Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

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THE ROLE OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN VOICING THE MARGINALISED IN ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S *BY THE SEA* AND *GRAVEL HEART*

Yasemin ENER

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2026

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

The jury finds that Yasemin Ener has on the date of 06.04.2026 successfully passed the defense examination and approves her Master's Thesis titled "The Role of Intertextuality in Voicing the Marginalised in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart*".

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Yasemin ENER

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ETİK BEYAN

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I might have broken a record now in the history of the department as a half-centenarian master's student because twenty-nine years have passed since I was admitted to the master's programme at Hacettepe University in 1997 as a fresh graduate of Ankara University with the highest GPA. Then, I had to quit my studies twice and then come back again on academic amnesties while life was unfolding in the most unexpected ways for me. Each time I returned to my master's studies, I became assured again and again how much I love English literature and being among all these people of letters, my professors and classmates. In the meantime, learning to write papers in the accepted academic conventions, doing tremendous research, studying literary theories, and attempting to write a thesis after all those years have been extremely challenging for me; therefore, I must not deny myself the greatest credit for never giving up and always trusting this woman who I have become.

ABSTRACT

ENER, Yasemin. *The Role of Intertextuality in Voicing the Marginalised in Abdulrazak Gurnah's By the Sea and Gravel Heart*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2026.

This study analyses the role of intertextuality in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* (2001) and *Gravel Heart* (2017) in voicing the marginalised and oppressed characters in the colonial/postcolonial context. Set in the early years of independence, during the turbulent decolonisation period, and in the aftermath of the violent Zanzibar Revolution of 1964, both novels explore how shifting political power destabilises society and disrupts long-standing structures, exploiting the weak and the vulnerable, and denying their fundamental human rights. Inhabiting such a post-revolutionary world, Gurnah's protagonists have to leave Zanzibar, either seeking asylum or pursuing the education denied them at home, only to confront new forms of discrimination, oppression, and hardship in the former coloniser's land, England. Within this framework, intertextuality serves as a crucial narrative strategy that enables Gurnah to amplify the voices of the oppressed and to challenge the dominant accounts maintained by both colonial and post-revolutionary authorities. By employing various techniques of intertextuality, these narratives resist simplistic understandings of migrant identities by highlighting the multiplicity and psychological complexity of marginalised subjects shaped by displacement and trauma. Both novels incorporate major hypotexts alongside minor references. Structurally, *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* echo *A Thousand and One Nights* (800-1400 AD) through their partially episodic storytelling. Contextually, *By the Sea* draws on Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (1856), while *Gravel Heart* resonates with Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1623). Further minor source texts, Homer's *Odysseus* (750-700 BC), Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1623), and *Julius Caesar* (1623) illuminate the characters' circumstances and strengthen the reader's empathetic connection in *By the Sea*. Additionally, both allude to holy books and religious regulations, as well as including the literary trope of cuckoldry, as a critical issue from the perspective of social morality. This thesis analyses Gurnah's multifaceted intertextual strategies in *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* with a view to amplifying the voices of marginalised colonial and postcolonial subjects in the novels. The direct or indirect connections between the novels and their source texts affirm that no text exists in isolation; all texts interact, and in the case of these novels, this interaction enriches the portrayal of oppressed characters and ensures their voices are heard.

Keywords

Abdulrazak Gurnah, *By The Sea* (2001), *Gravel Heart* (2017), Intertextuality, Postcolonialism, Zanzibar

ÖZET

ENER, Yasemin. *Abdulrazak Gurnah'ın Deniz Kenarında ve Kumdan Yürek Romanlarında Dışlanmışların Sesinin Duyurulmasında Metinlerarasılığın Rolü*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2026.

Bu çalışma Abdulrazak Gurnah'ın *Deniz Kenarında* (2001) ve *Kumdan Yürek* (2017) adlı eserlerinde, metinlerarasılığın sömürgecilik ve sömürgecilik sonrası bağlamda marjinalleştirilmiş ve baskı altındaki karakterlerin sesinin duyurulmasındaki rolünü incelemektedir. Bağımsızlığın ilk yıllarında, çalkantılı sömürgecilikten kurtulma sürecinde ve 1964'teki şiddetli Zanzibar Devrimi'nin sonrasında geçen her iki romanda, değişen siyasal iktidarın toplumu nasıl istikrarsızlaştırdığını, yerleşik yapıları nasıl bozduğunu; zayıf ve kırılgan olanları nasıl sömürdüğünü ve temel insan haklarını nasıl yok saydığını araştırır. Böyle bir devrim sonrası dünyada yaşayan Gurnah'ın kahramanları, Zanzibar'dan ayrılmak zorunda kalır; kimileri sığınma arayışıyla, kimileri ise ülkelerinde kendilerine verilmeyen eğitimin peşinden gider. Ancak eski sömürgeci ülke olan İngiltere'de yeni ayrımcılık, baskı ve zorluk türleriyle yüzleşirler. Bu çerçevede metinlerarasılık, Gurnah'ın ezilenlerin sesini yükseltmesini ve hem sömürgeci hem de devrim sonrası otoriteler tarafından sürdürülen egemen anlatılara meydan okumasını sağlayan temel bir anlatı yöntemi olarak işlev görür. Bu anlatılar metinlerarasılığın çeşitli tekniklerini kullanarak, yerinden edilme ve travma tarafından şekillendirilen marjinalleştirilmiş bireylerin çok katmanlılığını ve psikolojik karmaşıklığını vurgulayarak, göçmen kimliklerinin basitleştirici yorumlarına karşı direnir. Her iki roman da temel hipometinleri, daha küçük göndermelerle birlikte içerir. Yapısal olarak, *Deniz Kenarında* ve *Kumdan Yürek* romanlarının kısmen dizisel anlatılarında *Binbir Gece Masalları* (M.S. 800-1400) yankılanır. Bağlamsal olarak *Deniz Kenarında*, Herman Melville'in "Kâtip Bartleby" (1856) metninden beslenirken; *Kumdan Yürek*, Shakespeare'in *Kısasa Kısas* (1623) oyunuyla çağrışım kurar. Homeros'un *Odysseus*'u (M.Ö. 750-700), Shakespeare'in *Fırtına* (1623) ve *Julius Caesar* (1623) oyunları gibi daha küçük hipometinler, *Deniz Kenarında* olay örgüsünde karakterlerin içinde bulundukları koşulları aydınlatır ve okurun empatik bağını güçlendirir. Ayrıca her iki roman da kutsal kitaplara ve dinî düzenlemelere göndermelerde bulunur; bunun yanı sıra, toplumsal ahlak açısından eleştirel bir konu olarak "aldatılan koca" edebî izleğini de içerir. Bu tez, sömürgecilik ve sömürgecilik sonrası dönemin marjinalleştirilmiş öznelerinin sesini güçlendirmek amacıyla, Abdulrazak Gurnah'ın *Deniz Kenarında* ve *Kumdan Yürek* adlı eserlerinde kullandığı çok yönlü metinlerarasılık stratejilerini incelemektedir. Romanlar ile hipometinleri arasındaki doğrudan olan ya da dolaylı bağlantılar, hiçbir metnin bağımsız olarak var olmadığını; tüm metinlerin birbirleriyle etkileşim içinde olduğunu doğrular. Bu etkileşim, ezilen karakterlerin temsiliyetini zenginleştirir ve seslerinin duyulmasını sağlar.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Deniz Kenarında* (2001), *Kumdan Yürek* (2017), Metinlerarasılık, Sömürgecilik Sonrası, Zanzibar

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Until the lions have their own historians,
the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.
-African Proverb

The plots and thematic structures in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea*[1] (2001) and *Gravel Heart*[2] (2017) are layered through intertextuality, creating a broad resonance through the hypotexts ranging from the Western literary canon to holy books and folk tales. The plots of the two novels present a temporal structure that moves back and forth between the colonial and predominantly postcolonial periods, which connect the marginalised conditions of many characters in these works to various postcolonial concepts and ideas. As the selected source texts stimulate ideas, layer themes, and prompt the reader to make connections, Gurnah achieves the aim of conveying the distress of his oppressed characters as they articulate their experiences loudly and clearly as postcolonial subjects in Zanzibar and immigrants in the UK. As such, this thesis examines the effective role of intertextual techniques in voicing the oppressed postcolonial subjectivities in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart.*

The introduction summarises socio-political history of Zanzibar to shed light on the events and characters in the two novels, presents the biography of Abdulrazak Gurnah and his oeuvre, and introduces the concept of intertextuality presenting the significant ideas and techniques employed in literature while also highlighting the importance of intertextuality in the postcolonial framework through the perspectives of eminent postcolonial scholars and Gurnah himself.

[1] Hereinafter, *By the Sea* will be referred to as *BTS* for in-text citations.
[2] Hereinafter, *Gravel Heart* will be referred to as *GH* for in-text citations.

Zanzibar's appealing geographical location for traders and significant historical developments in the country from the pre-colonial period to decolonisation, including its political evolution from a sultanate to a British protectorate, are of great significance when analysing the two novels in alignment with Gurnah's stance and the objective of this thesis. Zanzibar, situated off the east coast of Africa, is a part of an archipelago of over fifty islands and islets. Its unique geographic location has shaped its complex and rich history, diversified its cultures, and made it a significant trade centre. The islands, the largest of which are Unguja (Zanzibar Island) and Pemba (Prison Island), have been influenced by the cultures of various civilisations, including indigenous Bantu tribes, Persians, Arabs, and European colonisers throughout history ("History of Zanzibar"). This rich cultural layering evolved the region into a distinctive centre of African, Middle Eastern, and European interaction in history.

The island's history is shaped by consecutive waves of migration, commerce, and domination. After early Bantu settlement (1000 BC–500 AD), the archipelago became a significant Indian Ocean trade hub linking Africa, Arabia, and Asia ("History of Zanzibar"). Arab settlement from the seventh century onward led to a lasting cultural mélange, strengthened by Omani dominance in the seventeenth century and the emergence of the Zanzibar Sultanate of Oman in the early nineteenth century (Knappert 29). Then, intensive clove cultivation transformed Zanzibar into "the spice islands," while the archipelago also became the dark centre of "the Indian Ocean slave trade," exporting enslaved Africans to Oman, the Persian Gulf, and plantation colonies such as Mauritius and Réunion (Sheriff 96; Alpers 39).

Following the Berlin Conference (1884–1885), British colonial rule reconstructed Zanzibar's politics and economy, favouring the Arab elite and deepening racial divisions (Lawal). Independence in December 1963 did not bring about peace and happiness for long; instead, tensions rose and they culminated in the 1964 Zanzibar Revolution, when the Afro-Shirazi Party overthrew the Arabs' Zanzibar Nationalist Party and founded the People's Republic of Zanzibar (Knappert 36). The Revolution marked a violent fracture, leading to the marginalisation, displacement, and killing of Arabs, together with radical nationalisation and redistribution of land. Political instability necessitated Zanzibar's union with Tanganyika to form Tanzania in April

1964 (“Independence of Tanzania”), though tensions over identity, governance, and autonomy prevailed.

The Revolution remains the central discord in Zanzibar’s collective memory. As Burgess argues, it divided the society into “communities of memory,” shaping social relations and political allegiances (“Memories” 45). Revolutionary leaders such as Salmin Amour blamed slavery and class division on Arab cosmopolitanism, claiming Zanzibar would otherwise have been “a [totally classless] society” (Amour 23). Others, like Mapuri, justified revolutionary violence through counterfactual narratives, denying massacres and invoking exaggerated threats to African survival (Mapuri 56–57). As Malkki notes, such narratives function as “mythico-history,” recasting the past in fundamentally moral terms (54).

