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Unveiling Homes Within Silence:

***Admiring Silence* by Abdulrazek Gurnah (1996)**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

A Master's Degree of Arts in Anglo-American Studies

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Candidate Declaration Form

I, Sahbi Ayarrehmene Candidate of Master at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M'hidi University, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **Unveiling Homes Within Silence: *Admiring Silence* by Abdulrazek Gurnah (1996)** in partial fulfillment of Master Degree in Anglo-American Studies is my own original work, and it has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university.

Date 02/06/2023 ID number 119990088003180002

Signature of the candidate

Dedication

In the name of Allah, the most merciful and the most compassionate.

To MYSELF.

To my beloved parents, after five years of waiting, here we are! So, thank you for your support.

Mama my love this work is dedicated to you.

Papa you deserve this!

To my little baby **Ranim**, thank you for being such a blessing, this work is for the great person you will become.

To the one who made this work happen, my twin and sister **Kora** thank you for all the support and love, words won't describe how thankful I am. I will let silence do the job.

To my **Chahrazed**, thank you for a lifetime support and love.

To my partner in this long journey **Haithem**, thank you so much for making this easy to handle.

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Abstract

The present research highlights the dimensions of silence as a human experience, taking Abdulrazek Gurnah's *Admiring Silence* (1996) as a study sample. It examines not only the compulsory silence in the diasporic atmospheres but also the sites of admired and chosen silences. This is why, this study unveils the psychological and cultural silences within the context of the novel, for the aim of manifesting how silence transforms into home, in an act of constructing an inner space of desires, created by the silent behaviour of the protagonist. This study combines Stuart Sim's categorization of silence with Elsa Ronningstam cultural, psychological and psychoanalytic theorization of silence. Overall, the choice of the theoretical insights serves to prove that silences in *Admiring Silence* are but a space of home created by the nameless narrator of the novel to escape external feelings of diasporic unbelongingness, and to demonstrate how admiring the silence becomes home.

Key words: Silence, Home, Diaspora.

Résumé

Cette recherche met en évidence les dimensions du silence en tant qu'une expérience humaine, en prenant comme échantillon d'étude *Admiring Silence* (1996) d'Abdulrazek Gurnah. Elle examine non seulement le silence obligatoire dans les atmosphères diasporiques, mais aussi les lieux de silence admiré et choisi. C'est pourquoi cette étude dévoile les silences psychologiques et culturels dans le contexte du roman, dans le but de manifester comment le silence se transforme en foyer, dans un acte de construction d'un espace intérieur de désirs créé par le comportement silencieux du protagoniste. Cette étude combine la catégorisation du silence de Stuart Sim avec la théorisation culturelle, psychologique et psychanalytique du silence d'Elsa Ronningstam. Dans l'ensemble, le choix des perspectives théoriques vise à prouver que les silences dans *Admiring Silence* ne sont qu'un espace de foyer créé par le narrateur sans nom du roman pour échapper aux sentiments externes de non-appartenance diasporique et pour démontrer comment l'admiration du silence devient un foyer.

Mots clés: Silence, Diaspora, Foyer.

ملخص

يسلط البحث الحالي الضوء على أبعاد الصمت كتجربة إنسانية، باستخدام رواية "إعجاب الصمت" (1996) لعبد الرزاق جورنه كنموذج للدراسة. حيث انه لا يفحص فقط الصمت القسري وسط الغربة والشتات، ولكن أيضاً تلك المواقع التي يكون فيها الصمت اختيارياً. ولهذا السبب، تكشف هذه الدراسة عن مواقع الصمت النفسية والثقافية ضمن سياق الرواية، بهدف تسليط الضوء على كيفية تحول الصمت إلى مسكن، وذلك عن طريق خلق محيط داخلي للرغبات، والذي يتجلى عن طريق حالة الصمت التي يعيشها بطل الرواية. تجمع هذه الدراسة بين تصنيف ستوارت سيم للصمت ونظرية إلسا رونينجستام الثقافية والنفسية والنفسية التحليلية للصمت. بصفة عامة، يعنى هذا الطرح بإثبات أن الصمت في الرواية ليس سوى محيط للانتماء يتم إنشاؤه من قبل السرد الروائي البارح في الرواية للهروب من الشعور الخارجي بالشتات وعدم الانتماء، ولإظهار كيف يصبح إعجاب الصمت موطن انتماء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصمت الانتماء الشتات.

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General Introduction

Evidence of the earliest roots of the written language can be traced back to the Egyptian, Mesopotamian and even Chinese regions around 3000 BCE (A Short History of Writing Web). However, spoken language is believed to have started thousands of years before that. After that, people expressed themselves in different manners, gestures, body language, sounds and even the lack of sounds i.e., silence. Then, history moved forward and cultures became subcultures, humans systemized languages to describe their emotions, thoughts and experiences. Silence takes place when words are not both unnecessary or insufficient, in here, silence can communicate what words cannot. In this vein Bilmes describes: “Thus, for each kind of talk, there is a kind of silence” (1).

Silence is a rather nebulous term, and for that it became an arena for curious minds in various disciplines. For instance, it was integrated with psychology where it had significance in the study of human soul and its components, as silence is integrated with psychoanalytic contexts where it had several interpretations in relation to psychology (Ronningstam 1277). Further, communicative studies deal with silence in the realms of cross-cultural communication where silence takes a plethora of interpretations. A great example of this is silence's significance as a sign of respect and thoughtfulness in Japan (Morsbach 210).

Further, literary studies also adopt silence within the literary streams, where it serves as a powerful tool for authors to convey meaning and create tension. It can be a symbol representing suppressed emotions, societal oppression such as in feminist and postcolonial studies. This is to say that the interpretations of silence differ from one discipline to another. Therefore, silence can be classified into: Silence as Condition, Silence as Response (Sim 14) and Selective Silence (Ronningstam 1280), this categorization shows how silence may create

an inner escape during the process of the search for inner calmness and relief and according to which, it can be said that silence may almost contain the characteristics of home.

We cannot mention silence without speaking of Abdulrazek Gurnah the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature of the year 2021, he is one the prominent writers who delved in silence and its implications on his writings, of the several Black British writers who tackled the struggle of silence and its implications, he is, he developed the issue of silence in the diasporic milieus, *The Last Gift*, *Dottie* and *Admiring Silence* are novels in which he profoundly tackled silence. From this, *Admiring Silence* serves the theorization of this dissertation best. For the reason that, it tells the story of a nameless Zanzibari character who leaves Zanzibar to England because of the political turmoils of the 1960s. Gurnah discusses the theme of silence and its significance within the diasporic context, he also reflects the effects of the European colonial heritage, where he discusses the corruption in Zanzibar, which made it hard for the protagonist to go back to his hometown and live there. The silences in novel tells both the resistance and the choice, where it implies the psychological conflict between one's self and the external factors one may face.

It is important to highlight that, this work will try to reconcile between the concepts of Felcity Hand and Kimani Kaigai to reach new conclusions regarding the significance of silence in the studied novel. It will answer questions such as: why is the protagonist silent? Why does he want to stay silent? Does he find refuge, ease, or belonging, in his silence? Why does he fear leaving the state of familiar silence? What is silence to the nameless protagonist?

In her article "*Becoming Foreign: Tropes of Migrant Identity in Three Novels by Abdulrazak Gurnah*", Felicity Hand explains the silences in *Admiring Silence* and distinguishes silence from lies. She sees that some spots in the protagonist states of silence are

considered to be lies and that “he never tells the truth about his childhood or his family” (41), she argues that the narrators silence indicates the ambiguity he feels towards where he feels home and what land to call home (42). Furthermore, Hand focuses on the Postcolonial subject and its implications on the main character’s silent attitude toward his memories and present life, Hand also discusses the memory and fragmentations in the novel which the protagonist attached in the novel to serve the theme of his diaspora in both his homeland and host country. Nevertheless, Kimani Kaigai in his article “*At the Margins: Silences in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s Admiring Silence and The Last Gift*” discusses “the centrality of silence as a constituent aspect of every utterance” (129), he provides a reading and of the narrative and analyses the strategies of representing silence in the novel Kaigai also relates the silent state of the protagonist to his inability to return to his homeland in Zanzibar.

It is true that both Hand and Kaigai discussed silence in the novel, they observed those moments of silences the protagonist had to undergo through the Postcolonial scope, yet, the psychological need for silence was disregarded, alongside with the reasons behind the silent state of the narrator, or what does his silence symbolize. They only provided a reading of silence in the context of the novel, *Admiring Silence* tells more than just an existent state of silence, but reveals its symbolization and what does it stand for.

The subject of silence in the novel is not a psychological condition to be diagnosed but rather, it is a state of admiration along with the protagonist’s journey in the search for a new home, as this interest arises, the concern of this study is centred on the following questions: why silence in *Admiring Silence*? Why does the protagonist fear leaving the state of familiar silence? And, what is silence for him?

This study serves the aim of understanding the motives behind the narrator’s silence, and to understand whether he could finally find home after his long journey of

unbelongingness and displacement between Zanzibar and Metropolitan Britain. The theorization in this study relies on theories of silence such as Stuart Sim's *Manifesto for Silence* (2007) to create the theoretical framework which explains the states of silences in the novel. Furthermore, the study also relies on "*Silence: Cultural Function and Psychological Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*", Elsa Ronningstam's study of silence in the psychological and cultural contexts which established the theoretical insights for the third chapter which explains how silence may attribute the familiarity of home in the diasporic environment. The theoretic insights of this study are based on the understanding of silence in literary contexts alongside with the theorization of diaspora and home which serves to understand silence in the context of the novel.

Undoubtedly, this topic was not a coincidence, the quest for home and belongingness within the silence was unconsciously my permanent concern, it is true that I did not have the word to name it as such, yet, I silently felt as I was looking for my safe space, somewhere where I can feel home. I decided studying my own silence through studying this character's silence. I wanted to draw relations between two human experiences that share the same view on a beautiful concept. It was a long journey I might describe, but it ends with a fulfilling station that is finding a home, for both the nameless character and myself.

In order to fulfil the aims of this study, the latter will be divided into one theoretical chapter and two practical chapters. The first chapter will be entitled *Tracing the Homes of Silence and the Silence of Homes*, I will delve in different definitions of silence with focusing on silence in the literary realms and how different scholars such as Max Picard, who paved the way for the study of silence, also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak et al explained silence. Also, this chapter will be concerned with the quest for home in diasporic milieus where home and diaspora will be dealt with as entities which serves in the process of understanding both

home and diaspora accordingly and would help me to explain how one may establish home in diasporic environments.

The second chapter entitled *The Paradox of Silence Between Ontological Construction and Strategic Subversion*, is the practical chapter and it mainly deals with the categorization of silence in the novel to provide an understanding of silence for its complexity within the flow of events.

The third chapter entitled *When Silence Transforms into Home* deals with the psychological and external factors that the character of the narrator undergoes to initiate his transformation and therefore the transformation of his conceptualization of the meaning of home and finally approaching it.

