Césaire uses both colloquial style and local words and myths in the play of *Une Tempête*, unlike Shakespeare's elegant and formal language; And on a radical level, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o was totally opposed to the use of the language of the colonizer. In addition, in the

criticism of the play *The Tempest*, it is said why Caliban, a native of the island, should be forced to learn English by Prospero (the master). They ask why the reverse process has not been done? The answer lies in the structure and phenomenon of "power". Prospero was in power. Regarding Gurnah's English-language stories, you can also ask why not in Swahili? If we skip the economic and technical discussions and audience studies, we should ask what a book in English adds to the society and culture of Zanzibar. This question can be asked about many writers who have preferred a western language over their native language. It seems that despite all the features of this type of books, in terms of language, some kind of hegemonic relationship still exists.

Gurnah's books are all in English. The use of popular languages of the world cannot be considered a discursive defect for world-class writers. Because this language ironically helps to raise their desired topics to a global level with a global audience. In fact, the language of the "other" becomes a means of representing "self". As, for example, Milan Kundera chooses French to express the problems of the Czech society. But about language as a social phenomenon, the issue is slightly different. Writing in the "other" language actually helps to strengthen it and does not help the "mother" or national language. And as a result, the language of "own" becomes weaker increasingly, and maybe one day it will be forgotten. The point here is whether or not the issue of language in Gurnah's works is, in principle, discussed or not?

In Gurnah's works, the linguistic aspect can be examined in the dialogues and also in the names of the characters. In the dialogue, in a few cases, you can find sentences or keywords that express the cultural and linguistic background of the characters, the narrator/writer. For example, in the story of *Admiring Silence*, in the conversation with the paternal family, the narrator uses Arabic words. The comparison of the colonial and post-colonial situation is highlighted in this section. In the beginning, we see the difference between the language of the narrator and his compatriots. The narrator and his visitor speak with words from the Arabic. The narrator also uses the word "Ado" (enemy)(219). In some analyses, these linguistic signs or interruptions are considered as a kind of resistance in the narrative, but in this Gurnah's text, such an interpretation is very far. Even the narrator somewhere curses the "responsibility of the Whiteman" (238); the phrase that is the title of a poem by Rudyard Kipling, which curses the responsibility of the colonizer for their humanitarian presence in the colonies, considering the costs of colonization. In a way, the narrator sees himself in such a role, because he has to settle his homeland. The impression of the white man's role continues, as he speaks to the guard in English instead of Swahili. And the irony of the story is that he is only allowed

to enter when he talks to the guard in Swahili. It can be guessed that he chose to speak in English in those minutes as a sign of his education. A choice that brought him closer to the role of a second-class Whiteman.

In *Memory of Departure*, the narrator goes to Nairobi to receive a family inheritance, to his uncle Ahmed's house, where he lives a European lifestyle. The language of family members is also English. The children call their father "Daddy" (164) and he also speaks English with his uncle's housekeeper. Ali, the housekeeper, speaks a mixture of English and Swahili. The radio also speaks in English about the early Christian missions in Uganda.

In *The Last Gift*, Abbas, the patriarch of the family, finds himself unassimilated into the host society, portrayed as "a restless wanderer in a foreign land after a life seemingly devoid of purpose" (29). Although in the end, he did not bring anything from his motherland with him. But these past(s) have trapped everyone. Within this narrative, we encounter a poignant sense of "anonymity." The father neglects to impart his mother tongue to their children. Yet, within the confines of his bed, he murmurs words that his wife interprets as remnants of a time when Abbas becomes detached from the external world. He says "he reads these words in their own language, as if he has forgotten how to speak English" (232). In fact, whenever Abbas returns to his true self, he speaks in Swahili/African language. Perhaps this is why in *Gravel Heart*, the narrator believes that London sloppy language is not a language for conversation. At the same time, in the house of "SWA", which means the Organization of African Unity, all of whom are from Africa and the narrator sees that neighborhood as a place of "accumulation of ancient pains", he only talks to one person (Mr. Magni) in Swahili. And when he talks to his father about his friends in England, he tells him that he only knows Malindi as "theirs" because he speaks in Swahili. In *Afterlives*, we are faced with several languages, and perhaps Swahili is used more than any other of Gurnah's works, but at the same time, the German officer calls Hamza's Swahili "childish language." (140). In addition, as in *The Tempest* of Shakespeare, none of the colonizers or western characters, whether in the West itself or within the story in Africa, none of them know a non-European language and no effort is made to learn it. Instead, it is always Africans who have to learn another language. In fact, the supremacy of the western side in the field of language is assumed to correspond to military, economic and political superiority.