By the 1990s, Zanzibar realised political liberalisation gradually within the framework of Tanzanian politics, allowing more open discussion of history, heritage, and social reconciliation (Burgess, *Race, Revolution* 180–195). Today, Zanzibar tries to balance its revolutionary past with its deeply rooted cultural diversity, standing as a historically layered society shaped by African, Arab, Persian, and global influences. This rich and often turbulent history provides essential context for understanding the themes explored in Abdulrazak Gurnah’s life and works, where questions of identity, displacement, and memory are deeply intertwined with the legacy of such a complex cultural heritage.

Abdulrazak Gurnah was born on December 20, 1948, in Zanzibar, the identity of which has been shaped over centuries by interactions among African, Arab, Indian, and Persian cultures (Chambers 115). Growing up on this Indian Ocean littoral, Gurnah was at the heart of linguistic and cultural crossroads that later infused his fiction. In a polyglot setting where Swahili, Arabic, and English are spoken simultaneously, and their respective cultures coexist, Gurnah probably drew the first inspiration for his characters from “fluid and negotiated” identities (Xu 157).

Gurnah witnessed turbulent political changes in his homeland during his teenage years. Since the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 ended the Sultanate and set violence free, against Arabs and South Asians in particular, the author lived through times of

oppression, fear, and disappearances. Gurnah wrote that during Abeid Karume's presidency in Zanzibar, "the category 'Arab' had been used to dispossess, expel, and murder thousands of people who had had a different idea of who they were, that is, they were Zanzibaris" ("An Idea of the Past" 12). After long years of such state-induced terror and discrimination, "to get away from the malice of the state" (*BTS* 120), he resorted to fleeing to Britain in 1968 at the age of eighteen initially on a tourist visa, with the real aim to study and lead a dignified life (Williams and Gurnah 10:21-10:38). Leaving his homeland suddenly and forcibly has created a void in the author's life, and formed the landscape in most of his novels. While he portrays an East Africa few have seen before, Abdulrazak Gurnah is one of the most critical local authors of the post-independence government in Zanzibar, which he describes as the "[horrible] terrorist state" (Nobel Prize, "Transcript"). Partly because of his lack of nostalgia and partly because of political reasons, he was able to return to Zanzibar only briefly before his father passed away (Nobel Prize, "Bibliographical").

Gurnah was despondent for those he had left behind in Zanzibar amid relentless oppression; however, he also suffered abroad, as his arrival coincided with a critical time in the UK. The British society was filled with oppressive immigration policies, an anti-immigrant spirit, and racism, fuelled mainly by fundamentalist politicians. Politicians like Enoch Powell[3] were escalating racism, and everybody was frightened of the issue of immigration. Britain in the late 1960s was a place where racial prejudice and psychological distress under systemic ostracism were inflicted on migrants (Chambers 117). Despite this surge of hostility towards immigrants at the time, Gurnah pursued higher education with resilience.

In "Writing and Place," Gurnah describes the time he leaves home in his early twenties as a period "of hardship and anxiety, of state terror and calculated humiliations," when "all [he] wanted was to leave and find safety," and he states that he "could not have been more remote from the idea of writing" in his English exile then, in fact he just

[3] Enoch Powell (1912–1998) was a British Conservative politician, classicist, and former minister. His 1968 "Rivers of Blood" speech posed postcolonial immigration as a national threat, articulating British anxiety over decolonization and racial change. In postcolonial criticism, Powell is a symbolic name in the persistence of imperial power structures and racial hierarchies within post-imperial Britain (Hall 29).

"stumbled into" writing, making English his literary tool despite Swahili being his native tongue (Gurnah, "Writing and Place" 58). Noting that he thinks in both English and Swahili while writing, he emphasises that "[i]f [he's] thinking about how someone might speak, then [he] would probably think of it in Swahili. That allows [him] to play with syntax" (Snaije and Gurnah). The author also states that access to literature in Swahili was almost non-existent in Zanzibar, and early inspirations for his works could have been the surahs of *the Qur'an* in Arabic, Arabian and Persian poetry, and the English translations of *The Arabian Nights* in particular. It can be observed that the occasional use of sentences in Swahili, Arabic, Hindi, and German in his novels characterises his authorship as precisely cosmopolitan.

Focusing mainly on writers such as Wole Soyinka, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Salman Rushdie, he earned the title of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Kent (1982), where he became an eminent academic as a Professor of English (2000) and Director of Graduate Studies. He specialised in postcolonial literature, diaspora studies, and African writing, particularly dealing with migration, colonial legacies, and Indian Ocean histories. In the meantime, not only has the author written eleven novels and several short stories, but also has analysed African writing in two volumes and edited many of Salman Rushdie's works. Gurnah retired from the University of Kent, where he had worked for many years as a Professor of English and Postcolonial Literatures, and was made a Professor Emeritus at the same university in 2017 (University of Kent "Abdulrazak Gurnah").

Abdulrazak Gurnah was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature on October 7, 2021. The Swedish Academy explained the motivation for the Prize as his "uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents" ("Nobel Prize in Literature 2021"). He has been actively teaching at New York University Abu Dhabi as the Arts Professor of Literature since 2024 (NYUAD "Abdulrazak Gurnah").

Gurnah's debut as a novelist was at the age of forty with *Memory of Departure* (1987), which introduces a concern reiterated throughout his oeuvre: the homeland is abandoned forever, except in memory and storytelling. Contrary to common assumptions, the novel depicts departure from the loved ones within Africa rather than

migration to the West, focusing on marginalisation and the search for identity. *Pilgrims Way* (1988) shifts this focus to exile in England, portraying racism and hostile immigration discourse in 1970s Britain, yet ends on an optimistic note of reconciliation between the past and the present.

His next novel, *Dottie* (1990) deals with mixed heritage, racism, and rootlessness in post-war Britain, emphasising storytelling as a means of self-construction of a young woman. Then came one of his most acclaimed novels, *Paradise* (1994). Shortlisted for the Booker and Whitbread Prizes, the novel combines a coming-of-age narrative with a historical exploration of colonialism, identity, and displacement in the early twentieth-century East Africa. Themes of immigration, silence, and refugee experience dominate *Admiring Silence* (1996) and *By the Sea* (2001), both of which depict characters caught between continents, cultures, and histories. *Desertion* (2005) similarly explores liminality through a cross-cultural relationship, subverting the conventions of the "imperial romance" (Olsson).

Later novels such as *The Last Gift* (2011) and *Gravel Heart* (2017) foreground family secrets, exile, and postcolonial corruption, while *Afterlives* (2020), often read alongside *Paradise*, revisits German colonial rule and the vulnerability of the colonised subject. Gurnah states he tries not to write his following book about Zanzibar (Snaije and Gurnah) ; however, in his final novel *Theft* (2025), he once again returns to his homeland.

How "someone powerless negotiates a kind of progress or salvation" constitutes the core of Gurnah's novels, providing him with the possibility to voice the marginalised primarily in the aftermath of colonisation (Snaije and Gurnah). All in all, he aims to reflect particularly the Zanzibar side of colonialism in his novels with its own challenges, motivated primarily by his interest in enabling the marginalised to be heard and restoring their agency through his authorship.

This commitment of Gurnah's is most notably realised through his use of intertextuality, which enables him to amplify marginal voices in the postcolonial condition and construct meaning under historical and political pressures, forming the central focus and guiding framework of this thesis. With this in mind, it is necessary to outline the concept's emergence and briefly mention the theorists and their ideas relevant to this thesis before addressing the importance of intertextuality in postcolonial writing, as this theoretical grounding enables a more comprehensive engagement with the novels under consideration. Graham Allen, a prominent literary theorist on intertextuality, reiterates that "[e]very text depends on a language within which is inscribed vast histories of meaning" (67). Then, it would not be incorrect to state that no text is authentically created, but is rather a reinterpreted or restructured version of formerly developed ideas. Most critics agree that texts emerge from networks of other texts and cultural formations, so literary creativity is never entirely autonomous. Walter Benjamin refers to the "overtaxing of the productive person in the name of […] the principle of 'creativity'" to highlight the unrealistic belief that authors create from pure originality, detached from external forces (71). When readers analyse the connections with the reserve of previous texts, they can derive a more profound meaning from the text at hand. In this context, the connection between a text and the other texts that have influenced or inspired it can be explained through the concept of intertextuality.

It is possible to trace back intertextuality, in its various forms, to the earliest recorded human societies (Worton and Still 2). Allen emphasises that intertextuality and related concepts have been addressed by ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, as well as contemporary figures and eminent scholars including Gérard Genette, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, Riffaterre, and Harold Bloom (Allen 43-49). With the emergence of the concept of intertextuality, approaches to textual analysis and interpretation changed, as it emphasised that various perspectives could shape the interpretation and perception of texts.

The word intertextuality is derived from the Latin "intertexĕre," meaning "interweave" in English. In terms of literature, it corresponds to the literary act of interweaving of texts. Interestingly, *textus* means "woven fabric" or "texture." Likewise, each text has

a texture composed of many threads, and texts are interconnected by many links (Weren 91). The subjects they are concerned with have also been discussed in other texts. The reader instinctively compares the content of a text with that of different texts, and the author does the same, too. It can, then, be inferred that both readers and authors are in constant communication with a vast network of other texts.

The foundational ideas of intertextuality as a literary and cultural theory date back to Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1915), which is considered to have made epochal contributions to modern linguistics. His exploration of the linguistic sign is vital to understanding language, communication, and meaning. His exploration of signs became a source of inspiration for the twentieth-century humanities, and played a significant role in the formation of structuralism in the 1950s (Allen 10). Another influential name in building intertextuality as a field is the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. Rather than perceiving language as a generalised system, Bakhtin emphasises its fixed condition within particular social circumstances and interactions. In other words, Bakhtin's perspective emphasizes the relational nature of the word, claiming that it is formed not only by abstract systems but also by specific social interactions of expression and reception (Bakhtin, *Problems* 276). Allen suggests that it was Julia Kristeva who first merged Saussure's model of signs and Bakhtin's conception of socially dynamic language, integrating the concepts from both to coin the term "intertextuality" (15).

When Julia Kristeva first used the term intertextuality in her essays "Word, Dialogue, Novel" and "The Bounded Text" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 64–91; 36–63), she introduced Bakhtin's ideas of literary theory of socially dynamic language to the French, which contributed to the recognition of intertextuality as a critical framework, theorising that all texts are intertexts. Although Kristeva does not directly refer to Bakhtin's essential concepts of heteroglossia and hybridisation, Allen emphasises that, heteroglossia and hybridisation were behind her use of the word ambivalence (Allen 197). Heteroglossia means many different voices coexist within literature or within a single language, including effects of society, ideology, and history. Hybridisation, as a key component of heteroglossia, emerges when two separate linguistic or ideological systems are unified in an act of speech, without thoroughly blending into one another

(Bakhtin *Dialogic Imagination* 324–26). Thus, the tension between specific perspectives allows different worldviews to both conflict and engage in dialogue. In this respect, the dialogic view opposes simple interpretations and recognises the complex and plural nature of human communication and its representation in literature. Within the dialogic view, Bakhtin and Volosinov also introduce the concept of addressivity, suggesting that "a word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor" (Bakhtin and Volosinov, *Marxism* 86), which will be identified between intertextual exchanges among the hypotexts and the two novels discussed in this thesis in the following chapters.