Chapter one: Tracing the Homes of Silence and the Silence of Homes

Introduction:

Homes are the places of comfort where there is relief and silence, silent homes, where calmness reigns supreme, dwellings become more than mere structures. The walls stand as the guardians of that calmness, embracing the harmony of silence and home, where silence and home connect. Both silence and home go beyond their mere restricted definitions where silence refuses to be defined as mere absence of utterance, and so home, where it rejects the mere physical definition. This chapter provides a reading for homes of silence in different disciplines, alongside with studying the construction of homes within unfamiliarity and diaspora. The chapter is divided into two sections: the first one revolves around the concept of silence and its interpretations in the Black British context. Then, the second section tackles Diaspora and home and how they are interpreted in postcolonial fictitious realms. Therefore, this chapter aims to reveal the theoretical dimensions of silence, home and Diaspora and the realization of these concepts in literature.

I. Reading Silence:

I.1. Definition:

To begin with, silence is a vast concept that can be viewed from different angles and according to various disciplines. This is to say that the idea of silence can be conjoined with a number of study fields under different definitions; for instance, it can be integrated with philosophy, feminism, and postcolonialism, etc. Silence is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as follows:

Refraining from speech or utterance; taciturn, reticent, reserved; omitting mention of or reference to; passing over or disregarding; containing no account or record; marked

by silence or absence of speech; characterized by the absence of sound or noise; quiet, noiseless, still. (Web)

This is to say that silence holds, in its layers, the meaning of indifference, ignorance and probably lies. Moreover, silence is the act of deprivation of speech alongside total state of stillness; it refers to the abstention or omission of a speech or utterance with the state or condition in which nothing is audible (the absence of sound and noise).

Max Picard in his book *the world of silence*, further explains silence as: “nothing merely negative; it is not the mere absence of speech, it is a positive, a complete world in itself” (16), he therefore emphasizes that the concept of silence goes beyond a mere absence or negation and that it is not simply the lack of speech or sound, but rather a positive and self-contained realm. In this perspective, silence is not empty or void, but rather a complete world with its own richness and significance, it “contains everything within itself. It is not waiting for anything; it is always wholly present in itself and it completely fills out the space in which it appears” (16), that is it encompasses a distinct existence and holds its own unique qualities, separate from the presence of sound or speech. Picard explains more that “silence is original and self-evident like the other basic phenomena” (20), for him silence, akin to fundamental phenomena such as love, loyalty, and death, possesses an inherent originality and self-evident nature. It stands as an essential and universally recognizable element. Like these fundamental concepts, silence carries its own innate essence that requires no further explanation or justification. It exists as a self-evident truth, ingrained in human experience and perception. Its significance and impact are profound and undeniable, paralleling the profound impact of love, loyalty, and death in shaping our understanding of the world (20). Picard goes beyond explaining silence to assuming that “speech came out of silence”, as one starts to produce speech, words come from silence (23). Picard suggests that speech originates from a state of silence, and when someone speaks, words emerge from that silence. This notion implies that

silence serves as the foundational source from which speech and words emerge. In this view, Picard sees that silence acts as a reservoir of potential, where thoughts and expressions take form and find their voice and as one engages in speech, the previously silent realm becomes animated and transformed as words flow forth, giving shape and substance to thoughts and ideas. His notion for silence highlights the dynamic relationship between silence and speech, with silence being the starting point and wellspring for the manifestation of verbal communication. It is safe to say that Picard believes that silence is the womb of internal thoughts that produce verbal communication.

In the same lane of thoughts, Sultan argues that: “Silence is the most impressive element that complements, enhances and even sublimates the meaning” (682), which suggests that silence, despite being the absence of sound or verbal communication, can still be understood and conveyed through language. Sultan sees that the concept of silence is given meaning and existence through linguistic references and symbols that are processed and interpreted by the reader's mind (681). No one denies the significant power of language as a tool for communication and expression, allowing us to convey ideas, emotions, and experiences. However, it is often used to describe and represent things that go beyond the literal words spoken or written. In the case of silence, which is inherently devoid of linguistic content, it can still be apprehended and understood through language. For Sultan silence in the literary realms “takes various manifestations such as pauses, speechlessness or dumbness which activate the expressiveness of the dramatic act. There are many texts whose dramatic power derives from this silence especially in modernistic literature” (683). That is, silence can be a powerful tool in the realm of drama and literature and possesses have the ability to enhance the expressiveness of a dramatic act; it is effectively utilized in various texts, particularly in modernistic literature, to create dramatic impact. By incorporating moments of silence into the narrative or dialogue, writers can evoke a range of emotions and engage the

reader or audience in a unique manner. The absence of words or sounds can create tension, anticipation, or a sense of mystery, allowing the audience to interpret the significance of the silence in their own way (684).

In her description of art's role in silence, Susan Sontag notes that: "The art of our time is noisy with appeals for silence... One recognizes the imperative of silence, but goes on speaking anyway" (12), which reflects a paradoxical situation often encountered in contemporary art and expression. This suggests that in the midst of a world filled with various forms of noise, chaos, and excessive communication, there is an acknowledgment of the importance of silence. However, despite this understanding, individuals continue to engage in speaking or making noise. Sontag reflects the struggle between the desire for inner peace and the need to participate in the noisy world around. Even in the face of the overwhelming need for silence, individuals are driven to communicate their thoughts, emotions, and experiences. This goes back to people's desire to be heard, understood, and connected with others. It also highlights the tension between the need for solitude and the inherent human need for social interaction and self-expression. Moreover, silence mediates the role of art as a form of spirituality in an increasingly secular culture (Sontag 07). Sontag explains that art replaces the role which was previously occupied by religion and mysticism in human life. It is to fill what is called a "craving for the cloud of unknowing beyond knowledge and for the silence beyond speech" (20). She stresses that the spiritual saturation that emerges from the dialogue between art and anti-art requires the pursuit of silence. For the serious artist, silence becomes "a zone of meditation, a preparation for spiritual maturity, a test of finally gaining the voice"(21). This is to say that silence nowadays transcends its traditional definition of the absence of sound or speech to contain worlds of thoughts and expression. It also bares or becomes an entire vivid experience pertaining to human realizations such as language, emotions, and art.

I.2. Silence through Different Lenses:

Silence, when examined within the frameworks of postcolonialism and feminism as well as through the lenses of philosophy and psychology, reveals intriguing layers of meaning and implications. In philosophy, for instance, silence often intersects with existential inquiries. Within psychology, silence can be a powerful therapeutic tool. Additionally, in postcolonial discourse, silence can be seen as a strategy of resistance against dominant narratives. Similarly, feminism recognizes the significance of silence as a form of resistance against patriarchal norms. The following titles further explain the latter idea:

I.2.1. Silence through a philosophical lens:

Robert Wood addresses the problems of noise infiltrating modern life in his article “Silence, Being and the Between: Picard, Heidegger and Buber” (Wood 127). These philosophers stress the significance of silence, quietness and introspection as crucial elements for comprehending oneself and the fundamental nature of existence. They criticize the impact of urbanized life, which gradually erodes this realm of silence, and they warn about the potential repercussions of losing connection with this essential aspect of human experience, i.e. silence.

Then, Max Picard's book, *The World of Silence*, is recognized as the first philosophical exploration of the concept of silence, according to Robin Patric Clair, Charles Courtenay's book, *The Empire of Silence*, published in 1916, is recognized as an earlier exploration of silence. However, Clair acknowledges that Max Picard's work is the first Western philosophical assessment that considers silence as a phenomenon that is inseparable from speech. In Courtenay's book, he extensively discusses the disciplinary nature of silence, which is now often referred to as "silencing." Courtenay seems to view silence either as a result of speech or as a therapeutic break from excessive speech (Clair 25). Picard initiates his work by linking silence to the divine, asserting that all language originates from God (120), making

silence inherently connected to the divine. According to Picard, silence, as a metaphysical concept, leads back to God and provides alternative avenues for comprehending our world and reality that go beyond traditional discourse. Picard's book takes on a quasi-mystical and poetic tone, infused with Catholic influences, as it advocates for silence and criticizes noise (118).

Furthermore, Alice Borchard Greene's in her *The Philosophy of Silence* provides illustrations regarding silence's position in the philosophical context; she emphasizes the mystical image that silence provides to religious discourse. Hazelton notes that "Dr. Greene's study of silence is both philosophical and practical in purpose" (63). In this sense, silence is strongly related to the cultural atmospheres that chiefly include religion. Philosophy highlights the ascetic and mystic elements within the experience of silence (48), where being silent means being closer to the divine. Silence in the philosophical context is transfiguration and circumcision of the soul to the holy divinity. Philosophical silence also is manifested in Bernard Dauenhauer's book *Silence, The Phenomenon and its Ontological Significance*, he explores the concept of silence in a comprehensive manner. Dauenhauer dedicates an entire book to the subject. combines phenomenological and discursive approaches, incorporating the works of other scholars like Picard and using Husserlian methodology, to provide a detailed description of the experience and nature of silence. Then, his primary focus is not on ethics but rather on understanding what silence is. To put it simply, Dauenhauer's book delves deeply into the nature of silence. He examines various forms of silence and their roles, drawing on different philosophical approaches. His objective is not to discuss the ethical implications of silence but to provide a comprehensive understanding of what silence is and how it functions alongside speech (05).

I.2.2. Silence through a Feminist Lens:

It is important to note that this section's purpose is to highlight the idea that silence cannot be restricted to such one field. Therefore, what gives the best explanation of the concept is to explore the different significations where silence may take place. Feminist silence, for instance, lies under the restriction of speech where it embraces both extremes of goodness and evil in the act of silence. Caroline Godart in her *Silence and Sexual Differences: Reading Silence in Luce Irigaray* considers silence to be the weapon used against women in a patriarchal society (09). In Elizabeth Grosz's terms, Irigaray's work explores the notion that women are often defined and understood in relation to men, rather than as autonomous individuals with their own inherent value. She argues that patriarchal structures and social norms have historically silenced women and positioned them as the "other" or the "second sex," emphasizing their perceived inferiority or subordination to men (112). Silence in the context of feminist studies is classified under the oppression that men exercise on women and how women are forced to be deprived of their voices. In contrast, silence can also be defined as a role of resistance. Heldris's *Le Roman Du Silence* tells the story of the Earl of Cornwall heir and his daughter who was raised as a boy in order to be eligible to inherit, as The King of England forbade women's inheritance. In this context, silence provides a kind of prominence to women. Indeed, raising a girl to be a boy is indirectly imposing silence over her femininity, yet it acts as a resisting potential against patriarchal dominance. Therefore, feminist silence can be viewed as a choice taken deliberately as a form of resistance. This is to say that silence in this case does not adhere to the meaning of abstinence or indifference but rather takes the meaning of fullness (not with words, but with emotions such as anger and fear; almost like a muted scream).

I.2.3. Silence through a Post-colonial Lens:

Similarly, Postcolonialism is the era of resistance and rewriting history. It is also prominently characterized by silence where colonizers insisted on silencing minds before words to assert domination, and it can be said that postcolonial silence is more of a “silencing” (Khan 06). It was an imperial weapon used against the other (the colonized) to impose thoughts and implant cultures. The refusal to speak was not an option because it was replaced by the fear to speak. Then, colonized people were afraid to express themselves and their culture. In *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, Ashcroft et al. discuss it as follows:

Language becomes the medium through a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of ‘truth’, ‘order’, and ‘reality’ become established. Such power is rejected in the emergence of an effective post-colonial voice. For this reason, the discussion of post-colonial writing by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture... the empire needs to write back to a centre once the imperial structure has been dismantled in political terms... (7).