Another instance of the non-English language challenge manifests in the characters' names and sometimes even in the context of the novel itself. Previously, the issue of names was highlighted in the play *The Storm (Une Tempête)* by Césaire. The colonizer labels the island's native as "Caliban," a name bearing resemblance to "Cannibal,"

connoting a man-eater. Caliban protests: "It's better if you call me X." A nameless person.... this is called a historical fact... every time you call me, I remember this historical fact that you stole everything from me and did not even spare my identity" (Césaire 35). In *Gravel Heart*, the narrator's father says that at one time it was thought that only "when one can be sure of the existence of a thing (a river, a lake, a mountain, or a wild animal) that a European man has seen it or, if possible, put a name to it" (256). This statement is a clear example of the idea of "Naming" in post-colonial research. In Gurnah's stories, almost in most cases, the names of the characters are Arabic: Jamal, Abbas, Hamza, Halima, Hassan Omar, Ali, Yusuf, etc.; However, the second generation of immigrants like their Arabic names to be pronounced in English. In the rest of the cases, Arabic names are probably one of the signifiers of the Gurnah native discourse. In *Gravel Heart*, Arabic names are changed to English and abbreviated, for example Ahmed becomes Eddie and Khadijah becomes Kadi. In *The Last Gift*, Hana likes to be pronounced Anna, and Jamal is called Jimmy.

In addition to the responses of intellectuals such as Wa Thiong'o and Césaire, the perspective of Gloria Anzaldua, a Mexican poet residing in America, towards this discourse is equally intriguing. Anzaldua crafted a portion of her book "Borderlands" in English and another segment in Mexican Spanish (Anzaldua). Through this creative choice, she not only embodied her liminal identity but also transformed the societal concept of in-betweenness into a work of literary artistry. From an alternative perspective, this linguistic amalgamation may be viewed as a form of defiance against the prevailing global dominance of the Anglo-Saxon culture. Nonetheless, Gurnah should write in English, because English is the language of powerful countries in non-literary as well as literary terms. But, can a foreign language be the voice of the subalterns? The answer will be a combination of yes/but. Yes, Gurnah, as a figure, is a silence full of unknown voices; But, the reality of the world is still unequal.

5. Conclusion

The literary discourse of migration or the so-called post-colonial literary genre is made up of 'moments' such as place of birth, time of birth, migration, life in exile, nationalism and internal revolution. Some of these events are decisive for any writer, but those like Gurnah bear the weight of these events more. As it can be said, both their liberation and their authorship depend on the traces that these individual or collective events leave. Therefore, post-colonial literature contains a kind of historical realism, indicating that many bitter and problematic phenomena, such as illiteracy, superstition, fatalism, inefficient way of managing society, structural corruption, authoritarianism, etc., are real in colonized lands and societies.

In various cases, and especially in *Admiring Silence*, the presence of persistently blocked toilets is used as a metaphor for the stagnation and also the abomination of the post-colonial/independence era. The main character of the story, who is nameless, lies to his white wife about his country and himself in order to create a sense of self-esteem for himself as well as gain empathy and affinity. It is his way of managing and of coping. The reason and cause of these bitter realities are related to the traditions and possibilities of those societies and to the process of colonization. But two points are important: First, in both cases, it does not diminish the human mission of the "white man" in the sense of a man with power and possibilities; of course, in the field of literature, it is only addressed in its fantasy aspect. Second, and more importantly, is speaking about this silent world; Migration literature has helped to create a discourse for subalterns, and its result has helped to recognize non-western worlds.

Concerning *Socrates'* play, the court acquitted him but recognizes the right of wandering for him. "It even gives the right and duty to enjoy permanent immigration without presenting an identification card" (Badiou 153), to get closer to the shore of humanity. At the end, it seems, Badiou is telling the audience that, "Get up, you, sedentary people! Join the nomads, the home-bringers of ideas, the emigrants and the bearers of truth" (154). Migration has been a way of change throughout history. Although forced migration is different from voluntary travel and displacement, it seems that humanitarian goals are more difficult to achieve without displacement. Socrates' right to wander is a metaphor for paying attention to other possibilities. Geographical, mental and discourse borders are fictitious and historical things. Man approaches humanity, or as Plato says, the "idea" of human, only when he/she does not limit to a specific, objective or mental boundary. Gurnah has tried to move between these territorial, cultural and mental boundaries. As, according to Rakell, central value that Gurnah's fiction reflects, and the source of its moral power, is liberalism across the board, in relation to trade, politics, and the rights of the individual (Rockel). Or, in Brydon's words, Gurnah's efforts can be considered as an attempt to redefine colonized or 'contamination' subjects.

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