Drawing attention to the dialogic nature of texts, Kristeva considers them as "intersections of multiple voices" (*Desire in Language* 65). The concept of "poetic language" developed by Kristeva suggests that texts correspond with each other "horizontally," between writer and reader, and "vertically," with former literary traditions. This leads her to formulate "intertextuality," which holds that all texts "absorb and transform previous texts," thereby eliminating the idea of a single authorship in favour of an active "textual mosaic" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 66). Every text is a component of a massive world that is not composed solely of literary texts; the contexts of history, society, and culture are also considered "texts." This means one single writing of literature is embedded in the general text; in Kristeva's words, "texte général," comprising the almost infinite intertext of the whole societal and cultural order (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 66). In accordance with Kristeva's view that all texts are intertexts, intertextuality refers to the way a text's meaning is derived from its connection with other texts. In this expansive employment of the word, it is understood that "every text is an intertext," and an intertext is "a text between other texts" (Leitch 59; Plett 5).

On the other hand, structuralist theorists Gérard Genette and Michael Rifaterre restrict Kristeva's broad semiotic claim that all texts are inherently intertextual. They prefer to limit the concept of intertextuality to specific and reasonable connections between actual texts, perceiving it as limited, identifiable, and methodologically useful. Within this perspective, Genette and Riffaterre reserve the term "intertextuality" for the connections authors intentionally make during the process of writing texts (Genette 1;

Riffaterre 11). In this way, the perception of intertextuality has been narrowed to deliberate and calculated allusions between a text and previously written texts. Discussing intertextuality in Gurnah's novels, this study also holds this view established by Genette and Riffaterre.

As other critics who oppose Kristeva's understanding, Worton and Still argue that Kristeva's perception of intertextuality might be problematic when analysing non-literary art forms, such as painting, music, and architecture because its application outside literature may overlook foundational theoretical constraints (1-5). In support of this view, Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida believe that culture is the broad text itself, having relations, meaning, and patterns in continuous action. Accordingly, written texts are born out of this comprehensive context (Barthes 146; Derrida 278). In this context, it could be observed that Gurnah refers to this broad context of culture, which constitutes the intertextual foundation in his novels.

While identifying the manifestations of intertextuality, Gérard Genette's structural techniques and Michael Riffaterre's reader-oriented concepts are particularly significant for this thesis since the functionality of their views regarding referential relations between texts is observed in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart*. In his *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, Genette includes intertextuality within five subclassifications of a broader framework that he calls transtextuality. This model encompasses all the connections a text may have with others and offers a systematic method for analysing sophisticated intertextual references by classifying not only what texts derive from one another but also how they relate structurally. Genette defines intertextuality "as a relationship of copresence between two or more texts, that is to say [...], through the effective presence of one text within another" (Genette 1–2). Surely, intertextuality and the other subclassifications of transtextuality, namely paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality, are interrelated and cannot be isolated from each other when analysing a text. Paratextuality is related to the edging parts of a text, such as titles, prefaces, footnotes, and illustrations, which outline the main body and lead its interpretation. Metatextuality draws in critical commentary, allowing one text to allude to another in an analytical or reflective style, often through literary criticism or

scholarly interpretation. Hypertextuality is another classification of Genette's transtextuality, in which the connection between a text (hypertext) and a preceding text (hypotext) transforms or imitates the latter, as is most often observed in rewritings or parodies. Lastly, architextuality is the least concrete classification, referring to the genre or textual category a text belongs to and how it elicits or alters such expectations (Genette 3-5). All in all, transtextuality extends intertextuality beyond quotations and face-value references, enabling a deeper understanding of literary dynamics.

The terms hypotext and hypertext, as used by Genette, are practically helpful in pointing to the alluding and alluded-to texts in any analysis of intertextuality. In fact, these terms have been facilitating for literary analysts to make references between texts since he articulated them, defining "[a]ny text is a hypertext, grafting itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text that it imitates and transforms" (Genette 5). For this reason, they will be frequently used to demonstrate the intertextual relations between the novels and the texts they draw on in the following chapters of this thesis. Though an ancient text may also be viewed through the lens of contemporary texts, intertextuality usually analyses how oral or written antecedents influence the restructuring of the new text in its creation. Studies carried out in the fields of literature and history pay particular attention to tracing the sources of a text because they have the presumption that identifying and comprehending the origins of a text is indispensable for the correct interpretation of it. As intertextuality connects and reshapes previously written works in current literature, there are certainly complexities in comprehending a later text without an extensive understanding of preceding ones.

Judging by the multiplicity of hypotexts and their semantic, structural, and cultural connections with the analysed novels at hand, the appreciation of the educated reader must not be ignored. Regarding this necessity, both Kristeva and Genette stress that textual meaning emerges through readers' active recognition of preceding texts, as intertextuality relies on a continuous rewriting of previous works and requires well-read readers capable of perceiving these layered relationships (Kristeva, *Desire* 64–89, *Revolution* 16; Genette 1–2). Likewise, Michael Riffaterre also accentuates the reader's function in giving meaning to any work of literature. The influential theories on textual interpretation and poetic meaning, and his approach centring around the

reader's role in creating meaning, remain highly relevant in literary studies, particularly in discussions of intertextuality and reader-response criticism. He argues that the reader's automatic recognition of textual structures and intertextual repetitions from prior reading experiences is what gives the text meaning (Riffaterre 2). Hypogram and syllepsis are the two central concepts of his model. Hypogram is an underlying pre-text that the author does not directly quote, but the reader subliminally identifies in the new text. In other words, the former text serves as a platform for the reader to interpret literary works (Riffaterre 76). Syllepsis, on the other hand, is the act of generating multiple meanings from a single word or structure simultaneously, emphasising ambiguity and intertextual layering (Riffaterre 115). As a whole, Riffaterre asserts that intertextuality is not just a writer's strategy but an explanatory device, since readers decipher texts by linking them to previously known texts and create meaning through intertextual associations. With this in mind, his concepts of hypogram and syllepsis will be employed to explain the intertextual associations in the following analysis chapters.

Despite the age-old presence of intertextuality in literary history, it became most well-known with the emergence of postmodernism. As a reaction to modernism, postmodernism emerged, characterised by a sense of loss, including the decline of faith and cultural unity (Waugh 65). While modernism is defined by the erosion of stable values and a growing scepticism towards objective truth and overarching ideologies, postmodernism embraces fragmentation, fostering a spirit of negation and unmasking as it rejects coherence, stability, and fixed meanings in texts (Haberer 54). The counter-elite and subversive approach of postmodernism enables it to confront traditional authority and encourages creative freedom from prevailing discourses. Christopher Butler points out that postmodern texts are perceived as open to multiple interpretations, leading to the rejection of grand narratives (199), and that intertextuality often establishes a connection between time and context by interpreting previous works from novel perspectives.

It is commonly observed that intertextuality appears as a creative method in postcolonial writing, disrupting colonial narratives and restoring the agency to marginalised individuals. This method unveils the partiality of colonial records and

literature, which were often built to “foreground the agency of white, Western, male actors,” as Priyamvada Gopal contends (11). Drawing on classical texts, archives, religious traditions, and local stories, postcolonial writers often question cascading ideologies, reframe cultural memory, and propose alternative identities.

Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin define “the characteristics features of the postcolonial text” as “subversive manoeuvres, rather than the construction of essentially national or regional alternatives,” and assert that “the rereading and the rewriting of the European historical and fictional record is a vital and inescapable task at the heart of the post-colonial enterprise” (*The Empire* 221). In doing so, they highlight the importance of intertextual rewriting for postcolonial authors to expose the ideological assumptions embedded in colonial discourse while confirming cultural difference and agency. It could be argued that postcolonial authors, by referencing the canonical literary works of the West, have several primary objectives.

Postcolonial authors could have more sophisticated objectives than merely reversing binary contradictions in former texts when producing new texts. Postcolonial writing can also acknowledge the renowned works of the coloniser by writing back to them since it means admitting their impact and importance in the literary world without reinforcing its authority. In this manner, they may acknowledge their complicated relationship with the European literary tradition, in which they have been educated. Simultaneously, “using traditional Western texts as a foundation or an inspiration can allow modern post-colonial writers to illustrate the hybridity of their cultures without either favoring the European tradition or ignoring it” (McClinton 1-2).

An intermediary view that may explain the use of the Western canon in postcolonial literature comes from literary critic John Thieme. Framing intertextuality as a process among “pre-texts” (canonical works) and “con-texts” (postcolonial responses), he explains that postcolonial rewritings of the canon are complex, ambivalent, and transformative rather than merely oppositional (Thieme 2). In this process, the canon is dynamic and open to reinterpretation, being questioned and transformed.

Notwithstanding, the primary function of referencing the Western canon is to enable postcolonial hypertexts to repudiate and problematise the intrinsic ideology of their

hypotexts, which may be related to nationalism, imperialism, religion, race or gender. By doing so, postcolonial writers intertextualise Western canons primarily because they aim to challenge the assumptions of Western canons and restore authorial control to the previously oppressed. Therefore, in his introduction to *Postcolonial Con-Texts*, John Thieme chooses to refer to such intertextual practices as "counter-discourse" or "writing back," a term popularised by Salman Rushdie in the 1980s. He underscores "[p]ostcolonial writers' need to engage in a […] contestation of the hegemony of the colonially constructed canon of literary texts, with particular instances of writing back to an English canonical text being viewed as metonym" (Thieme 3-4). In the same vein, Helen Tiffin holds that the operation of intertextuality as a strategy of resistance is often observed in rewriting canonical texts in order to contest colonial authority and recover marginalised voices (18). Through many methods including allusion, adaptation, revision, and rewriting, postcolonial writers problematise Western literary traditions that historically rationalised imperial domination. This process of responsive writing transforms canonical texts from unquestionable authorities into criticisable contexts in which suppressed histories and alternative perspectives can appear.

Theories of intertextuality demonstrate that no work comes into being on its own, changing the perception of literary influence by asserting that works are products of a complex historical, cultural and intertextual web. Highlighting unbreakable bonds between the past and the present, Edward Said argues that the histories of the dominated and the dominators interdepend with "overlapping territories, intertwined histories […] whites and non-whites, dwellers in the metropolis and on the peripheries" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* xxii–xxiii). He argues that canonical texts should be read "contrapuntally," by a method analysing texts from both imperial and colonised perspectives. He explains that contrapuntal reading requires an awareness of both dominant Western colonial narratives and the historical facts they exclude to disclose suppressed histories and voice the oppressed (*Culture and Imperialism* 59—78). This method challenges texts' universal claims by revealing their complicity in imperial power structures (*Culture and Imperialism* 43).

Likewise, Linda Hutcheon foregrounds the requirement of the informed reader not only of literature but also of the historical past for intertextual analyses to be made

effectively. She asserts that intertextuality, as a term in the theoretical framework, is not only a conceptual tool, but it has significant functionality in demanding that the reader both recognise "textualized traces of the literary and historical past" and be aware of "what has been done […] to those traces" (Hutcheon 128).