Thus, postcolonial silence is the agony of being denuded of the ability to speak. In “Can the subaltern speak?” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak equally draws attention to the silence of marginalized groups: Prisoners, men and women, tribe members and the lowest strata of the urban sub proletariat, which she calls "subalterns" through colonial oppression and monolithic points of view (283). Furthermore, silence in the postcolonial discourse can be seen as a form of resistance or critique of the dominant culture of noise and distraction. Jenn Díaz’s *Es Un Decir* (2014) is a fictional testimonial account of three generations of women living in Spain following the Civil War which emphasizes the power of silence and its utilization as a prominent tool where it expresses pain, strength, and resistance. Díaz’s novel is the

representation of the negative force of silence, where it becomes “silencing” and fear controlled the situation in Spain back then which causes people to keep silent and created a state of muting that was forced against anyone during and Post-Civil War (Kahn 06). In this sense, Goncalves notes: “Discursive interplay in the novel reveals who can speak with authority and what can be said without fear” (05). This means that being silenced is associated with weakness. This demonstrates how covert silence is the power that authorities exert over people to insist on their dominance where they, and only them, can freely express their voices and will. Colonizers have always imposed their language and culture to manipulate the socially constructed colonial other. This manipulation, however, may serve in the favour of the silenced group (Spivak 283). As noted by Foucault, “silence can obviously marginalize and oppress members of society, but it can also express protection, resistance, and defiance” (20). Silence evokes the power of defying the authoritative codes by refusing to take part in their discursive interplay. By sticking to silence, the subject creates a process of differentiation. Furthermore, in his “*Silence as an Interlocutor in the Diaspora: Olumide Popoola’s this is not about sadness*”, Jamele Watkins sees that the novella *This is Not About Sadness* written by Olumide Popoola, explores the function and significance of silence within the context of community building, diasporic space, and the expression of trauma. Watkins argues that: “Popoola illustrates diasporic relationships primarily through giving space for silence and allowing language to slowly emerge” (257). That is to say that, the silences introduced by Popoola allow for connections to be established on a deeper, unspoken level, where words may fail to fully capture the complexity of their experiences. In this way, the novella highlights the transformative power of silence in forging connections and building resilience within marginalized communities. Language and its relationship to silence are also explored in the novella. Popoola's use of language, combined with the presence of multiple silences, reflects the diasporic nature of the story. Language becomes a vehicle for expressing

diasporic experiences and navigating the complexities of identity. The presence of silence alongside language emphasizes the limitations of words in fully capturing and conveying the nuances of these experiences. The silences become spaces of contemplation, reflection, and interpretation, where meaning is shaped through shared understanding and empathy within the relational community of the novella (260).

On one hand, if we compare between the feminist silence and the postcolonial silence, we can see that feminist silence is a choice of resistance while the other one is an imposed silence. On the other hand, the philosophical and psychological silences appear to have a deeper connection to human experiences away from politics, oppression, and hidden agendas. This is to say that silence can be regarded differently and accordingly as it manifests in different levels of the human experience.

II. The Quest for Home in Diasporic Milieus:

Constructing a home in diaspora requires establishing a sense of belonging amidst the challenges of immigration. It is to blend together memories and aspirations.

II.1. Home:

The concept of home is intrinsically linked to its physical manifestation, the homeland. The homeland is a representation of the imaginary borders established by nation states (Raj 87). Yet, the meaning “home” goes beyond mere physicality and encompasses emotions, relationships, and a sense of belonging. It is a place where one finds comfort, security, and a sanctuary from the outside world, for that, Mohineet Kaur Boparai explores how home may differ in meaning. In her *The Fiction of Abdulrazak Gurnah: Journeys Through Subalternity and Agency*, she argues that the dictionary defines "home" in several ways. At its core, it refers to the dwelling or residence of an individual. Additionally, it is a location that holds deep emotional connections for people. The term "home" can also be applied to institutions that provide shelter for those in need, such as the elderly, homeless, or sick. Furthermore, it can denote the natural habitat of an animal, like Australia being the native home of the Kangaroo. Similarly, a place that is native to a person is also referred to as their home (84). Furthermore, Brah asks the question:

Where is home? On the one hand, home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day...all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations (192).

For Brah, home is a complex and multifaceted concept that holds different meanings for different individuals. It represents a place of longing and nostalgia, a mythical destination that cannot be truly recaptured, even if one were to physically return to the geographical origin. Also, home is a tangible and sensory experience rooted in the lived reality of a particular locality. Home is a deeply personal and nuanced concept that encompasses both the imagined and the tangible aspects of our sense of belonging.

Home is both the starting point and ultimate destination, encompassing the notion of safety and belonging within a community. It is a place that requires no further explanation for those born there, and it holds an innate desire that cannot be denied as Raj explains: “Home as space is where it began and returns. Home as a secure place needs no elaboration for a native and connotes community. It is a place, in Spivakian terms, we cannot not want” (90).

II.1.1. Home and fiction:

Toni Morrison wrote about the concept of “home” in her novel *Home* 2012, that tackles events from the 50’s era. The novel revolves around the prominent theme of “home” and its elusive nature for Frank and Cee (Protagonists) throughout their journey, they search for a sense of home in their relationship, the military, various jobs, romantic partners, and even attempt to deny its importance. The novel explores their literal and figurative quest for home. Morrison in the novel says: “Whose house is this? Whose night keeps out the light In here? Say, who owns this house? It’s not mine. I dreamed another, sweeter, brighter With a view of lakes crossed in painted boats; Of fields wide as arms open for me. This house is strange. Its shadows lie. Say, tell me, why does its lock fit my key?” (40).

However, they find that their childhood hometown, Lotus, remains the same physical location, but they are finally able to embrace it as home. This transformation occurs as they become prepared to heal, confront their trauma, and view themselves and each other as complete and united individuals.

II.2. Diaspora:

To understand the term Diaspora, it is important to mention that it “was originally applied by Greeks to imply triumphalist migration or colonization. The original meaning of the word was related to voluntary migrations” (Raina 6470), diaspora is the “a strong attachment to and desire for literal return to a well-preserved homeland” (Clifford 305). Furthermore, Rainer Baubock & Thomas Faist states that: “Diaspora is an old concept whose uses and meanings have recently undergone dramatic change. Originally, the concept referred only to the historic experience of particular groups, specifically Jews and Armenians” (12). However, Judith T. Shuval argues that:

The term diaspora refers today not only to such classic groups as Jews, Greeks and Armenians, but to much wider categories which reflects processes of politically motivated uprooting and moving of populations, voluntary migration, global communications and transport. The term has acquired a broad semantic domain and now encompasses a motley array of groups such as political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, overseas communities. (42)

Shuval sees that in the present day, the term diaspora extends beyond its original application and now encompasses a much broader range of categories. This expansion reflects various factors such as forced displacement due to political reasons, voluntary migration, advancements in global communication and transportation. The term now encompasses a diverse range of groups, including political refugees, non-native residents, temporary workers, immigrants, those expelled from their homes, ethnic and racial minorities, and communities residing abroad.

II.2.1. Diaspora and Fiction:

Thus, Dr. M. Maheswaran discusses diaspora within the field Literature of The Indian Diaspora, it is the “dislocation, unfriendliness, rootlessness, fragmentation, racial discrimination, marginalization, crisis of identity, cultural clash, and many other difficulties caused by the experience of migrancy and Diaspora are widely portrayed in contemporary Indian writing in English” (41). Emigrant or Diasporic Literature, which draws inspiration from various forms of the Diaspora Theory, has influenced literary works in numerous languages worldwide. This genre of literature is often associated with the term "Indian Writing in English." In recent years, Indian authors writing in English have not only made noteworthy contributions to this field but have also gained international recognition and acclaim. It would be suitable to examine the distinctive characteristics and elements of such literature (40).

The creative contributions of Indian Diaspora writers have undeniably had a profound and transformative impact on English literature. Through their unique perspectives, rich cultural backgrounds, and the blending of multiple identities, these writers have brought a fresh and vibrant voice to the literary landscape. Their works explore the complexities of migration, diasporic experiences, and the challenges of living in between multiple worlds. The initial literary works of V.S. Naipaul, namely "The Mystic Masseur" and "The Mimic Men," effectively depict the sadness and aspirations experienced by individuals who were displaced as a result of indentured labor. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, a significant number of people were displaced from their homelands to work for the British Empire in various parts of the globe (41).

Both novels, "Born Confused" and "Queen of Dreams," share a common theme of immigration and transformation. They depict the experiences of immigrants in America and their quest for identity in a foreign land. The novels explore the challenges and aspirations of

these individuals as they strive to integrate into American society while maintaining their Indian heritage. Both authors focus on the California landscape and delve into domestic and spatial elements, emphasizing the struggles within the domestic sphere amid the diaspora. They highlight the longing, trauma, and cultural clashes experienced by the characters, portraying their attempts to create a sense of belonging and transform their surroundings into a meaningful place (Ahmad 42-43).

II.3. The Diasporising of Home and Gurnah:

In his article “*The Diasporising of Home: An Exploration of Space, Identity, and Domesticity in the Selected Works of Tanuja Desai Hidier and Chitra Banerjee*”, Mr. Sheikh Showkat Ahmad explores the experience of searching for home in diasporic spaces. Ahmad exemplifies by the Avtar Brah, along with other black British Asian and African-American scholars, emphasizes the importance of studying the domestic and spatial aspects of Diaspora. Instead of solely focusing on the scattering and dispersal of immigrants, scholars should delve into the realm of the home and the private spaces of immigrants (39-40). Avtar Brah suggests that analysing Diaspora through spatial terms can provide valuable insights into the lives of immigrants and their experiences within their domestic environments (McLoughlin 80).

Dr. Anne Ajulu Okungu argues that Abdulrazak Gurnah explores the concept of home in his novels *Paradise*, *Admiring Silence* and *By the Sea*, depicting characters who constantly move from one place to another. The idea of a "journey" symbolizes both personal growth and displacement in different contexts. Through travel, characters embark on a quest to find a physical home, but also to discover their own identity and purpose. The notion of home becomes fluid and evolving as characters navigate their journeys (17). Okungu resumes her analysis: “Gurnah’s ambivalent treatment of the diasporic experiences of his characters, the fact that he seems to take a nonpartisan view of either side (home and diaspora) and how this serves to highlight the idea of an elusive paradise preponderant through the novels” (18), that

is, Gurnah portrays the diasporic experiences of his characters in an ambivalent manner, neither favouring the notions of home nor the diaspora. Instead, he presents a balanced perspective, allowing readers to explore the complexities and nuances of both sides. By adopting this nonpartisan approach, Gurnah emphasizes the elusive nature of paradise, a recurring theme throughout his novels by not taking a clear stance, Gurnah invites readers to question the idea of a fixed and idealized home or a perfect paradise. He challenges the notion that one can find absolute fulfilment or happiness solely by returning to their place of origin or by assimilating into a new culture. This treatment of diasporic experiences serves to underscore the idea that the search for paradise, whether it is a physical place or a sense of belonging, is ultimately subjective and elusive. Gurnah invites readers to reflect on the multiple dimensions of home and diaspora, questioning conventional notions and embracing the fluidity and diversity of human experiences.