Even though Abdulrazak Gurnah appears to be utilising the interdependence of binaries in the postcolonial context with the aim of voicing the marginalised, it could also be noted that several other postcolonialists are sceptical on this matter. To illustrate, Benita Parry, a postcolonial critic known for her materialist and anti-imperialist approach to colonial discourse, critiques some postcolonial theorists and writers in their affirmation of the interdependence of the coloniser and the colonised, arguing that

> [s]ome scholars reduce the violence of colonial history by emphasizing cooperation instead of conflict. This ignores the forced and unequal relationships between colonisers and the colonised and fails to see their different experiences as part of one shared history. As a result, colonialism is often presented in a comforting but inaccurate way that is not well supported by theory or evidence. (Parry, "The Institutionalization" 76)

Parry, in her work "The Postcolonial: Conceptual Category or Chimera?" notes that the term "postcolonial" is quite complex and that postcolonial literatures may also feature intertextuality that is essential in creating post-nationalist narratives (3). On the other hand, uncritical intertextual engagement with Western canons in postcolonial literature has attracted counter-criticism. It could be interpreted that what Harish Trivedi, prominent Indian literary critic and postcolonial theorist, says specifically about Indian literature, can actually be applied to the whole postcolonial literature. He claims that

> [t]he literature produced by the previously colonised countries "in the last few decades has often been discussed in terms of 'intertextuality' or 'pastiche' or that postcolonial, theoretical half-breed cousin of it – 'hybridity'. And it may, perhaps, be a little too self-reflexive to ask if this shift in terms of critical discourse from 'influence' to 'intertextuality' or 'hybridity' has itself come about as a result of the persisting influence of the Western critical practice upon [postcolonial] critical practice in this regard, and is therefore itself part of the problem. (122)

Other critics, too, express similar concerns about intertextualising Western canons without interrogating power relations. They discuss the limitations of intertextual approaches in postcolonial studies, critically examining the risks of unquestioned

intertextuality with Western literary traditions (Ahmad 115–140; Kundu 75–98). Although many scholars readily accept the place intertextuality holds in literature, they remain hesitant to acknowledge that "political, institutional, and ideological constraints" shape writers just as strongly as literary conventions (Said, *Orientalism* 13). Still, it is inevitable for many postcolonial authors to utilise the resonance created by intertextuality in order to underscore the distress of the victimised masses within the political turmoil of decolonised countries.

In discussing the function of literature and intertextuality, Abdulrazak Gurnah emphasises that literary texts preserve their meanings because they constantly produce new questions and interpretations in time. He asserts that the enduring relevance of literature lies in its ability to provoke reflection and challenge conventional perspectives, fostering an evolving process of inquiry that deepens our understanding of historical and social realities. Through its capacity, literature becomes a powerful medium for interrogating issues of justice, morality, and marginality. In this respect, he notes in an interview:

> What literature does is to pose questions for us, and whatever period they're operating in, that's why people keep returning to Shakespeare or to Chaucer or to whatever. It isn't just to study but it's because that their works, their texts keep opening up even centuries-old questions, and the same thing works. I think when literature works, it seems to me that process is continuously growing. You know everything you read, especially if you're assisted, shall we say by somebody who's able to point things out here and there, now and then, it opens up issues. It makes you understand things, it, in a sense, humanises what we know both historically or in terms of social events or social whatever […] of course literature's full of ideas that are sometimes being experimented with ideas that challenge your or our understanding are received conventional way of looking at things." (University of Kent, "Full Interview" 00:17:41–00:19:35)

Gurnah's words underscore literature's dialogic and exploratory structure, which enables texts to communicate with one another across temporal and cultural boundaries. In his own fiction, especially in *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart*, intertextuality serves beyond referencing canonical works as a narrative strategy. Furthering its function, intertextuality gives way to alternative points of view on history, migration, and identity in both novels. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, although Gurnah draws on the Western literary canon as the major hypotexts in the thematic content of the two novels, his intertextual practice is not confined to it.

Structurally, he also incorporates narrative traditions beyond the Western canon, most notably the storytelling framework of *A Thousand and One Nights*. Zanzibar's location as the melting pot trade port enabled "the stories of the Ocean," as the author names, to be spread and told. In an interview with Tina Steiner, Gurnah notes that the settings of these stories, such as China, Persia, and Syria, did not feel faraway in his childhood (Steiner, "Euryclea's Greeting" 399); instead, they reflected the trade routes connecting Zanzibar to other "islands of culture along the broader archipelago, which are linked together by the sea and by mercantile connections" (Chambers, 129). As another example, he draws parallels to cultural, social and religious contexts. This expansive intertextual scope reveals that Gurnah's literary dialogue is inclusive of multiple cultural, social and religious contexts. Therefore, rather than relying solely on Western canonical references, Gurnah utilises varying textual sources from different literary worlds, and creates a layered narrative atmosphere where there are many intertexts amplifying the voices of marginalised colonial and postcolonial subjects.

While analysing the role of intertextuality in voicing the marginalised, the concept of marginality must be scrutinised along its associations. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin note that the centre/margin binary by imperialists trap the indigenous in essentialism, labelling them as "ultimately marginalised" while ignoring that indigenous political claims arise from this evolving context of dynamic cultures and identities (*The Postcolonial Studies Reader* 214). Nevertheless, marginalised groups in this thesis refer to indigenous peoples, religious and ethnic minorities, women, and other vulnerable populations within the larger or mightier population. While doing so, Gurnah's protagonists often feature as the parallels of main characters in the source texts he draws upon. The most significant change in Gurnah's hypertexts is obviously the fact that Gurnah's protagonists, as the marginalised and oppressed characters, are (post)colonial subjects. Thus, it is necessary here to touch upon some of the prominent scholars who theorise on the condition of postcoloniality. Most of these characters are depicted navigating transitional situations in their homelands as postcolonial subjects, as well as experiencing life as immigrants in Europe and the UK. As such, the theories of Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Hobi Bhabha offer insight into the

condition of these marginalised characters in Gurnah's novels which are even more accentuated through Gurnah's use of intertextuality.

Some accounts of colonial history often stress cultural exchange and mutual interaction while underestimating conflict and violence. This approach hides the forced and inhumane nature of colonial relationships and creates self-justifying but misleading idealised visions of coexistence. Actually, colonial relations have been based on control and resistance, not impartial exchange. As Frantz Fanon, (1925–1961), psychiatrist, philosopher and anti-colonial thinker, argues, colonialism is inherently violent, dividing the world into zones of power and deprivation (*The Wretched* 14). In order to understand the responses in postcolonial literature, it is essential to acknowledge Fanon's understanding of violence, including revolutionary violence, which he deems necessary to restore the Black people's rights and dignity, violated by the profound psychological impacts of colonialism (*The Wretched* 51). Even if Gurnah critiques from a lower tone, he resembles Fanon in his active contestation against post-independence elites, who have replaced colonial rulers, without changing the underlying structures of exploitation, instead, benefiting from them.

In the colonial context, the European coloniser oppresses the colonised by forcing cultural, political, and economic systems on them with the underlying aim of suppressing and erasing indigenous cultures and identities. The colonised are denied power and the right to speak even in their own communities; consequently, they are reduced to subjugation. However, the situation after independence is not quite promising, either. Fanon's theory of decolonisation emphasises fragmentation rather than negotiation. Fanon says decolonisation can be "summed up in the well-known words: 'The last shall be first,'" which underlines the power shift after independence (*The Wretched* 2). He observes that the usual patterns of inequality, injustice, and poverty prevail among native peoples, creating the oppressor and the oppressed within the same society, making one section powerful rulers and the other marginalised, culturally hegemonised, and economically exploited. Regarding "[c]olonization or decolonization […] simply [as] a power struggle", he argues this situation necessitates the radical measure of using force (*The Wretched* 23).

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he argues that independence necessitates a substantial break from colonial structures in all its cultural forms (*The Wretched* 173). From a cultural perspective, Fanon contends that colonial literature naturally acts as a reference point that colonised subjects are forced to quote. He claims that "through their knowledge of [White] writers" such as Montesquieu or Claudel, the colonised "expect their color to be forgotten" (*Black Skin* 193). Additionally, Fanon argues that linguistic assimilation ruptures the subject's psyche, stating "[t]o speak a language is to take on a world, a culture," highlighting the alienation the colonised face. (*Black Skin* 38). He considers that the inescapable exposure to the coloniser's language results in solely unfavourable results. Gurnah sheds light on the predicament of his postcolonial characters that go through the alienation that Fanon mentions here.

This tension between domination and expression, however, also opens a critical theoretical space within postcolonial studies for reconsidering how identities are formed under colonial power. In this regard, Homi K. Bhabha problematises binary models of coloniser and colonised, and suggests more reconciliatory solutions by emphasising hybridity in the postcolonial condition. His concept of cultural hybridity refers to the creation of new cultural meanings emerging from colonial contact. These meanings come into being in an area that he calls the third space, where distinct identities negotiate and hybrid identities emerge heterogeneously between cultures (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 37). Gurnah's narrators in *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* occupy this exact transitional site. Without fixed identities, his immigrant characters are in a process of adjustment to their new homes in the diaspora, creating new meanings instead of existing in a single culture and tradition. Their first-person voices in the novels vocalise reinforced agency after being vulnerably displaced. Their ambivalent conditions do not mean loss, instead, they refute the claims of cultural purity and highlight productivity.

Irrespective of the hybrid characters in his novels, and despite himself being defined as "a member of this group of hybrid Zanzibari Arabs," Gurnah avoids using the word "hybrid" in the case of cosmopolitan Zanzibar since he feels the energy of the word cloaks the violence and oppression colonialism imposed (Malak 57; Chambers 130). In his interview with Gurnah, Chambers notes that Gurnah "seem[s] more pessimistic

than Homi Bhabha about the enabling, transformative 'third space' of hybridity"(130) which for Bhabha "breaks the symmetry and duality of self-other, inside/outside" (*The Location of Culture*, 116). Gurnah responds that "[w]hat many postcolonialists didn't acknowledge in discussions of hybridity was various kinds of racism" because divisions between races existed there and then; therefore, neither schoolchildren nor adults from Muslim, Catholic, or Indian communities had anything to do with each other (Chambers 130). Gurnah reiterates that the Zanzibaris had separate schools, and there were no marriages between these communities, making it impossible for them to constitute a meaningful, enabling, and transforming hybrid "Third Space" in the sense that Homi Bhabha defined (Chambers 130). It is noteworthy that Gurnah responds to questions of hybridity only in the context of Zanzibar in this interview. However, it cannot be ignored that Gurnah's diasporic characters in Europe and the UK encounter the instances of transformative power of hybridity in the sense Bhabha explains.

The fact that some characters might be able to create Bhabha's third space in their immigrant status, however, does not refute that Gurnah's characters mostly are perceived as the Others. The concept of the Other basically corresponds to the marginalised subjects in this thesis, and serves significantly within the chapter analyses. The nuances between the perceptions of the concept by Fanon, Said, Bhabha and Spivak are worth noting. Although Fanon does not explicitly use the term "the Other" in the theoretical sense that later postcolonial theorists like Edward Said or Homi Bhabha do, it can be inferred that his descriptions of racialised severe psychological estrangement and internalised inferiority caused by colonialism lay the psychological groundwork for the Other. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), he presents decolonisation as a transformative process through which the Other reclaims identity, dignity, and sense of humanity.

Following Fanon's preliminary work, Edward Said asserts in *Orientalism* (1978) that Western knowledge system relating to the Orient produces the Other as exotic, backward, and inferior, and legitimises domination. Later, Homi K. Bhabha directly addresses the concept of the Other for the first time as a critical observation within the postcolonial framework in 1983, in his article "The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism" (20). Later, in *The Location of*

Culture (1994), he views the Other within a dynamic and interactive framework, explaining that it is born out of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence. As colonial interactions result in mixed identities and unstable authority, Bhabha's Other does not lack agency, instead, is powered through resistance resulting from cultural interaction.

When it comes to Spivak's understanding of the Other, she presents the concept as "the subaltern," who is deprived of the right to power and representation. In her acclaimed work "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), she particularly emphasises the gender oppression of women by foregrounding dominant discourses of the coloniser and the patriarchal power that silences the marginalised voices, makes decisions on their behalf, and makes it impossible for these women to speak for themselves.

While situating his marginalised Others in a third space enabling a transformative process through which these subjects reclaim identity, dignity, and a sense of humanity on the one hand, Gurnah draws attention to the perils of hegemonic discourse of all kinds on the Other, be it European colonialism, African nationalism, socialism, or American imperialism, in that it generates a dangerous narrative out of the challenges of the past to legitimise present injustice (Burgess, *Race, Revolution* 48). He shares the view of Salman Rushdie in that "[l]iterature is not in the business of copyrighting certain themes for certain groups" (Rushdie 15). In this vein, despite the fact that he is always mentioned as "a postcolonial writer," Gurnah rejects this label:

> I also don't think of myself as a post colonialist. There's clearly just a useful postcolonial way of thinking about how we organize the texts that we teach. We find that we can say things in common about these texts, but postcolonialism isn't a piety, or something you can believe or disbelieve in. […] It's not a part of identity, but a nice tolerant term, that is so capacious that you can put it almost anywhere these days. (Chambers 126)

Despite his rejection to being categorised as such, it is inevitable to consider the author in a context separate from postcolonialism. His fiction questions how history is told because the colonised are excluded by the colonisers from archival structures that would enable their narratives to be recorded as history. As "history is not a fixed truth, but something shaped through narrative," and it is made by the historical accounts of the imperialists in this case, the author explains that one of his most significant motives to start writing was the necessity to challenge "the self-congratulat[ory]" colonial

narratives, which "sought to wipe the persecutions and cruelties from [their] memory" (Nobel Prize, "Nobel Prize Lecture" 10:10-10:18). In this respect, Abdulrazak Gurnah explains that one of his most significant motivations for beginning to write was the need to challenge what he calls "the self-congratulat[ory]" colonial narratives, which "sought to wipe the persecutions and cruelties from [their] memory" (Nobel Prize in Literature, "Nobel Prize Lecture" 10:10–10:18). By confronting these biased historical narratives, Gurnah's fiction seeks to provide the silenced with voice. By restoring the human realities that colonial discourse tries to obscure, Gurnah makes alternative memories reinscribed within the literary representation of colonial and postcolonial histories.

With the awareness that all history is ideologically represented, Gurnah defies the idea of objective reality, adopting intertextuality as a means of shaping his own perception of the past. He prefers to tell stories that do not aim to reveal any singular truth, but rather convey different accounts, based on various narratives. Therefore, literary techniques of intertextuality render themselves quite convenient for the author in the process of writing as an instrument for giving voice to the silenced throughout history. The author believes that some stories must be told repeatedly to create resonance, enhance the enjoyment of reading familiar human experiences, and offer an opportunity to make sense of issues previously unconsidered. Gurnah argues that "recognition of intertextualities to some extent reintroduces us to each other as readers" (Steiner, "A Conversation" 166). First-person narration and dense intertextual layers in *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* interpret colonial and postcolonial histories from the perspective of displaced and marginalised subjects. Thus, Gurnah aligns his storytelling with intertextual and postcolonial concepts of rewriting that challenge dominant historiography and the canon, exposing their gaps and silences instead of offering an official or complete account of the past in the two novels.

Within this framework of significant postcolonial concepts and intertextual techniques, the first chapter analyses how intertextuality functions as a means of voicing the marginalised in *By the Sea* through the novel's references to various hypotexts. One central intertext is Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," the themes of which are non-conformity, alienation, and resistance, paralleling the

marginalisation of the elderly postcolonial asylum seeker, Saleh Omar. By likening Bartleby's withdrawal to Saleh Omar's refusal to speak, Gurnah exposes how oppressive systems shape excluded individuals. Beyond being merely a hypotext, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" is an important recurring reference for the characters in *By the Sea*, functioning like a password that explains much without saying much. Another hypotext, Homer's *Odyssey*, offers another important framework, as Saleh's journey to Britain seeking asylum echoes Odysseus's journey of displacement and longing for home. Unlike Odysseus' triumphant return, Saleh's journey ends in permanent loss, yet he remains hopeful about rebuilding his life in the host country. Gurnah also draws extensively on Shakespeare in *By the Sea*, particularly his plays *The Tempest* and *Julius Caesar*. Beyond Western texts, Gurnah embeds *A Thousand and One Nights* into the novel, alluding to Scheherazade's storytelling as a form of survival and resistance. Finally, Qur'anic references and Islamic practices situate individual narratives within a broader spiritual framework.

In parallel, the second chapter examines *Gravel Heart* and its intertexts to analyse how intertextuality enables the voices of the marginalised to be raised. Intertextuality in *Gravel Heart* is rooted in Salim's family trauma in post-revolutionary Zanzibar, shaped by corruption and the failures of decolonisation. Gurnah's use of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* illuminates themes of injustice, moral hypocrisy, and abuse of power within this context. In England, Salim encounters racialised hostility and Islamophobic nationalism, contrasting sharply with the more optimistic portrayal of diaspora in *By the Sea* and pointing to a shift in Gurnah's portrayal of England from potential refuge to hostile space. Structurally and thematically, *Measure for Measure* frames Salim's family tragedy. Unlike Shakespeare's partially restorative ending, however, *Gravel Heart* offers no redemption, mostly due to the nepotism and corruption in the post-independence Zanzibar. *A Thousand and One Nights* and Biblical and Qur'anic references reappear in this novel as well.

Taken together, this thesis explains that Gurnah employs intertextuality not to decorate his novels with renowned works of literature; instead, the intertextual techniques in both novels serve multifariously as an aesthetic practice, a political intervention, and an ethical commitment to oppressed individuals. By reinterpreting canonical, sacred,

and folkloric narratives through the perspective of the marginalised, Gurnah foregrounds the enduring force of intertextuality to challenge dominant narratives, question imposed boundaries, and enable the silenced to speak with renewed agency.

CHAPTER 1

SPEAKING ACROSS SILENCES: INTERTEXTUALITY AND MARGINALISED IDENTITIES IN *BY THE SEA*

> The past is a country from which we have all emigrated.
> -from Salman Rushdie's "Imaginary Homelands."

Abdulrazak Gurnah's writing is profoundly shaped by his experiences as an immigrant as well as by the turmoil of post-decolonisation politics in Zanzibar. *By the Sea* (2001), which thoroughly explores memory, displacement, and identity in the historical and cultural setting of Zanzibar and in the diaspora in England, is one of his best-known novels. The novel owes its richness and cultural multiplicity to the author's effective embedding of intertextual allusions and history into its gripping story. With the addition of direct and indirect references to literary and historical texts, the narrative becomes sophistically layered, presenting various subjectivities and "transnational identities" (Steiner, *Translated People* 122). Accordingly, this chapter analyses what manifestations of intertextuality in the forms of allusions, cultural contexts, and intersecting themes are present in *By the Sea* and the role of these manifestations in amplifying the voices of the oppressed and marginalised characters in the novel.

The hypotexts *By the Sea* draws on, and the related analyses are presented consecutively in this chapter. Herman Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1853), as the primary hypotext, followed by Homer's *Odyssey*, William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1623) and *Julius Caesar* (1623), and respectively brief mention of the colonial maps as the references are analysed as examples of intertexts from the West. The hypotexts from the East, namely, canonical *A Thousand and One Nights* tales and the holy book *the Qur'an* are analysed in order of intertextual significance in the novel. *By the Sea* has discontinuous narration, which is due to Gurnah's use of two separate first-person narrators, Saleh Omar and Latif Mahmud, the accounts of whom are made up of limited knowledge, traumatising memory, and delayed disclosures of facts. Since

different individual perceptions of the protagonists' common experiences restrict narration in first-person, the confluence of the two competing voices in the novel disrupts the chronological order, rendering linear narration psychologically and logically unfeasible. With its introspective storytelling through these two protagonists, the novel narrates a tangled tale of how marginalised people are displaced and how they must rebuild their identities in the eventuality of colonialism.

The older protagonist, Saleh Omar, is a 65-year-old refugee who leads a "half-life of a stranger" in a British town by the sea, and the younger protagonist, Latif Mahmud, is apparently a legal immigrant, a professor at a London university, and a poet (*BTS* 1,145). The lives of these two men are connected by a complicated history of betrayal, economic dependency, and political manipulation, long before they meet for the first time in the UK. The interwoven accounts of their lives show that memory, history, and storytelling enable survival for both of them in the UK diaspora. The layered nature of the narrative naturally transitions into the novel's intertextual dimension, where stories echo one another and individual histories reflect more expansive literary and cultural traditions. In an interview, Gurnah states that intertextuality provides readers with the enjoyment of recognising "a shared sense of textuality," to provide "a convenient echo or resonance," an abbreviated expression that deepens the narrative, implying that certain essential human stories must be retold repeatedly, with every retelling creating a new chance to grasp unintelligible things about the worlds readers move through and their roles within them (Steiner, "A Conversation" 166). With this view, Gurnah embeds multiple literary, historical, and cultural writings in changing times, voices, and personal declarations of truth in an anachronic and restorative style, which makes *By the Sea* both a story of personal losses and an intertextual means of recuperation for the wounds of the marginalised.

By the Sea centres on and rewrites the colonial narrative, embedding the subjective experiences of people displaced by colonialism and the political upheaval in its aftermath. Through the dual first-person narrations of the two protagonists, Gurnah employs a dialogic structure that allows the novel to challenge dominant narratives of postcolonial migration and belonging by positioning its marginalised subjects as storytellers rather than as only victims. The use of overlapping and fragmented

storytelling in the novel is a characteristic of diasporic and exile literature, which is mainly based on the testimonies of the displaced (Caruth 4-7). Reshaping collective memory through subjectivities, *By the Sea* transforms personal traumas into an intertextual discourse of resistance and recuperation. At the same time, the title of the novel melancholically implies the liminality of the refugee who is forever bound to be on the edge between belonging and not belonging. The sea might represent the Zanzibari littoral itself, serving as the central metaphor for separation, journey, and loss. Indeed, for the novel's protagonists, the sea is both the route of exile and the symbol of the impossibility of returning to the homeland. Nevertheless, the sea also signals promising prospects as "[t]he sea of dislocation that is symbolised by the journey between Africa and Europe can, in [Gurnah's] view, become the sea of discovery, past the edges of the maps, and into the sea of 'becoming'" (Goddard and Goddard 13). In other words, the British littoral where Saleh Omar lives in at the beginning of his new life concurrently stands for the hope for belonging.

"Relics," "Latif," and "Silences" are the three main sections of the six-chapter novel. As the first and third sections are narrated by Saleh Omar, and the second by Latif, the story is interwoven with the separate perspectives of the two men regarding both their shared past and divided history. Initially, they are both marginalised in their home country and, then, in the host country. The presence of dual narrators sheds light on the story from complementary angles. During the transitions between the sections, the confused reader might feel as if solving a puzzle; however, this is how Gurnah enables the reader to reconstruct a hopeful new narrative from the protagonists' interwoven, non-linear narratives undermine chronological coherence and narrative stability. Before beginning to analyse the agency of intertextuality in voicing the marginalised in *By the Sea*, it is required to provide a detailed summary, taking into consideration the complexity of the novel due to its interwoven accounts by the two different protagonists, and the connections of many incidents involving many other characters with the referential texts to be mentioned afterwards.