The concept of home and diaspora emphasizes the diverse manifestations of communal assembly that can arise from the dispersion of individuals. It acknowledges the difficulties encountered by those who experience displacement, while also acknowledging the prospects for solidarity, strength, and the establishment of communities in unfamiliar lands. Bhabha explains the idea of gathering in scattering as follow:

I have lived that moment of the scattering of the people, that in other times and other places becomes a time of gathering. Gathering of exiles and émigrés and refugees, gathering on the edge of foreign cultures; gathering at frontiers; gatherings in the ghettos or cafes of city centers; gathering in the half-life and half-light of foreign tongues, or in the uncanny fluency of another's language. Also the gathering of the people in the diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned. (292)

The experience of scattering, in different contexts, can either lead to a gathering of people or further separation. It describes situations where individuals are displaced from their original homes and find themselves in unfamiliar environments. In some cases, these displaced individuals may come together in gatherings, seeking solace, support, or a sense of community. One form of gathering mentioned is the gathering of exiles, émigrés, and refugees. These are individuals who have been forced to leave their home countries due to various reasons, such as persecution, conflict, or political instability. When they gather in new places, they may form communities that provide mutual support and understanding as they navigate their new lives. Frontiers can also be places of gathering. These are border regions where people from different cultures and backgrounds come together. They may gather for trade, cultural exchange, or simply to interact with one another. These gatherings on the edge of foreign cultures can lead to the blending of traditions, ideas, and languages.

In the same lane of thought, Dr. Anne Ajulu Okungu sees that Gurnah's characters are often uprooted from their original cultural and social contexts due to factors like migration, colonialism, or war. She says: "Gurnah's characters are away from their natal homes, living in diasporic conditions, which are often characterized by a sense of non-belonging, but the very sense of belonging to their original abodes is also not well established" (21). Gurnah's characters often face marginalization and discrimination in their diasporic lives. They may encounter prejudice, racism, or xenophobia, which further reinforces their sense of non-belonging. These experiences can lead to a feeling of being "othered" and result in a fragmented sense of identity, the thing that is manifested in his novel *Dottie*, that tells the story of a Zanzibari family that immigrated from Zanzibar to Britain to face problems such as: Cultural Displacement, Alienation and Marginalization, Ambiguous Identity and Loss and Nostalgia. Dottie's journey of leaving her home and adapting to a new country is not explicitly mentioned as a specific event in her life. However, this experience significantly influences her

process of defining her identity in Britain. Dottie is the daughter of immigrants who belong to the second generation. Her grandfather, who is Pathan, and her grandmother, who is Lebanese, relocated to the UK in the early 1900s. In her search for identity in Britain, Dottie consistently encounters and challenges the politics of the nation-state. Bungaro highlights how race (specifically referring to blackness) and gender (specifically referring to femininity) are the primary stigmatized markers within the practice and politics of the border. Nevertheless, these markers are not the only ones, as they interchangeably intertwine with differences in nationality, sexuality, and class within a fluid system

In Gurnah's narratives, the sense of non-belonging and the lack of well-established belonging to their original abodes reflect the complexities and challenges faced by individuals living in diasporic conditions. Through his characters, Gurnah explores themes of displacement, cultural hybridity, and the search for identity and home in a world where boundaries and notions of home are constantly shifting. His works shed light on the human experience of longing for a place to belong while navigating the complexities of diaspora (37).

The characters in Gurnah's texts rely heavily on storytelling to construct dwellings in their diasporic reality, that Salman Rushdie describes as "the homes of the mind", which can be understood as homes created through imagination (Rushdie 10). The narratives within these texts play a crucial role in shaping the lives of both the storytellers and the audience. Individuals who share common cultural backgrounds use storytelling as a means to preserve their heritage, while individuals from diverse traditions engage in the exchange of tales, occasionally in a friendly manner but at times with subtle jabs that emphasize their differences, such as in the conversation between his characters Hamid and Kalasinga regarding their interpretations of *Paradise*.

Conclusion:

In the quest for home amidst the challenges of diaspora, the aesthetics of silence emerge as silence transcends language and cultural barriers, allowing individuals to navigate the complexities of their identity and find solace in their search for a sense of belonging. Silence becomes a sanctuary, a space where the noise of displacement fades, and a deeper understanding of oneself and the world is cultivated. Within this silent realm, the quest for home unfolds, providing the necessary stillness to hear the whispers of memory, tradition, and longing, ultimately leading to a profound sense of belonging in the diaspora. This chapter explores the theoretical dimensions of silence in different fields of study and different levels of the human experience; it also delves in the manifestations of silence and its significance for each conceivable orientation. Silence then becomes more than a state of being; it reshapes and crystallizes to be something else.

Chapter two: The Paradox of Silence Between Ontological Construction and Strategic Subversion in *Admiring Silence*

Introduction:

This chapter deals with Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Admiring Silence* (1996). It explores silence within the context of the novel to reveal the psychological and social motives behind its artistic manifestation in contemporary society. Stuart Sim's *The Manifesto for Silence* explains the crucial need for increasing silence in various aspects of human life, including the environment, religion, philosophy, the arts, literature, and science (32). He suggests that the failure to make room for silence will result in negative consequences for the human race. The conflict between the politics of noise and the politics of silence holds profound implications for all individuals and communities. Remaining neutral on this issue is not a viable option (39). This chapter is divided into two sections, each one approaches the factors which led to silence or the reaction towards those factors in a silent way. Also, it deals with the outcomes of both silences as silence can have different effects on the dialogue between the Self and the Other. When silence is used as a tool for acceptance, the self dominates the interaction, potentially limiting the other's ability to express themselves. On the other hand, when the self refuses to engage in dialogue with the other through silence, it may give a sense of empowerment. The use of silence, then, can have a significant impact on the power dynamics and outcomes of interpersonal communication.

I. The Depiction of Silences in *Admiring Silence*:

Starting from the nameless narrator of the novel as he struggles to express his emotions and confront his inner turmoil, silence becomes a shield used to hide his true thoughts and feelings regarding his new culture and his home culture. The narrator has a supreme submission to silence as he repeats the phrase "respectful silence" along with the flow of the events. When he visits the doctor's office, he utters to himself: "I sat in respectful silence

while he went through his lines” (11). Silence in this instance creates a barrier between him and the outside metropolitan society. It conveys unspoken emotions, unsaid truths, and unexpressed desires and it adds depth and complexity to the structure of the character. For instance, in the doctor’s office, the narrator imagines how possible the doctor’s life could be in silence, he assumes: “I imagined him getting wearily into his Range Rover after work to go to his pretty wife in their comfortable house in a pleasant suburb” (11).

The narrator chooses silence when it comes to telling both his families about each other and due to his tendency to withhold information about his relationships, his silence becomes a stumbling block in his interpersonal connections. His family holds resentment towards him for his lack of communication, and he ends up breaking up with Emma due to his introverted and distant nature, which stems from his habit of keeping secrets. The narrator's struggle to maintain positive relationships with others bears resemblance to his father Abbas, who had abandoned the narrator and his mother in the past. This parallel is intriguing as it suggests a similarity in their failures in maintaining healthy relationships. His wife Emma believes that the reason why the narrator's father is silent is that “he had no dominion over his life” (53). He lacks control over his own life as if he has no authority or power. Emma's remark sheds light on why the protagonist remains silent in his interactions with others and in his role as a narrator, suggesting that he may feel powerless or lacking in control.

Multicultural Britain is, indeed, a space of freedom of expression and multinational existence. This variety brings about a kind of confusion in the narrator’s life, especially with his Zanzibari Islamic background as mentioned in the novel: “Muslim, orthodox Sunni by upbringing, Wahabi by association and still unable to escape the consequences of those early constructions” (12). The changing lifestyle, thoughts and beliefs created a double circumference where the protagonist has adopted the state of silence to coexist with his dispersion.

The novel's title, *Admiring Silence*, conveys a dual meaning regarding the treatment of silence in the narrative. Silence is presented as both a psychological state and a deliberate choice, and the title can be analysed from the same perspective. By using this title, Gurnah invokes two opposing groups: the "Admirers of Silence," who are oppressive figures that exercise control over others through silencing them, such as the Zanzibari government's tyrants; and those who appreciate the power of silence as a deliberate stance, as exemplified by the protagonist who refuses to engage in dialogue with individuals who display discriminatory behaviour. Thus, the title, *Admiring Silence*, represents both an acknowledgment of the oppressive nature of silencing and an appreciation for the deliberate strategic choice to remain silent in response to discrimination and racism. That is to say, the novel combines both moments of silence as a condition and as a response.

The novel explores the interplay between voicing and silencing through various stylistic choices, contributing to its overarching theme of encounter. The narrator, despite appearing silent, actually expresses himself eloquently and provides profound critiques on important subjects. This paradoxical relationship between speech and silence is evident from the beginning of the novel. The narrator initially tries to suppress his physical pain, hoping it would disappear and allow him to focus on his restless thoughts. However, as his discomfort becomes unbearable, he seeks medical help from a doctor who holds prejudiced views towards migrants, whom he collectively labels as "Afro-Caribbean" regardless of their diverse backgrounds.

During this encounter, the doctor dominates the conversation, to the extent that the narrator feels as if the doctor is talking alone. In a silent confessional manner, the narrator shares with the reader that the more the doctor talks, the worse the narrator feels. The doctor's words make him feel diminished as if he was a child: "The more he [the doctor] talked the worse he made me feel, as if I was a slow child or a palsied ancient who had lost hearing and

speech, as if I was an uncomprehending native” (9). The silencing mode imposed by the doctor reflects the broader epistemological framework of the encounter between the "Holy European Empire" and its "ancient colonial provinces" (5). The narrator ironically implies that the narrative of empire ultimately leads to nothing more than "beautiful ruins" that echo the fragmented pieces of colonial history (4):

Let your eye wander farther afield, and there are the factories and warehouses and mechanized farms and model towns and chapels, and museums bursting with booty from other people’s broken histories and libraries sprawling with books congregated over centuries. If you compare that to any one of the seething cesspits that pass for cities in the dark places of the world, and take into account the dedicated exertion that made it possible, then as small a comfort as your own doctor does not seem overindulgent. (4)

the passage highlights the dynamic between voicing and silencing in *Admiring Silence*. Despite the narrator's apparent silence, he profoundly conveys his thoughts and critiques. This paradox is exemplified in the encounter with the doctor, where the doctor's dominance in the conversation silences the narrator, echoing the power dynamics between the European Empire and its colonial subjects. Yet the narrator’s silence has a subversive mode that renders the context of the dominant voicing doctor absurd and full of gaps.

Drawing from Sim's classification of silence as a condition or response, the main character in *Admiring Silence* experiences a loss of “dominion over his life” (35). It can be seen as a condition imposed upon him by external forces such as other people or impactful experiences that hold greater sway over his life than he does himself. Furthermore, the novel explores the theme of silence as a pervasive condition that arises from the interplay of various social, racial, and familial factors. It highlights the social dimension of silence through its depiction of Zanzibar which is located at the crossroads of mercantile activities in the Indian Ocean, and

it has been governed by various administrations such as the Oman Sultanate and the Arabs, that have exerted their power in the politics and economy of the region. However, this exercise of power has come at the cost of silencing the voices of the Zanzibari citizens, who are mostly marginalized and vulnerable in the face of misgovernment. It is suggested that the silence in Zanzibar is a result of a complex interplay of factors, including historical legacies of colonialism and imperialism, racial and familial divides, ethnic cleansing and the perpetuation of oppressive power structures. This silence can be seen as a damaging aspect of life in Zanzibar as it reinforces the marginalization of vulnerable citizens. Silence is portrayed as a condition that has emerged as a consequence of the tragic situation lived in Zanzibar.