The first chapter, "Relics," focuses on Saleh Omar's story, which he narrates from his small home by the sea in the UK. In retrospect, he recalls his experiences in Zanzibar and the asylum process leading up to that point in his life. From his recounts of how

he ended up in the UK, it is understood that he has been a victim of a family with retributive sentiments against him and of institutionalised injustice by the corrupt and biased government in his homeland. Years before Zanzibar's independence, Saleh Omar ran a successful business in the furniture shop he had inherited from his father. He is a well-educated man who attended an English-medium university in Kampala. In a *Musim*[4] season, when international traders sail to Zanzibar, Saleh Omar meets a wealthy Persian incense trader named Hussein, and is influenced by his personality and his story. It is during the same Musim season that the other protagonist Latif Mahmud's alcoholic father, Rajab Shaaban Mahmud, too, meets the trader while idling at a café and quickly trusts him. Then, Hussein, a man of evil intentions, makes business deals with both men separately. He first deceives Rajab Shaaban Mahmud by promising to set up a business together, convincing the gullible man to be a partner by pledging his only house as security. At the same time, Hussein borrows money from Saleh Omar and uses Rajab Shaaban's family home as collateral. Thus, what Saleh Omar believes is an ordinary business deal drags him into a devious plot that leads to a series of incidents that ruin both protagonists' families.

After Hussein leaves for good, the deeds of Rajab Shaaban's house pass into Saleh Omar's hands as collateral for the loan the trader has received from him. This inevitably ties Saleh Omar to Rajab Shaaban, who has been terribly fooled by a fake business deal. When Saleh Omar eventually claims ownership of the property to recover his losses from the unpaid loans Hussein borrowed, the Mahmud family interprets this as an act of ruthlessness, and their growing resentment turns into vengeance. Latif Mahmud's mother, already notorious for her extra-marital affairs, capitalises on the affair she has with a socialist nationalist minister during the revolutionary uprisings of the 1960s. Thus, benefiting from shifting political circumstances, she gets Saleh Omar's assets confiscated and has him imprisoned for over a decade, tangling him in a resentful legal and personal dispute with Rajab Shaban Mahmud. By the time he is released from prison, Saleh Omar is without a family

[4] The *Musim* (monsoon) winds were central to Zanzibar's history, as they determined seasonal sea travel and trade across the Indian Ocean, linking the island with Arabia, India, and East Africa and shaping its economic and cultural life ("Zanzibar").

because his wife and daughter have died in his long absence. His best years stolen from him in prison, his family lost, and his properties confiscated, Saleh Omar is drawn into further disappointment and silent endurance lasting for the rest of his life from then on. Fearing further injustice, he decides to seek asylum in the UK and contacts an immigration agent, who sells him a flight ticket and strictly advises him not to let the UK immigration officers know he can speak English. Trusting the agent's experience, he decides to follow his advice and not speak the language. Thus, when he arrives at Gatwick Airport from Zanzibar as an asylum seeker with only a few belongings, including a small suitcase and a false identity, he presents himself to the UK immigration authorities using Rajab Shaaban Mahmud's identity card, which he found among the documents in the house the Mahmuds had lost. The first immigration authority Saleh Omar meets, an officer whose parents were Romanian immigrants, mercilessly criticises and ostracises Saleh Omar for being too old to embark on an immigration adventure, and not belonging to Europe as a Black Muslim. Tremendously hurt by what the officer tells him, Saleh Omar maintains his silence, not uttering any other words except "refugee" and "asylum."

After having his first documents stamped, Saleh Omar is entrusted to Rachel, a young social worker assisting immigrants with their integration and settling in the UK. Saleh Omar continues his silence with Rachel, as well as Celia, who runs the bed and breakfast where he was temporarily placed, and all the other immigrants there, avoiding interaction as much as he can, in his desire to be left alone to contemplate his past and present circumstances. While Saleh Omar is enduring all the rudeness and indifference of Celia silently, the unhygienic conditions of the place, and the mockery by other immigrants due to him being a Black Muslim, Rachel searches for a Zanzibari in the UK to enable communication with Saleh Omar. When he breaks his silence in Rachel's office building to say that he does not, in fact, need an interpreter, Rachel, shocked and irritated, asks him why he has not spoken until then. The elderly immigrant then answers that he preferred not to, an allusion to Melville's Bartleby that Rachel does not get. Notwithstanding the revealed truth, Rachel arranges for the two Zanzibaris to meet and communicate.

The second chapter, titled “Latif,” narrates the history of Latif Mahmud and his family. Latif Mahmud grows up in a family that is morally and emotionally decaying. His father’s alcoholism and his mother’s extramarital affairs make him a sad, isolated child ridiculed by his peers. What is worse, a stranger, the Persian incense trader Hussein in his thirties, whom they host in their home, lures Latif’s elder brother, sixteen-year-old Hassan into a homosexual relationship with him, impressing him with his wealth, prestige, and gifts. The fact that his family is regarded as morally corrupt by the society leaves traces of unspeakable shame and helplessness in Latif’s childhood, and these scars keep silencing him in adulthood. Led by his parents to antagonise Saleh Omar for the loss of his family home and the destruction of his family, he is left with a spite against this man, which distorts his perception of justice and his sense of guilt. Despite his familial problems, Latif Mahmud, as a promising student with dreams, manages to make his way to Europe at the age of eighteen, going to Dresden in the German Democratic Republic, GDR, on a government scholarship to study dentistry, owing to the relationship between the new socialist government in Tanzania in the post-independence period and its socialist alliances. There, he has a chance to visit his long-term German penfriend, Jan, and his mother, Elleke, at their home. Together with Jan, who has also sought an opportunity to escape the socialist regime, Latif Mahmud leaves the GDR. Onward migrating, first fleeing Eastern Germany, and then arriving in the UK, Latif Mahmud begins studying English literature once he receives legal immigrant status. At the start of his new life, he changes his given name, Ismail, to Latif, in the hope of leaving behind all the sorrows of the past. He succeeds in building a solid career in academia but still faces occasional incidents of discrimination as a lingering legacy of the colonial period. The interpreter Rachel has arranged for Saleh Omar turns out to be Latif Mahmud himself. Upon hearing each other’s names before meeting, both men are shocked. At the very ends of the first and second chapters, Latif Mahmud is appalled to learn that a Zanzibari immigrant with the same name as his late father has arrived in the UK, and Saleh Omar is surprised to discover that his prospective interpreter shares the same surname as the man who contributed to his downfall.

“Silences,” the third chapter, is one of reconciliation. After many years, the paths of Latif Mahmud and Saleh Omar cross again. While Saleh Omar is now a refugee in the

process of integration, Latif Mahmud is a settled academician. When these two Zanzibaris, wounded by the same past but remade by different experiences of exile, meet and confront the challenge of reconciliation by filling the emotional and moral voids in their respective stories, the narrative's core is formed. Latif Mahmud, previously opinionated negatively about Saleh Omar because of the vengeance his family pursues against him, approaches him coldly and reservedly at first; however, by exchanging their sides of the events and exchanging their goodwilled perspectives in episodic storytelling sessions during their daily meetings, they make peace with their past and with each other, supporting each other in a kind of diasporic kinship in the UK. The novel ends on a hopeful note, promising Saleh Omar a second life with the company and assistance of Latif Mahmud and Rachel, whom the elderly immigrant regards as his deceased daughter.

The protagonists' movement from historical dislocation to diasporic reunion, which constitutes one core aspect in the narrative, is mirrored in the novel's intertextuality. As these marginalised characters' lives are shaped by layered histories, the text itself is interwoven with numerous literary and cultural hypotexts. Gurnah draws on a wide variety of sources, including Western literature, Arabic tales, Islamic traditions, and colonial archives in *By the Sea*. This distinctive feature of intertextuality functions in the novel as a way to voice the oppressed and to insert East African and diasporic experiences into a broader literary conversation historically dominated by Western narratives. Through intertextuality, Gurnah enables his exiled and marginalised protagonists to have a voice in the shared history of literature and ethics that has silenced them before. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie draws attention to the danger of "a single story" of individuals as Spivak does for the subaltern (Adichie 00.03). Her concept of the "single story" explains how reducing a person, culture, or place to only one narrative creates stereotypes and a restricted, often misleading perspective. Likewise, Gurnah, too, clearly opposes the reading and representing of refugee stories from one reductive perspective and emphasises different subjectivities in his works. Even though Europe was doubtlessly far from being a haven for African refugees in the post-independence period, it was their only resort since many African countries had become regions of fatal disaster. Within this tense atmosphere of restricted choice and forced mobility, the novel avoids reducing migration to a simple story of helpless

displacement. As Helff observes, "Gurnah's novel rejects easy characterisations and avoids depicting Africans arriving in Europe as victims per se," problematising narratives that frame refugees only through victimhood (397). Gurnah's protagonists in this novel are not self-pitying. Instead, they endeavour to tell different migrant stories, rejecting victimisation and searching for a new beginning.

The primary referential text in *By the Sea* is American writer Herman Melville's short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (1853), which is significant for emphasising the issues of non-conformity, identity, alienation, and resistance that both Bartleby and Saleh Omar share. Although it is "neither a postcolonial text nor a narrative of asylum, Bartleby provides a model for postcolonial resistance through the denial of his master's voice" (Cooper 91). Resonating with Herman Melville's character Bartleby, Saleh Omar feels obligated to go through a lengthy process of unresponsiveness after taking asylum in England. In fact, the elderly protagonist's initial adoption of silence, similar to Bartleby's, dates back to the time he has been released from prison in Zanzibar, and has started sitting in his shop as a recluse, completely disconnected from society. Later in the UK, he endeavours to mitigate the challenging experiences of displacement through similar strategic withdrawal like the scrivener's. Pretending to have no command of English when questioned by authorities upon his arrival in the UK, Saleh Omar benefits from this deliberate silence in several ways. Primarily, this protects his status as a postcolonial asylum seeker since he knows how vulnerable people like himself are silenced by the Western bureaucratic system. Then, silence can reflect the pain of displacement and confirm his vulnerability and determination to conceal the past filled with injustice and fear inflicted on him in his homeland. From the moment he ends his pretended inability to speak English, his voice emerges as an act of recovery and rewriting of erased history in a process of fragmented remembrance.

In Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener," the first-person narrator, a well-established Wall Street lawyer, tells his perplexing encounter with Bartleby, a copyist whose quiet resistance reveals the fragility of institutional power and the limits of human agency within capitalistic and bureaucratic structures. First hired for his calm demeanour and reliability, Bartleby soon refuses to perform even the simplest, most routine tasks. The iconic phrase that marks his defiance, "I would prefer not to," both

disengages from and challenges the authority's directives (Melville 28). Every day, he continues to refuse to participate in the mechanical task of writing documents, disrupting workplace functioning and transforming passivity into nonconformity. Beyond mere obstinacy, Bartleby's words become the language of resistance. His refusal to meet his employer's routine demands becomes an existential stance that disconcerts the lawyer's authoritative control, as Bartleby's silent noncompliance reverses the hierarchy that supports the capitalist culture of productivity. The lawyer's inability to reassert dominance over his subordinate reveals how structures of power delicately depend on the compliance of the subjugated, and how even passive resistance can unsettle that dependence.

The only thing that is known about Bartleby's previous life is the rumour that he used to work in a "dead-letter office," where his duty was to sort and burn the letters that never reach their recipients. His incurable gloom and indifference towards worldly matters could have emerged out of his deductions on the futility and transiency of life as a consequence of recurrently being exposed to those letters at first. This situation might eventually have led to his existential crisis and passive resistance to the capitalistic world, which always demands that people work while disregarding their emotional and spiritual needs.

Despite not carrying out any tasks, Bartleby starts to occupy the lawyer's law chambers. The way he lives there as though it were his home, and refuses to leave, shows that his quiet presence transforms from compliance to a passive form of revolt. When his employer discovers this on a Sunday morning, he is not let in by Bartleby but asked to "walk about the block two or three times" so that "he would probably have concluded his affairs" (12). On this occasion, the lawyer describes his response to Bartleby's "wonderful mildness" as "impotent rebellion," a total reversal of agency in which the master becomes powerless before the servant who refuses to act. It is obviously Bartleby who determines the nature of their relationship by challenging the assumed power dynamic between employer and employee.

As there have been many useless attempts to expel Bartleby from the premises and the building, the law enforcement is finally involved, and he is taken to the Tombs, a prison in New York City, where he is called "the silent man" (Melville 153), which

parallels Saleh Omar's situation in front of the immigration officer and in Celia's place. After one of his occasional visits to Bartleby out of a sense of pity, the lawyer is informed that he has died due to his refusal to eat. In a deep sense of melancholy and guilt, he goes to the prison and finds him:

> [s]trangely huddled at the base of the wall, his knees drawn up, and lying on his side, his head touching the cold stones, I saw the wasted Bartleby. But nothing stirred. I stooped over and saw that his dim eyes were open; otherwise, he seemed profoundly sleeping. *'He's asleep with kings and counselors,'* murmured I." (Melville 29)

Bartleby dies quietly and passively in consistency with his repeated phrase, "I would prefer not to," making his grand finale from the world that he could not accept or resist by starving himself to death. The narrator's famous final note, "Ah Bartleby! Ah humanity!" (Melville 29), compassionately but helplessly emphasises failure to understand Bartleby's suffering personally and collectively. This often-reiterated exclamation is a strong critique of the alienation, isolation, and lack of empathy in modern society. Bartleby's striking passive resistance portrays the tragic side of the human condition. The narrator's shifting tone throughout the story, from disturbance to pity, and then to existential sorrow, which is caused by his inability to "save" Bartleby, underscores Melville's criticism of capitalist bureaucracy and ethical indifference in America in the mid-nineteenth century.

In Melville's story, Bartleby's death by starvation due to his refusal to eat can be interpreted as passive suicide. His persistent refusal to engage with the world around him leads to his death, highlighting the morbid outcomes of extreme non-conformity and isolation. Gurnah says, "[Saleh Omar] doesn't go as far as Bartleby of course, and indeed in the end he's pulled out of that, but he's fascinated by what it means for Bartleby to do what he does" (Steiner "A Conversation" 167). Saleh Omar's refusal to speak also stems from his desire to be left alone like Bartleby. He does not want to be disturbed in the detention centre or in the pension, as he needs extended periods of contemplation in silence after the extreme hardships he has endured in Zanzibar.

By invoking Melville, Gurnah connects the alienation of the nineteenth-century office clerk to the marginalisation of the postcolonial asylum seeker, stressing that both are

victims of oppressive systems. As a response to Steiner's query on how the Bartleby story works in *By the Sea*, Gurnah explains that Saleh Omar's chosen silence and withdrawal against the hostility he faces as an asylum seeker in Britain is very much reminiscent of the Bartleby character (Steiner, "A Conversation" 166). In fact, his silence not only expresses his withdrawal as a result of his exclusion but also represents his resilience against greater structures that reinforce marginalisation. Similar to Bartleby's passive revolt against societal expectations and his repeated responses to himself with the phrase "I would rather not to," Saleh Omar's preferred silence represents his perseverance in securing his status as a refugee, as well as his alienation and struggles in the host country. The repetition of the exact phrase of Bartleby's, or other similar phrases directly associated with it, is a clear example of Riffaterre's definition of the syllepsis concept, which can be explained as generating multiple meanings from a single word or structure simultaneously, emphasising ambiguity and intertextual layering (115).

In this respect, Saleh Omar's interview with immigration officer Kevin Edelman at Gatwick Airport is of great importance for highlighting the postcolonial refugee's help-seeking situation and the tension he experiences between speech and silence. Reflecting on the question of the relation between agency and language, Derrida claims that "as soon as one speaks, as soon as one enters the medium of language, one loses that very singularity" (60). Since the question of responsibility is generally regarded as being connected to speech and action rather than to secrets and silence, Saleh Omar considers what the ticket seller told him before he embarked on his asylum journey to Britain. He becomes more appreciative of the benefits of silence and withdrawal because expressing one's circumstances could sometimes be too hard to be realised and to be interpreted correctly by others, especially by the authorities to decide on one's status as a refugee. Reasoning on his extreme act of passivity, Saleh Omar says: "I had been told not to say anything; to pretend I could not speak any English. I was not sure why, but I know I would do as I was told because the advice had a crafty ring to it, the kind of resourceful ruse the powerless would know" (*BTS* 5). Having been educated in the British colonial system for years, and attending an English-medium university, the elderly man has a good command of the English language; however, he feels obligated to both change his identity and hide his ability

of speaking English to escape from Zanzibar and be granted asylum in the UK. He believes that he could avoid answering risky questions and being deported as some possible wrong answers could hinder his refugee status. Another plausible reason for Saleh Omar's silence could be that "he does not relish the prospect of opening up and reliving the painful, heartbreaking story of his life under the cool gaze of the airport officer, who is not interested in listening" (Mondo 11). Especially in the vulnerable psychological status of an asylum seeker, it can be claimed that feeling not being cared for would be unbearable.

Later in the novel, Latif Mahmud speculates that "without English you are even more a stranger, a refugee" and that "you're just a condition, without even a story" as someone expecting the provision of security from Britain as a former colonial power, drawing attention to the general neglect for the humane needs of the refugees who are stripped down to abstractions without a past (*BTS* 143). While being insistently questioned by Edelman, Saleh Omar can only utter the words "refugee" and "asylum" to be on the safe side. Although the immigration officer sounds as if he were empathising with Saleh Omar's uprootedness saying that his parents, too, were refugees from Romania, he actually proves that he is a racist when he later discriminates Saleh Omar for not being a member of the European "family" like himself and his family: "[b]ut my parents are European, they have a right, they are part of the family. […] You don't belong here, you don't value any of the things we value, you haven't paid for them through generations, and we don't want you here" (*BTS* 12). Conceptualising immigrants as prospective thieves who will steal from him, Edelman absolutely ignores that the accumulated European wealth largely owes its existence to colonies and their inhabitants. Here, Edelman's contradictory "us versus them" discourse is shaped by "a historical amnesia," ignoring both Europe's colonial past and the migration waves stirred by the Second World War (Llena 92). It is quite ironic for the immigration officer, as a son of Eastern European refugees, to assume sharing a common history with the English, while the only shared aspects could be being "white" and their religion, Christianity. This false idea of European homogeneity results from a desire for what Paul Gilroy, British cultural theorist, defines as "the peculiar synonymy of the terms 'European' and 'white'" (155). Apparently, Edelman, despite being an Other himself, believes that the uninvited Other, Saleh Omar carries the

potential to disrupt the established order for the European immigrants like himself and his family. His discriminatory speech underscores the ideas behind a common European identity and colonialists' standards about who to accept or decline, which Gurnah frequently criticises in his novels.

Probably, the most poignant part of *By the Sea* in terms of displaying the vulnerability of the elderly asylum seeker is when the immigration officer Edelman asks him how much danger his life is really in, and why he did not stay in his own country, where he could grow old in peace (*BTS* 11). The silence of the asylum seeker before the authoritative immigration officer is reminiscent of a scene from colonial times, in which Europeans claimed superiority by controlling language and reason (Arslan 47). Although he knows Saleh Omar cannot speak English, the immigration officer continues to try to talk to the man in his mid-sixties out of "this asylum business," which he thinks is "a young man's game" (*BTS* 11). As a response, what Saleh Omar's inner thoughts reveal is striking on the issue of immigration:

> At what age are you supposed not to be afraid for your life? Or not to want to live without fear? How did he know that my life was in any less danger that *(sic)* those young men they let in? And why was it immoral to want to live better and in safety? Why was that greed or a game? I was touched by his concern though, and wished I could break my silence and tell him not to worry. I was not born yesterday, I knew how to look after myself. Please stamp that passport, kind sir, and send me away to some safe place of detention. I dropped my eyes in case their alertness should reveal that I understood him. (*BTS* 11)

In this passage, Saleh Omar's narration in the first person provides the reader with direct access to his inner fears and reasoning. His questioning of why it is not right to seek safety emphasises a moral argument for the basic human right to living in safety. This contrasts him sharply with Bartleby, who remains silent and inaccessible. Directly hearing Saleh Omar's voice, which asserts his right to safety, creates a sense of closeness, and makes it possible for the reader to feel his vulnerability and struggle.

Saleh Omar's refusal to speak English equates to Bartleby's refusal to work. After a history of abuse, both characters resort to the refrain "I would prefer not to" to prevent further breaches against their integrity, as Fanon notes: "silence falls when the oppressor approaches" (*The Wretched* 31). In their marginalised condition, the only possible response to the master's commanding voice is silence, an unyielding form of passive resistance. In Bartleby's case, silence is non-committal to anything, uttering

nothing fixed, positive or negative for the future. In Saleh Omar's case, however, the silence embedded in the phrase is transient, suggesting probable future action or communication. It means something cannot be realised yet, under the present conditions; in other words, Saleh Omar refuses to speak as a victim. Having already been troubled in his homeland by colonialism, the Persian merchant, and the corrupt politicians in the early days of independence, Saleh Omar does not risk being tormented again in the host country he arrived in with hopes of safety and peace. He aspires to "claim a singularity beyond known identities," and have "the possibility of universality without necessarily having to claim the ethnic specificity of the British" (Olaussen 233). By refusing to speak, Saleh Omar suffers from the humiliation of being talked about in his presence by some helpers, who also make inconvenient decisions for him in the same way Bartleby has the lawyer, or the law, speak on his behalf. His silence inevitably creates the perception that he is entirely dependent on his helpers. For instance, when he is taken to a bed-and-breakfast for asylum seekers run by a woman called Celia, whom he describes as loud and bullying, with a "fussy and random motherliness" (*BTS* 51), he is called "Mr. Showboat" because she does not bother to learn his name. "That's what I call him. It's our nickname for him. He doesn't mind, I've asked him," says Celia, not caring the least how he feels (*BTS* 62). In an interview, Gurnah says, "[t]he rudeness—people felt they could say really quite unpleasant things to your face, their refusal even to try and pronounce your name and, of course more obviously negative encounters in public places, shops, etc." was offensive (Iqbal 35). As such, the rudeness Saleh Omar encounters is an exact example of what Gurnah himself experienced as verbal abuse in the first years he arrived in England.

Without English, Saleh Omar's identity is hidden, but this anonymity does not secure an unconditional welcome. Celia insists that "[he]'ll have to learn some English" (*BTS* 58), reframing the relationship between the host and the immigrant through the political dimensions of language (Farrier 131). This instance recalls Frantz Fanon's claim in *Black Skin, White Masks* that "[m]astery of language affords remarkable power," social legitimacy and dignity in the immigrant's case (18). In this regard, the landlady's insistence on Saleh Omar's learning English indicates that acquisition of the dominant culture's language is the primary requirement for belonging and power.

Although the similarity between Bartleby and Saleh Omar is established earlier in the novel, the first time Saleh Omar actually breaks his silence and utters a hypogram of Bartleby's famous phrase is when he is taken for debriefing to the interview room of the office where Rachel, the refugee caseworker appointed for him, works. Michael Riffaterre claims that the reader's automatic recognition of textual structures and intertextual repetitions from prior reading experiences is what gives the text meaning (2). Hypogram, a central conceptual term he coined, is an underlying pre-text that the author does not directly quote, but the reader identifies in the new text. In other words, the former text serves as a platform for the reader to interpret literary works as "the significance issuing from intertextuality is meaning, but not necessarily content" (Riffaterre 76, 188). At this stage, while Rachel is trying to explain how hard they are trying to get him an interpreter, Saleh Omar suddenly confesses "[he doesn't] think [he] need[s] an interpreter" (*BTS* 64). In response to Rachel, who exclaims in surprise and asks why he has not spoken English until then, Saleh Omar says, "I preferred not to" (*BTS* 65). Only after this indirect reminder does Gurnah directly mention Melville's work. A wall in the office instantly reminds Saleh Omar of the story of Bartleby, and he thinks, "[t]he brick wall made me think of it as soon as I walked into the room, and I was certain that when I started to speak I would find a way to say that sentence, to see if the wall had made her think of it too. A beautiful story" (*BTS* 65). While he utters Bartleby's expression to break that silence and show his effort to communicate with Rachel as equals, he realises she does not know the story. Let alone being equals, Saleh Omar appears more knowledgeable then about Western literature, as an individual of a previously colonised country.