In *Language and Collective Mobilization*, Nadra O. Hashim analyses the situation of Zanzibar during the colonial and post-colonial eras, which gives an overview of how voices were silenced and muted. She holds that the British regimes in Zanzibar aimed to concentrate political power under their control and support the development of a wealthy economic elite. The British promoted the idea of Zanzibar as an Arab state and relied on local Arabs, who were already prosperous from their maritime trade, to be the primary political representatives. This helped the British to maximize economic control and extract revenue for the crown. Overall, the British rule in Zanzibar was focused on serving their own interests and maintaining control over the region (8-9). This deprived people of wealth and freedom. The British repressive policies did not end with the end of the British occupations in Zanzibar, yet, it did extend up to this day as Paul Gilroy points out in his *Race and Culture in Postmodernity* that the British regimes “have regularly presented the illegitimate presence of blacks as an invasion” (190).

This highlights Gurnah’s experience of exile and he later portrayed it in his novel *Memory of Departure* (1987), the one that pictures Zanzibar's independence era, where racism was particularly oriented against Arabs. This reflects the hostility incited by nationalism,

particularly against individuals of Arab origins. Hostility was, then, “unleashed by the removal of the common enemy, the British” and led to “persecutions, imprisonments, murders, and regime of terror that followed” (Hand 75). As a colonial legacy, the divide-and-rule policy of the British colonial system in turn contributed to the extreme events with its accentuation of the division of the Zanzibari society on ethnic grounds, hence mobilizing ethno-racial conflicts with its race politics (Killian 106).

Gurnah’s fiction on exile is, therefore, caught between discourses inextricably haunted by racial divides. In fact, the loss of freedom constitutes the binding theme in Gurnah’s writing about the forces of separation that afflict one’s identity as an exile (Kharoua 128). This is what Gurnah emphasizes in *Admiring Silence* when describing Zanzibar after independence as an era when no big changes have affected rulers nor ruled, the country is still governed by the “homegrown bullies”, “the lawmakers and the bullshitters, squatting over everyone’s faces and issuing their wastes on them” (41). It was the history of the powerful where Zanzibar lost the records of the excluded and the perspectives of those who have been marginalized.

In Zanzibar, the presence of multiple ethnic groups means that power and control are interrelated with language as ethnicity is often defined by language. Thus, gaining political or economic power also entails the ability to control language, which ultimately is translated to controlling speech. It is noted that: “The true sources of conflict in Zanzibar are largely economic and linguistic; they are a function of the grave disparities that characterize plantation economies” (Hashim 2). Such a policy provides negative conditions for the state of the country such as manipulating education for the controlling ethnic groups and 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 (Hashim 2). Thus, it is a war to speak a language

that is already of their own which resulted in social segregation that caused people to embrace silence.

The narrator experiences a sense of alienation, which is something he has in common with other migrants who have been separated from their homeland (in his case, Zanzibar) and also feel estranged in England, he feels like: “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), he escapes his exile through silence and interior talks. He utilized storytelling in order to fill his moments of loneliness. In the novel stories takes different forms and functions according to the narrator’s needs, 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, the narrator said in silence: “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). the narrator tells tales that comment on his situation as a foreigner in England. These stories likely serve as a form of self-expression and reflection on his experiences and challenges in finding his belongingness. Through these narratives, he may offer insights into the complexities of his position, exploring themes of identity, cultural displacement, and the nuances of being an outsider in a different society.

While storytelling provides the narrator with temporary solace, allowing him to temporarily evade his troubles and concerns regarding his past and present life, it ultimately fails to resolve his issues of displacement. By concealing certain aspects of his life and

fabricating stories, he avoids confronting the truth about his circumstances. Initially, he remains oblivious to the deterioration of his relationship with Emma. However, Emma begins to perceive his lies, as evidenced by her recognition of his "inconsistency" (63). Eventually, she ceases to believe his stories as intently, indicating her awareness of his deceptive behaviour.

II. Categorizing Silence :

In *Manifesto for Silence*, Stuart Sim has categorized silence into two types: “silence as a response” and “silence as a condition”. Thus, he explains:

Silence as a condition has a long history of people writing about it as an ontological phenomenon. I find it very interesting reading the work of people like Max Picard, for instance, who almost reifies silence into an actual object out there. His notion that silence comes before any existence is intriguing. But certainly, the second formulation, silence as a response, has more to do with expression and the aesthetic notion that if you try to achieve the condition of silence, it is to have an effect on a particular individual or the audience, as it were. (1)

In that respect, the silences mentioned in the novel are categorized accordingly into condition and response. It came as a response to the English segregation and ethnocentrism which was exercised upon migrants. As Sim defines in his categorization, the concept of silence in this work can also be interpreted, not only, as a form of response but also as resistance, where it serves as a useful tool for the protagonist to take revolt against those who considered him an outsider. In the moments of silence, the protagonist witnesses a refusal to engage in a conversation with a person who makes racially discriminatory comments or holds views that are based on racist or Eurocentric beliefs, as when he refuses to correct the doctor’s assumptions about him being an Afro-Caribbean. He states inwardly: “Of course, after all this drama I did not have the heart to tell him that I was not Afro-Caribbean” (10). This refers to those whom Gurnah called “silence admirers”, the expression that he used to open the novel with. Gurnah initiates his first chapter of the novel in the first part with an epigraph from Robert Louis Stevenson’s posthumous book *In the South Seas* (1908) entitled “*The King of Apemama*”: “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” (1). In 1888, Stevenson's voyage to the South Seas for the purpose of improving his health provided him with sufficient material to write his book (Ambrosini 211). Apemama is an atoll located in the North of the Equator, within the Gilbert Islands. Stevenson was greatly influenced by Tembinok, the king of Apemama, whom he depicts as "the last tyrant, the last remaining vestige of a defunct society (206).

As the epigraph indicates, Gurnah is an admirer of silence himself just like all those tyrants who controlled silence. In the novel, *Admiring Silence*, admiration refers to those who exercise their authority to suppress individuals who are under their control through the title. For example, the narrator's portrayal of "tyrants" who appreciate silence is similar to Stevenson's depiction 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” (134). And here the narrator is referring to the Fatwa of Khomeini which came for the execution of Salman Rushdie after writing his *Satanic Verses* (1988), which imposes silence through spreading fear and restrictions. This makes him an admirer of silence.

II.1. Silence as an Ontological Condition:

The case of silence as a condition came mostly when the narrator had to keep silent. It was a result of discrimination and muting that the narrator has faced mainly in his hometown because of the repressive regimes that had control over Zanzibari, yet, the discrimination and segregation that caused the narrator to be silent was not only the product of being traumatized from his experience at home but also England was a place where he witnessed factors that resulted in silence. In his first year in England the narrator had to make his living by working at a restaurant, where he was treated racially as mentioned in the novel when he approached Emma the white lady and the owner of the restaurant refused that action and “with a sharp

motion of his head sends her away” (58), the thing that was of a racial reaction that was followed by his words: “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”(58). The owner of the restaurant adds that those immigrants can “doss on the state” if they want, but they cannot doss on him (58) and by “doss on the state” Peter the owner means that immigrants like Indians and Pakistanis, whom the narrator is part of, are the ones who are 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” (59).

Not only Peter, but also Emma’s parents and especially her mother considered the narrator to be one of the corrupted coloured immigrants, which caused him to remain silent when they are present. The narrator feels the echoes of discrimination. For instance, he silently shows awareness of the mother’s racial behaviour as he reflects: “In her presence I often felt like a third person, as if I was absent and the conversation was being reported to me later” (72). For a white family, the idea of having a black member in their family is indeed unacceptable. When Emma gave birth to their first baby girl Amelia, her parents Mrs. Willoughby and Mr Willoughby were not satisfied nor happy to have a mixed-race grandchild and they faced her with “hatred” (85), which the narrator was fully aware of: “I could feel the stirrings of a tragic story: confused offspring of mixed parentage doomed to instability and degeneration as the tainted blood cursed through generations, waiting to surface in madness, congenital bone weakness, homosexuality, cowardice and treachery” (86). The discrimination shown by Emma’s parents is obvious, as any racist white European citizen, they are afraid of getting their genes mixed with a black DNA which may curse their pure race. The protagonist has felt that way before having his first child. He attempts to express himself as follows:

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. (30)

They could express some kind of control over him which causes him to keep silent, a similar case to the one he experienced in Zanzibar; he has become unfamiliar with his own voice as a result of his ongoing silence among white English. Hence, Alienation is depicted via the condition of silence.

The narrator's personal traumas, which date back to his childhood and involve his family problems, are the reasons why he feels compelled to remain silent. His past experiences, including his father's abandonment and his upbringing by a stepfather, have left him with feelings of shame and hurt that are evident in his expressions of regret and pain: "Age breeds aches. I could have told her ages ago- that my father was Abbas and he left my mother before I was born" (215). His past was full of painful memories that he could not tell stories about what he lived to Emma, which later was revealed that Abbas whom he considered in the novel to be his uncle is his father and Hashim, whom he presents as his father actually is the stepfather.

The narrator finds no better escape from his present situation and his memories than silence, which he considered to be the landscape of utterance that he was deprived of. He fills the silent mode in the novel with storytelling, which can be considered as his "third space" where he tells stories to escape the fact that he is not accepted in his wife's milieu and also to mimic the colonial discourse or to keep silent about his traumatic past as he comments: "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). He aspires to give himself the delusion that he chose silence, which was not the case because silence was imposed on him. The moments of silence are a kind of revision of the past, yet they are also a conviviality with his present events. As a mechanism to cope with the missing order of his life, the narrator chooses to tell stories and revise them. He uses silence as a cover, under which he holds his thoughts, tells stories and pretends to blend with the English society not to feel as a stranger: “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” (62).

Although stories can provide the narrator with a temporary escape from the troubles in his life, they do not offer a solution to his problems. Instead, the act of hiding certain facts about his life and fabricating stories to defer his concerns prevents him from confronting the truth. Initially, the narrator is unaware of the deterioration of his relationship with Emma, but she notices “inconsistencies” (63) in his stories and stops paying close attention to them. Despite the narrator's belief that Emma's fondness for narratives allows her to understand his adjusted stories (33). Over time, she begins to complete the stories for herself and takes control of the relationship, ultimately leading to her distancing herself from the narrator. He implies that Emma takes control of their relationship and gradually distances herself from him. His tendency to be unreliable in his storytelling is not the genuine cause of his problems, but rather an unsuccessful attempt to improve his life. The root of his difficulties lies in his marginalized status as a migrant and the challenges of his past, which make it difficult for him to establish a sense of home and self that are interconnected. Accordingly, the process of recreating a sense of self is closely tied to the creation of a space where one can feel at home. *Admiring Silence* uses the concept of silence as a symbol for this space, suggesting that the sense of home is not necessarily tied to national culture.

Gurnah portrays a character who experiences ambiguity in his identity (Hand 43). The protagonist feels lost in the border space and consistently experiences a sense of isolation and displacement, making the novel more about the experience of migration rather than exile. Although the narrator has memories of Zanzibar, he cannot fully leave it behind. However, the protagonist does not find comfort in his past life due to familial and social conflicts that he attempted to escape through silence.

II.2. Silence as a Strategic Response:

Silence in the first case is considered a condition that was a result of several social and personal factors at home and in England. Stuart Sim also discusses silence as a free choice, a deliberate action that may be a way of communication. Hence, Sim states: “Not to say something becomes as meaningful as saying something when there is a conscious decision to refrain from communicating verbally” (13). Purposeful silence is strategic when used by migrants or postcolonial figures from the dark margin. It is subversive, that is, those who were forced to be silent since their childhood may learn to use this silence differently for their own benefit against the tyrant authority.

The silence performed in *Admiring Silence* is an act of resistance. The narrator uses silence as a weapon against those who judged and criticised him, and his silence becomes an act of admiration as the title introduced. As a black man hailing from a previously colonized country and living in England during the 1990s, the narrator is subjected to a pervasive sense of inferiority by the white English. He finds himself facing the unwelcoming behaviour of Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby and feign ignorance when discriminatory statements targeting individuals of his ethnicity are made on television. Furthermore, when the protagonist is introduced to Emma's parents at the beginning of their relationship, she warns him because she knows that they will stereotypically Other him and she always makes sure to keep his background a secret for her parents and she even asks him: “Don't tell them those kinds 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" (72).

Thus, the narrator relies on many monologues to give responses in cases where he chooses not to start a conversation or speak. Monologues perfectly serve to manifest the spots where the narrator chooses silence over speech. They contain within their context a sense of analepsis. Rimmon-Kenan explains the concept of analepsis as a narrative device where the story moves back in time to provide background or context. Analepsis can be seen as a second narrative in relation to the main narrative, which Gerard Genette calls the "first narrative" (47). Silences in this context can be considered part of this second narrative, as the narrator's return to previously unmentioned or partially mentioned aspects of the story can create a second narrative. Genette further divides analepsis into two categories: internal and external analepses. Internal analepses occur when the story moves back to a time that comes after the beginning of the first narrative, while external analepses refer to a time before the start of the first narrative (211). For example, in the context of a 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). An external analepsis might involve recounting the father's early life or childhood, while an internal analepsis, on the other hand, might describe events that occurred during the narrator's own lifetime but were not mentioned earlier in the story. Furthermore, Rimmon-Kenan's discussion highlights the complex ways in which narrative structures can be built through the use of analepsis, and how this device can create multiple layers of storytelling within a single work. Silences in this case serves the concept of analepsis within the context of narration.

After the narrator's incident with the restaurant owner Peter where he worked, he started expressing and communicating his thoughts to the reader indirectly and subtly. The

monologues are the ways in which the narrator expresses his responses. In this regard, he responds to Peter's discriminatory speech as follows: "*Chin-up, old Phut-Phut, they are not really as many as they look, and they come here full of love for you*" (59). In other words, Peter is reminded by means of a sarcastic inner monologue that immigrants like the narrator came to England by political forces and severe conditions. They did not choose to come to the country just for the love they have for England. In another scene, where the narrator's silence is a "silence as a response", was when he visits the doctor for his heart problem. Upon examination, the doctor diagnoses his heart as "buggered" (8), which the doctor explains that it is a common condition for people "like" the narrator: "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" (9). The narrator prefers not to correct the doctor, he rather let him think that he is an Afro-Caribbean, yet, in a monologue mode, he explains to the reader his focal point:

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)

This is considered an instance of irony that the narrator's illness is diagnosed by the doctor with regard to the patient's ethnic identity although the doctor is not familiar with the patient's background. During the diagnosis, the doctor lists illnesses that are commonly found in Afro-Caribbean patients, and the protagonist listens to the diagnosis without interrupting or commenting. However, it is later revealed through analepsis that the protagonist has a detailed response to the doctor's diagnosis, which the doctor dramatizes. The protagonist's response is

specifically directed at the doctor's overgeneralizations, which make the protagonist's condition seem "perfectly predictable" (91). By having the narrator maintain silence in situations where speech is expected, the narrative prompts the reader to focus on the enduring imperial context and the motivations behind the narrator's silence. Through the doctor's display of "smug ignorance" (10) the narrator highlights the political influence of silence and exposes the limitations of speech as a tool of power. The doctor's use of speech weakens his narrative because it reveals his shallow understanding of the "Afro-Caribbean" identity reducing it to a superficial label devoid of meaning.

In contrast, the narrator's silence becomes an empowering act as it satirizes the doctor's unwavering self-assurance. Through his silence and its remarkable effectiveness, the narrator draws attention to systems of misrepresentation. The political potency of silence in subverting misrepresentation is evident in the narrator's seemingly passive yet impactful silence against the doctor. The writer has shared his knowledge of the racial factors that shape the doctor's diagnostic reasoning: "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. The most gentle of stories are interpreted as cunning metaphors that turn them into beasts and sub-humans, miserable creatures and slaves" (7).

In relation to the idea of silence as a response, the narrator's stories have a significant impact as meta-narratives in subverting Eurocentric worldviews and actions. However, it is ironic that these stories actually "mimic" the colonial discourse that still dominates modern-day England within the novel. Despite this, the protagonist's empire stories allow him to communicate with Emma's parents, even though it is not a genuine form of communication since he only echoes what they already know and stereotype. It appears that the protagonist responds with silence in situations where the empire is speaking. However, by using mocking exaggerations in his stories, he is able to assert his own voice through silence and make a

subversive statement. The effectiveness of his stories as weapons lie in how they challenge the Western discourse by exposing its stereotypical images of the Other. This is exemplified by his portrayal of colonial Zanzibar as an exotic and romanticized image, he sarcastically says to Emma's parents: "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" (22). The narrator kept silent about the truth, he never mentioned the true image of Zanzibar, yet, he mocks the Western beliefs and views of the colonial space.

The narrator's descriptions refer to a broader perspective established by Western discourse that applies to all colonized societies by uncovering and rejecting its power. The narrator believes that the assumptions that forged the foundation of modern British culture were built on a mistaken 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" (7). Homi Bhabha, in his *Location of Culture*, points out that: "What emerges between mbimesis 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). This explains how powers lose their prestige and force when the power of mimicry interrelates with writing, the thing that the narrator used as a weapon. Bhabha argues that history in short is a constructed text, which means it can be reconstructed to challenge dominant narratives. He also highlights the constructed nature of Western discourse, which is based on false assumptions. Bhabha places mimicry at the centre of this critique, suggesting that it can be transformed from a tool of oppression into a strategy of resistance and a means of asserting agency. By challenging dominant assumptions through mimicry, marginalized groups can transform the power dynamic and create new possibilities for their own representation and empowerment. Stereotypical Eurocentric assumptions are

devoided of their powerful significance via the subversive filters of the silent space that the narrator resorted to in England. The narrator's stories serve as meta-narratives within the novel, disrupting Eurocentric worldviews and actions by highlighting the significance of silence in responses. At a high level, these stories inadvertently imitate the colonial discourse that continues to dominate present-day England. Silence in this context serves to emphasize the narrator's sarcastic behaviour in ignoring the English imperialism and underestimating its legacy, the narrator declares: "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" (180). Ironically, he uses the term "civilization" instead of "England", his selection of words seems to entail a form of degradation, as he connects civilization with his visit to the doctor who makes generalizations about his identity without truly knowing it. The fact that he is diagnosed based on his ethnic background underscores the ironic manner in which he employs the term "civilization."

Conclusion:

The depiction of silence combines both collective and personal experiences during the colonial and post-colonial eras, which can be seen as a response to oppression and discrimination. Additionally, silence is presented as a potent form of resistance in the face of such challenges. The spots of silences the narrator undergoes are either imposed silences because of fear from the discriminatory regimes, or chosen moments of silence that are considered a weapon for resisting and subverting the imperial legacies and their stereotypical images that still haunt Britain.

Chapter Three: When Silence Transforms into Home

Introduction:

Silence has been an integral part of various cultures across the world. From the ritualistic silence observed during certain ceremonies to the quiet contemplation and meditation practices in Eastern cultures, the significance of silence varies widely among different ethnic groups. However, silence is not just a cultural phenomenon, it is also of psychological and psychoanalytic significance. Regardless of its cultural acceptance, silence's role in shaping an individual's psyche has been a subject of controversy and debate. This chapter explores the relationship between cultural silence and its transformative role as a psychic mode of experience. It delves into the psychological aspects of silence and how it impacts human psychic transformation. By examining both cultural and psychological perspectives, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of silence and its role in shaping human experiences in postcolonial spaces.

I. Silence as a Psychic Mode of Experience and Self-transformation:

The changing meanings that were included in different stages of the narrator's life tell that he undertakes a process of transformation. This phase is coined the transformation phase; it is the result of the diasporic factors that had a large influence over the narrator's definition of several concepts and even it reshaped so many events that he retells in silence. In her *"Silence: Cultural Function and Psychological Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy"*, Elsa Ronningstam introduces the concept of "selective silence" which refers to a deliberate decision to avoid discussing certain topics or experiences. This can occur for various reasons, including shame, fear, discomfort, or a desire to protect oneself. In some cases, people may avoid discussing certain topics because they are deeply ingrained in cultural taboos or social stigmas (1280).

These psychic motifs are the ones that manifested the narrator's way of dealing with memories of the past in Zanzibar. He was so secretive about his homeland memories and he kept so many details from his wife and her parents. The feeling of shame was not mainly related to his life in Zanzibar, but also the shame that followed him after building a new life in England. It is a life in the form of secrets that he kept from his parents. The novel reveals that his silence was a consequence of the shame he felt towards his life with Emma and if he reveals that he cohabitates with an English woman, it would bring shame to his family. This shame would mean that he has denied his family their customary influence on the choice of partner (75). The narrator tells the story of Hashim whom he represents as his uncle, and with the escalation of events Hashim turns out to be his step-father and he reveals the story of his father to the readers. This transformation in narration tells a lot about the narrator's mindset and his feelings of shame.

Moreover, Ronningstam explains how individuals from high-shame cultures may develop complex communication patterns that involve both spoken and non-spoken material. Her analysis of the cultural significance of silence in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy reveals that people from 'high shame cultures' are used to hiding shameful experiences (1280). In certain cultures, such as those that place a high value on honour and respectability, individuals may feel a strong sense of shame or disgrace when they experience something that goes against the expectations or norms of their community. The thing that happened to the narrator when his mother and step-father knew about his relationship with Emma, and Hashim (his step-father) faced him with his deeds and made him feel shameful about what he did: "I think your father just wanted to run away from his life, from us, from here. He could not imagine the hurt and shame he was leaving behind. And now you have done the same" (188). For individuals from these "high shame cultures" the act of hiding shameful experiences can

become second nature. This behaviour can be detrimental in many ways as it can lead to feelings of isolation, which caused the narrator in this case to choose silence over speech.

In *Admiring Silence*, the disappearance of Abbas (the narrator's father) is presented from multiple perspectives. The narrator himself shares his version of events through the stories he fabricates (36). The narrator's mother also tells her version of the story to the narrator, who serves as her audience (123). Additionally, Abbas' parents offer their own perspective on the same story (35), and the narrator's stepfather, whom the narrator initially portrays as his uncle and father, also provides his viewpoint (188). These multiple focalizations counteract the negative influence of the narrator's lies and fabrications. Despite admitting to deceiving both his immediate audience and the reader, the narrator dismisses any concern with an "I don't care" attitude (215). While he expresses guilt and regret for driving Emma away, the narrator insists that the story he has shared "will have to remain that way until I can raise the calories to return to it" (215).

The story told by the narrator is strongly linked to emotions of shame and pain which was introduced in the first part of the novel: "I have found myself leaning heavily on this pain. At first, I tried to silence it, thinking it would go and leave me to my agitated content. That it would linger for a season, a firm reminder of the disquiet that lurks and coils below the surface of the stubbornly self-gratifying vision of our lives" (3). This subtraction difference in this context tells how silence is the main driving force for the process of transformation.

Despite his high feeling of shame, the narrator advocates for the importance of accepting and understanding one's identity without doubting the truthfulness of the story: "the story exists because it has to, and it needs you to be these things so we can know who we are" (15). The narrator conciseness of the ideological processes which embedded certain beliefs and ideas in him through their metanarratives urged him to retell these stories in a way that fits his own social context. He explains: "This was where my narcissism lay, I suppose, in my

desire to insert myself in a self-flattering discourse which required that England be guilty and decadent, instead playing my part as well and as silently as Pocahontas” (15). In other words, the narrator realizes that to establish his own identity or presence, he needs to highlight the differences between himself and the people around him. Specifically, when the narrator interacts with Emma's British friends, he recognizes that the cultural gap between them can be used as a way to validate or construct his own sense of self:

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. (62)

The concept of mimicry introduced by Bhabha, which suggests a similarity with some differences, creates a space for the narrator to recount his journey to England and his past in Zanzibar. This allows him to navigate between the realms of historical truth and fictional storytelling. By bridging the cultural gap that separates him from others, he gains the power to shape the narrative. However, he also recognizes that in order to connect the present and the past, he must employ fictional elements or rely on existing narrative structures.

The narrator presents events in his story and perceives them in a way where he relates present and past events. One of the noticeable traits of the narrator's presentation style is that he has difficulty separating or organizing past events into distinct compartments or categories. The narrator reflects on how difficult it is to begin his stories because he sees events as interconnected and part of a series that extends far into the past. This implies that the narrator is not able to separate individual events from each other, and sees them as part of a larger story.

This may suggest that the narrator's experiences have had a significant impact on him and that his inability to compartmentalize his past, may be due to the emotional weight and significance of those events. The interconnectedness of events may also indicate a sense of continuity in the narrator's life, with events from the past continuing to impact him in the present. The narrator's silence during most of the present events is a revision of memories from the past: "Sooner or later, I am going to have to go back to the beginning and tell this story properly. I can't quite fix on the beginning yet, where it is as such. When I think I've found a good position from which to start, I am tempted by the possibility that everything would seem clearer if I began with what led up to it" (17). It is clear that he suffers from diasporic accumulations, where he is haunted by memories, the stories told by the narrator often reveal his grappling with his inner turmoil and conflict. He struggles with his intense emotions such as guilt and shame which are a heritage from his shame culture.

However, the narrative has taken some unexpected turns in moments of silence and revision, as the narrator tries to cope with his emotions and present situation. The protagonist, and after finding himself living in-between, adopts silence as a kind of defence mechanism. As stated, silence is indeed a form of communication and a way of relating to others but also it is a tool of resistance (Ronningstam 1281). Resisting a reality that the narrator cannot fit in necessitates a dwelling in silence because, as the narrator states: "I like to dwell on differences" (12), it is a mechanism through which the narrator copes with incongruities of the border. The English lifestyle that the narrator has to experience is not the environment where he can belong. The narrator always takes the blame for Amelia's actions in a way, his difficulties to blend into the English society make the process of raising an English daughter an impossible mission. In this regard, he deeply points out: "Emma glaring at me! Demanding that I take the blame for my ineffectual love for a daughter willingly overwhelmed by the

gloating self-assurance of the culture that had nurtured her” (14). Thus, British culture and the English lifestyle are factors that hinder his psychic process of feeling a new home.

II. The Metamorphosis of Silence into an Inner Home of Desires:

Admiring Silence is about examining how the narrator interacts with his inner self and how he reacts to his emotions over this in-between experience. It focuses on the connections between human experiences and the environment around him. The narrator explores the idea that the way he feels can be mirrored in the physical spaces he occupies, and how those spaces affect his feelings. The events are an exploration of the complex connections between human emotion and the physical world.

Ronningstam assumes that: “silence can resemble a retreat or a space for resolving dilemmas that words cannot comprehend or it can provide a protection and legitimization of the core authentic self” (1282). When used as a part of a therapeutic process or developmental transition, silence can be compared to speech as it has its own way of building connections in a non-verbal manner. Rather than being a lack of communication, silence can offer an opportunity for individuals to take a break and mend ruptured relationships. In this sense, silence can act as a retreat or a space for resolving conflicts that may be difficult to articulate verbally. All in all, silence can be seen as an active and beneficial element in personal growth and inner transformation.

In her *Journeys Through Subalternity and Agency*, Mohineet Kaur Boparai argues that: “An aphorism goes, “home is where the heart is”, and since the heart is an inner, and not an overt, condition, home too, is not just a tangible place, but is structured on an emotional connection” (85). In this respect, Boparai explains how the concept of “home” is often associated with a sense of belonging. Individuals can experience a sense of belonging in various locations, with the family home being the most immediate and intimate. As one's sense of belonging extends beyond the family unit, it may go beyond spatial borders. That is, emotional attachment to the family home may serve as a defining feature of personal identity. Brah has clearly elaborated on the concept of home as follows: “Where is home? On the one

hand, 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination [...]. On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, all this is mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations" (Brah 193). This means that a dwelling becomes a home not just by its physical space, but also by the way it is adorned, the possessions within, the customs observed, and the relationships fostered. This framework is intricately linked to one's cultural background and personal perception of life and its ideals.

In *Admiring Silence*, the narrator explores various perspectives of home. For him, the latter encompasses more than just the family residence in which he grew up. It also extends to the notion of nationhood and, on a broader scale, the interconnected globalized world where borders are more permeable. As a member of the diaspora, he finds that his relationship with Zanzibar as his primary home has been shattered by his migration. He now feels a sense of otherness in England, where he resides. However, his partner Emma provides him with some comfort as he begins his new life as a diasporic individual in England. In his search for a stable definition of home, the narrator seeks a sense of comfort and belonging, the thing that makes him travel from the corruption and civil war of Zanzibar to England. During this journey, he comes to the understanding that home is a place within himself and that finding home is connecting with his inner self. He learns to value the importance of being comfortable with his own life and self, rather than only relying on external circumstances to provide a sense of belonging. Thus, home across spaces is an inner site of harmony that resides within the diasporic narrator.

Migrants can cultivate a feeling of belonging in their new country by focusing on the positive aspects and comforts of their adopted culture. For instance, the narrator states his experience with the luxury of the healthcare system in Britain compared to Zanzibar, which he considers as one of the reasons that caused his immigration from his homeland. He

describes this advantage compared to fellows in his home country: “The idea of having your own doctor might sound like an impossible fantasy to them” (4). The narrator portrays the conditions that attract immigrants to Britain, “Here it's different. Healthcare, from the first to the last day of life, delivered with courtesy and consideration in spacious clinics set out for the patient's comfort and convenience, and all of it free” (4). These facilities indeed encourage people to seek England to be their home. The narrator in the novel decides to migrate to England with the hope of improving his chances of survival and living a better life. However, despite his intentions, he is unable to predict his future with any certainty. After he arrives in England, he faces discrimination, which makes his life difficult. Alongside this struggle in his new home, the protagonist also feels trapped in his personal life. He feels disconnected from both Emma and Amelia,

How is the rottenness of Amelia and her generation to be passed on to me? Did I glut them with enriched vitamins and mushy love and fairy tales of the world and a self-importance beyond their means? Was it me who filled their heads with the beastly plebeian hubris which makes thought, art or principle equal to eating raw offal in public or indulging petty sensualities? What part did I play in persuading them that there is something witty in degradation and perversion? (10)

the generational gap between him and his daughter made the narrator feels disconnected not only with space but also time. This passage expresses a sense of frustration and blame towards Amelia and her generation, suggesting that the narrator asks himself how come he would be responsible for the negative qualities they possess; he questions whether he contributed to Amelia's generation's moral decay and questionable values. He then transforms the meaning to be that the "rottenness" of Amelia and her generation has somehow been transferred to him. This could be interpreted metaphorically, implying that the negative traits

or behaviours of the younger generation have affected his own character or perception. His questions ponder whether the narrator played a role in shaping the attitudes and values of Amelia's generation.

Due to all these factors, the narrator finds it challenging to feel a sense of belonging in his family home. The bitterness he feels in his home space is a reflection of his dissatisfaction with his situation and his struggle to find a place where he truly belongs. Despite his efforts to integrate into his new environment and connect with his family, he feels like an outsider in both spaces.

The protagonist struggles to share his diagnosis of a cardiac condition with his partner Emma when he received the diagnosis. Their relationship is certainly marked by a pervasive silence, preventing them from sharing their deepest thoughts and emotions with each other. This lack of communication is a result of their discomfort and dissatisfaction with their home environment. Despite living together, they do not feel a sense of belonging in their home. Typically, a home is a place where one feels connected and identifies with its members, with a sense of shared identity and belonging. However, in the protagonist's home, each member has a different personality, and there is no cohesive sense of unity. As a result, they feel like outsiders, lacking a shared sense of identity and connection. He narrates: "What was there to tell anyway that would not already have been evident to her from those early descriptions of the pain lodged in my chest? But I knew she was going to put on her long face and look glum, and even weep" (11). Their relationship is shattered. They are no longer able to value or respect each other, leading to a sense of dissatisfaction with their respective qualities or abilities. As a result, they engage in hurtful behaviour against each other, often through the use of sarcasm. In this matter the narrator states:

Then she'd ask me an utterly practical question about something it would never have occurred to me to do, demonstrating to me how weak my grip on the

world was, "Have you thought of seeing a specialist? Not really, dear, I never thought of that. What a bright young darling you are! You really are indispensable around here. Let me do it straight away. Then she'd walk away with a pained look, muttering snivelling impudence about me. That's why I talk to her in that sarcastic way. (12)

The narrator and Emma are constantly criticizing and complaining to each other, instead of staying silent. This negative communication is so excessive that it creates a tense atmosphere in their home, almost as if the house itself is being shaken by their constant arguments.

In addition to his feeling of otherness in England, he feels distanced from his parents in Africa. He hides his relationship with two women, Emma and Amelia, from his parents, and he also prefers to resort to silence with Emma and not share with her the details of his past and home memories because he feels that Emma would not be able to understand him or his past, as she has expressed contempt for Third World countries. As a result, he lies to her when he does speak. His silence and lies suggest that he deeply struggles with his identity and relationships, and he may feel disconnected from both his African roots and his current life in England. He narrates: "I had embellished my story to make it less messy, and had fabricated details where these had escaped me. The shame was intense for a few minutes, but it soon passed, and I became used to my lies" (33). The narrator thinks that keeping silent about his past causes no harm to his relationship with Emma when actually silence widened the gap between them. Home is a space where a person can reveal his true inner and authentic self, and where their life story and decisions are acknowledged and embraced. The narrator feels excluded and isolated within his own household, it appears as though he is being rejected from his home. The narrator in the novel constructs mythological versions of his past that would be more appealing to Emma. This fabrication gives him the ability to control how he presents himself and allows him to become an active participant in this process. Even when he

hides parts of his true past, he is still able to manipulate how he is perceived by Emma. Essentially, by creating a new narrative, he can shape his identity in a way that suits him better and gives him a sense of agency and control:

I found the opportunity to rewrite my history irresistible, and once I began, it became easier and easier. I did not mean to lie to Emma, dupe her out of contempt or disregard while I exploited her for her affection. I don't exactly know why I began to suppress things, change other things, fabricate to such an extent. Perhaps it was to straighten out my record to myself, to live up to her account of me, to construct a history closer to my choice than the one I have been lumbered with, to cling to her affection, to tell a story which would not bore her. (62)

His relationship with Emma faced a huge change along with their home. Initially, when they started their relationship, he felt comfortable and welcomed in their home. He enjoyed coming home after a long day at work. However, this implies that something has shifted in their relationship, and their home is no longer a place of comfort and security for him. He says: "I rushed away from school as soon as I could, and on most days, I would find Emma already at home [...]. Even now, when I think of that time, it recedes into a fug of contentment" (76). There is a shift in his perception of his home over time. Initially, he saw his home as a peaceful and safe place. However, as his relationship with Emma deteriorated and they became resentful towards each other, their home no longer felt welcoming or inviting. It loses its pleasing atmosphere.

Also, the narrator constantly compares his two experiences in life, as the narrator explains how the concept of home takes on different dimensions and evolves. It becomes a multifaceted notion, encompassing not only a physical dwelling but also a state of mind, a connection to the community, and a source of identity. The protagonist's experiences and

reflections shed light on the complexities and nuances associated with the idea of home, inviting readers to contemplate their relationship with this fundamental human concept. One of the scenes that he mentions is Amelia's day of birth where Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby, Emma's parents, were totally engaged in buying gifts for the baby. The narrator compares the situation to the one of his uncle Hashim, who used to help the narrator's family financially. In this sense, he reveals: "He gave my mother the daily housekeeping as he had been doing for the last couple of years (and sometimes brought some nice fish to add to the one she bought daily), and every month gave her some money for herself and for my father. He just gave her money, giving no explanation and requiring no account" (50).

The narrator suggests that the way homes are structured may differ depending on the culture and society, yet there is a universal feature of homes that transcends these differences. That is, in every home, people who live there have a shared concern for their mutual well-being and survival. The UNHCR's interview with Gurnah has tackled themes of displacement, history and home, in this matter he states that: "If you're a refugee, you're deeply unfortunate. It's not because you desire it ... it's to do with trying to save your life and possibly your family's lives as well" (Gurnah). Regardless of the specific roles and responsibilities of each family member, he suggests that everyone who lives at home contributes in some way to the survival and well-being of the family as a whole. Thus, he points out that regardless of the social structuring of homes across cultures and societies, there is a universal feature of homes in which all family members contribute to the survival and well-being of the family.

Furthermore, the narrator compares the security system between his home in Zanzibar and England, he describes the situation in Zanzibar:

the radio blared mocking, gloating speeches, issuing detailed prohibition after detailed prohibition like a demented bully: six o'clock curfew until further

notice, public gatherings of more than three people are illegal until further notice, cafes, schools, cinemas are closed until further notice, all passports are invalid, all travel is illegal, all land is nationalized. Gangsters roamed the streets with gleaming guns they had liberated from the riot-police arsenal, plundering where they chose, demanding a display of timid submission from everyone. (69)

the political situation in Zanzibar affects the safety and security of its citizens. Home, typically, is a place of safety, a thing that the Zanzibari political system does not provide to its citizens. This mainly is the reason why people who live in Zanzibar chose to leave their homes and seek out a safe haven.

Although moving to England offers him some comfort, as a member of the diaspora, he experiences a sense of displacement and dislocation in his new environment. In this regard, he states: "But in no time at all, after I moved, I was overcome by the enormity of my abandonment, like someone weeping in a crowd. I was astonished by the sudden surge of loneliness and terror I felt when I realized how stranded, I was in this hostile place, that I did not know how to speak to people and win them over to me" (83). In the face of rejection, the narrator discovers his comfort in his relationship with Emma, where he found acceptance and appreciation. However, this idyllic period with Emma was brief and came to an end when Emma became pregnant.

After a twenty-year absence, the narrator returns to Zanzibar to find that his mother has remarried and his stepfather appears distant, refusing to acknowledge him as part of the family. Despite his family's insistence that he should stay in Zanzibar, he is torn between his ties to his homeland and his stronger emotional connections to Emma and Amelia. During his visit, he meets Amur Malik, a government official, who emphasizes the importance of educated individuals in rebuilding new Zanzibar, a place that the narrator may relate to more

and feel like “home” finally. Although this information briefly causes him to consider his responsibility to his nation as a member of the diaspora, ultimately his attachment to Emma and Amelia is more profound, and he chooses not to stay in Zanzibar, “I was flattered, of course - they needed me here but not for a second was it a suggestion to be taken seriously. My life was elsewhere, principally Emma was elsewhere, and I could not in my wildest imaginings picture her agreeing to give up her university job and the convenience of Blighty to come” (151). This passage manifests how the narrator considers Emma to be his home, and he relates to her his feelings of security and safety, He re-joins Emma and his daughter in England, only to find out that Emma has left him for another man, which changed so many of his balanced perceptions, he immediately remembers Amer Malik’s words when he asked him to stay in Zanzibar: “Because we need you here. Forgive me for saying this, but they don't need you there. They have enough of their own people to do whatever is necessary, and sooner or later, they will say that they have no use for you. Then you will find yourself in an alien land that is unable to resist mocking people of our kind” (154). These words mark the final estrangement of the protagonist from his British family.

Amur Malik states the importance of staying among his people in his homeland, but the narrator's identity transcends national borders. For him, the concept of home encompasses more than just his country of origin, and he considers individuals from diverse racial backgrounds a part of his family. His worldview is pluralistic, and he sees himself as a citizen of the world. The interview of the UNHCR has tackled the matter: “one of the burdens of people who have fled from a trauma and find themselves living safely, away from those left behind”, which was reflected in his narrator who embraced his multicultural identity to suggest that cultural pluralism may be the key to achieving global harmony, rather than promoting nationalism (Gurnah).

In other words, diasporic identities live between multiple spaces, yet feels like they cannot truly belong to any of them. When someone experiences diaspora, it can be challenging to maintain the same level of connection to their homeland as they once had. Additionally, their adopted host land may not feel like a place that they can call home. As the narrative unfolds, the narrator experiences a series of displacements that disrupt his sense of home. They may arise from various circumstances such as physical relocations, personal crises, or societal changes. Amidst these upheavals, the story explores the protagonist's relentless attempts to restore a feeling of belonging. He embarks on a journey, both literal and metaphorical, in search of a new place to call home. This quest goes beyond mere physical relocation, as the narrator grapples with the deeper meaning of home, the emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects tied to it.

As home is physically disrupted, its locus becomes internal and diasporic. After his return to England from Zanzibar, the narrator learns about Emma's decision to break up with him. He starts to consider the prospect of new relationship with another immigrant, Ira, a Kenyan of Indian descent who, was forced to leave her home country and settle in England. They both share similar experiences of displacement and hostility and it might be a sign of forging a convivial relationship and a diasporic home across the boundaries of England.

The final scenes in the novel depict how the narrator appreciates the silence he discovers in England. His association with Emma has been tumultuous, leaving him unready for a new relationship as he decided not to call Ira. The novel concludes with this reflection as follows: "So now I sit here, with the phone in my lap, thinking I shall call Ira and ask her if she would like to see a movie. But I am so afraid of disturbing this fragile silence" (215). This shows that the protagonist perceives his silence as something that should not be disturbed or replaced, just like home. He also builds harmony that revolves around silence within himself. Ultimately, Silence to him is an inward space that goes beyond physical and tangible

definitions to include his entire reality. Therefore, it is safe to say that this nameless character has found home in its silence.

Conclusion:

In the embrace of silence, the narrator embarks on a profound journey of self-transformation, guided by the yearning to find a place that he can call “home”. Through the journey of silence, one can hide fragments of identity, shedding old layers, and paving the way for a metamorphosis. Each moment of quiet contemplation becomes a stepping stone towards self-discovery, as one unravels the intricate threads of their being, seeking authenticity and a genuine sense of rootedness. In this transformative quest, silence becomes a sanctuary, unveiling the path that leads to a profound connection with oneself and the world, ultimately unveiling the home that resides within. Finally, the narrator understands that “Home” is a place within himself, the end of the novel draws how everything has left him but his “Silence” (his wife, daughter); he understands that the idea of peace goes beyond the physical and tangible definitions of a home. For our character, home is a place within himself, all those moments of “selective silence” are his home, whenever he deliberately chooses to remain silent, the narrator is home; and even when he is forced to be silent, he is home.

General Conclusion

At the end of the novel the nameless character travelled back to England to find that his wife has left him for another man. As he sits in the calmness of his own silence contemplating whether to call Ira or not; he, then, decides to preserve the state of silent peace that he describes as too fragile to be tempered with. Again, the character chooses silence over the prospect of starting a new home with another woman (whom he relates to in their diasporic experience). This is to say that silence to him is not only a state of being but rather a space where he most finds himself at ease, just like a home.

Silence, then, proves itself to be more than just a nonverbal rejection, it is now obvious how the concept of silence goes beyond the restrictions of mere physical definitions. Silence transformed itself to be a literary concept which writers use to interpret psychological, cultural and postcolonial aspects.

Gurnah profoundly tackles the concept of silence throughout the events of his novels: *Admiring Silence* (1996), *The Last Gift* (2011), *Dottie* (1990) and *By the Sea* (2001), where each important character practice silence differently. Gurnah also emphasizes the theme of silence in relation to diaspora, where most of his characters adopt silence and offer alternative dimensions to it. *Admiring Silence* (1996) investigates the internal space that is created by silence to represent a landscape where the main character feels at ease. Furthermore, the concept of silence appears in the novel as both a condition and a strategy which indicates the protagonist's rejection to the social and psychological segregation that imperial England practices over him and which he cannot cope with. Also, the protagonist utilizes his silence as a functional tool to resist racial and cultural discrimination he faces being a black immigrant in Britain.

The novel, further draws two timelines of the protagonist's life in two different landscapes (Zanzibar and England), in order to prove that he does not belong to any of them. Therefore, this study relies in its first chapter on the theorization of silence and home under the dimensions of diaspora. Then, the second chapter projects the categorisation of silence as a condition and as a response on the silent experience of the nameless character. Further, the third chapter mentions the device of analepses and monologues to show how silence serves as a second narrative for the narrator.

Silence, then, is admired in *Admiring Silence* as a dwelling strategy within one's internal space; additionally, for the main character silence is a home of desires where one may reach to escape external factors which cause psychological instability and feeling of unbelongingness. Finally, all of this come together to unfold the transformation of the protagonist's silence into his home.

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