In this novel, the famous catchphrase "I would prefer not to" or similar phrases associated with it are uttered several times. Bazerman defines it as "intra-textual[ity]" referencing when a work of literature recalls its own previous parts (89). In Latif Mahmud's narrative, the connection with "Bartleby the Scrivener" is first established when a colleague of Rachel's at the refugee council tells him the reason why he is no longer needed as an interpreter. Referring to Saleh Omar, he tells Latif Mahmud:

> 'A strange one, it appeared he could speak English all along but he preferred not to.' The way the man inflected preferred made it sound as if he was quoting. "Preferred. Like Bartleby," I said, always eager to show off, to confirm my

> credentials as a teacher of literature. 'I'll get Rachel to give you a call,' he said, so I assumed he didn't know the story. (*BTS* 74–75)

Hearing the mysterious asylum seeker's response, Latif Mahmud immediately recognises the connection to Melville's work. The irony of the situation shows that Saleh Omar and Latif Mahmud, the two Zanzibari men, have acquired more command of Western literature as a result of the imposed colonial education. While previously colonised people are looked down on in the novel by people like Kevin Edelman, Celia, or the man in the street who insults Latif Mahmud because of his race, Gurnah's representation of the local British gives the sense that they are less educated than these two men, especially considering the fact that "Bartleby the Scrivener" is one of the most famous and widely taught texts in Anglo-American literature. Even before they meet, a connection forms between Latif Mahmud and Salih Omar solely through this sentence, as their common knowledge of the story and the phrase bonds them immediately. In this sense, the hypogram becomes the first element that connects these two characters, who might otherwise be expected to stand as adversaries in England.

This incident relates to addressivity, a Bakhtinian concept, which underscores the fact that it takes two, the addresser and the addressee, to assume their roles during the linguistic interaction. In his collaborative work with Volosinov, Bakhtin elaborates on this concept:

> Orientation of the word towards the addressee has an extremely high significance. In point of fact, word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant. As word, it is precisely the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener, addresser and addressee. Each and every word expresses 'one' in relation to the 'other'. I give myself verbal shape from another's point of view, ultimately, from the point of view of the community to which I belong. A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end of the bridge depends on me, then the other depends upon my addressee. A word is territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and his interlocutor. (Bakhtin, M. M., and V. N. Volosinov 86)

Addressivity suggests that even when there is a lack of visual cues, or an in-person encounter, the right choice of words conveys the intended meaning in this social context (Bakhtin, *Speech Genres* 95). The communication through Bartleby's catchphrase "I would prefer not to" is first actualised by the intermediaries in the relationship of the two men. The peculiarity of the sentence uttered by Saleh Omar enables it to reach Latif Mahmud. In this manner, the bridge between them is formed

directly as they meet and start mentioning the past rifts in Zanzibar. Thus, the two protagonists assume the roles of addresser and addressee in person. At that instance, Saleh Omar notes that "[p]erhaps it's inevitable that [Latif] should wish to quarrel with [himself]" while they are mentioning the past rifts, Latif Mahmud responds smiling, "I would prefer not to" (*BTS* 156). Then, feeling happy because they have both read "Bartleby, the Scrivener," they begin sharing how they interpret and connect to the story. Latif Mahmud recalls teaching the book in his first years at the academia in the UK, and Saleh Omar tells how he found Melville's book among the books left behind by British colonialists. Lastly, the famous refrain of Bartleby is repeated when Rachel invites Saleh Omar to her house for dinner with her and her mother. When Saleh Omar rejects by saying "I'd prefer not to," once more, she exaggeratedly sighs and protests: "[o]h you're doing your Bartleby act again," as an example of intratextuality Gurnah often utilises in *By the Sea* (*BTS* 198).

In fact, Bartleby articulates both protagonists' feelings of dislocation and defiance, since Latif Mahmud does not really fit in, either. He feels estranged from the academia, underestimating himself despite having been assigned as a professor in a London university or rewarded as a poet. Latif returns to Melville's scrivener once again while recounting his own version of the shared past, focusing on his father, Rajab Shaaban Mahmud. When Latif Mahmud recalls Bartleby, he does so through the lens of his father's downfall, confronting Saleh Omar with his memory of the events. Initially, Latif Mahmud casts his father as the silent victim, and Saleh Omar as the powerful oppressor in his mind. On this matter, Latif asks Saleh Omar to justify himself:

> I don't even know if I remember that day, but I remember the story. It was the story of my youth. When I read "Bartleby" for the first time I realised that that was how I thought of my father, resigned in his futility and you his persecutor. I learned to read the story differently later, to see that it was not all about resignation and futility, but the first time I saw him in it. You found the story moving. I remember you said that. Moving. Why didn't you find him moving? (*BTS*169)

Through the questions he asks, Latif seeks solace and comes to terms with the past and with Saleh Omar. Contrary to his accusing thoughts, at this point in the narrative, he finds out that Saleh Omar is in the position of the wronged rather than the wrongdoer. In fact, they both find sharing stories relieving, as two Zanzibaris with a common

history. Thus, implying intricate relations and interactions in *By the Sea*, Bartleby's story also symbolises resistance and emphasises the protagonists' revolt against norms and expectations of the society. It also parallels Bartleby's incurable sense of isolation within the constraints of Wall Street to the protagonists' own feelings of detachment and isolation in a foreign country. Moreover, making a literary connection through Bartleby enables Gurnah to establish an exchange between the struggles of Saleh and Latif and the classic theme of non-conformity showcased in Melville's work. Thus, the absorption of "Bartleby the Scrivener" by *By the Sea* demonstrates the interconnectedness of these works, proving the iterability of human experience across contexts.

At the end of the novel, Rachel has read Melville's story, but, regarding the scrivener as a cruel and abusive character with nothing inspiring heroism, she is quite unimpressed, unlike Saleh Omar. He interprets her dislike of it as "[t]oo much self-pity for her liking, all that nineteenth-century melodrama. Perhaps she was afraid that I saw myself as a kind of Bartleby, as someone with a secret and burdensome history who sought to expiate it with silence" (*BTS* 198). In defence of the story, Saleh Omar explains to Rachel:

> Perhaps you have lost tolerance for that desire for isolation which faith in a spirit's ambition made heroic. So the kind of self-mortifying retreat Bartleby undertakes only has meaning as a dangerous unpredictability. Especially since the story does not allow us to know what has brought Bartleby to this condition, does not allow us to have sympathy for him. It does not allow us to say, yes, yes, in this case we understand the meaning of such behaviour and we forgive it. The story only gives us this man, who says nothing about himself or about his past, appears to make no judgement or analysis, desires no reprieve or forgiveness from us, and only wishes to be left alone. (*BTS* 199)

As can be seen from Saleh Omar's explanation regarding Bartleby, his own story differs from the scrivener's in that he narrates his version in first-person both to be judged but acquitted afterwards, to be relieved of the burden of his conscience, and to be forgiven in the eyes of Latif Mahmud. Gurnah's referencing Bartleby actually serves beyond what intertextuality conventionally does. While the hypotext is only a reference point in classic intertextuality, drawing on "Bartleby, the Scrivener" in *By the Sea* appears to be more performative for Gurnah. The overt naming of the hypotext,

the protagonists' familiarity with it, frequent references to it, its capability to establish relations between characters, and the almost critical discussion above on it by Saleh Omar further the function of intertextuality here. The connection between the novel and Melville's tale serves both as an active mechanism that connects the protagonists to one another and a reconfiguration of resistance, belonging, and power within the postcolonial context. Furthermore, through Saleh Omar, Gurnah voices his own literary criticism on "Bartleby, the Scrivener." This critical commentary recalls Genette's definition of metatextuality, where one text alludes to another in an analytical or reflective style, often by means of literary criticism or scholarly interpretation (Genette 3—5).

The novel begins and ends with Saleh Omar's recollections of Rachel's visits since the first days of his arrival in the UK. At first, she causes him inconvenience despite her sincere wish to be helpful as a social worker because her erratic arrivals and absences disturb his otherwise still life. Every meeting with Rachel renders itself an opportunity for introspection, which exposes Saleh Omar's inclination toward withdrawal and resignation. However, as he becomes convinced that she is a very compassionate and helpful young woman, he starts regarding her as his daughter he lost long ago in Zanzibar during his imprisonment. Thus, they grow a symbolic family bond that connects them to each other as a caring yet weary daughter, and himself, an elderly, obstinate father. As time passes, the old refugee thinks about Melville's Bartleby again, implicitly altering the scrivener's words to reflect a shift in his own approach to life and the people who try to help him. Speaking with Latif Mahmud about the necessity of a telephone, he says:

> "I have no urge to do so," I said, and saw him smile. I thought I knew what he was thinking. He would have preferred me to say, I prefer not to. But I had been thinking of what Rachel said, and thought I would read 'Bartleby' again before speaking his words as the utterings of an admired desperado. (*BTS* 244)

It could be argued that Saleh Omar's rejection of Bartleby as a role model is necessary for him to recover language and be initiated into society (Cooper 92). After acquiring a new social standing, Saleh Omar disposes of the role model of Bartleby. In the process, Rachel's assistance for Saleh Omar to gain his voice back, as well as settle

and integrate into the new culture, is noteworthy. Thus, the distinction between the character of Bartleby and Saleh Omar becomes clear when the latter recovers his voice.

As the novel concludes, Saleh Omar talks about his trips to London to visit Latif Mahmud, describing their arrangement through quiet irony, saying "[t]hen when I had seen enough, he would put me on the train and Rachel would meet me at the other end, as if I was a decrepit old father that they shared between them" (*BTS* 244). In this hopeful tone, Gurnah's story completes a circle, depicting how Saleh Omar transformed from a fragile, isolated, elderly refugee into a near-familial connection. He is now the man on the first page of the novel, peaceful and contented, saying "[he] arrived at Gatwick Airport in the late afternoon of 23 November last year" (*BTS* 4). He has gone through the most challenging phase of his integration into the host country as a refugee, and can say at present, "I have time on my hands, I am in the hands of time, so I might as well account for myself" as a man with a promising future for the rest of his life (*BTS* 2).

Even though they are not as influential in the plot as "Bartleby, the Scrivener," there are other Western texts *By the Sea* draws on. The next one in the order of significance is Homer's *Odyssey*, which relates to both of the protagonists in the novel. As a masterpiece of classical literature, its epic journey first of all structurally informs Saleh's displacements with its themes of exile and the quest for belonging. Saleh Omar's journey, too, is one of exile, suffering, and longing for a home. The refugee of decolonisation suffers from displacement, and yearns for a home he could belong to like the hero of an empire. Odysseus returns home; in contrast, Saleh Omar's voyage does not end in a victorious return, but a recreation of a home that has disappeared in the past.

A more formidable connection between *Odyssey* and *By the Sea* is directly made through Latif Mahmud. The younger protagonist's part of the novel reveals his intellectual exile, different from Saleh Omar's obligatory refuge. At the age of eighteen, when he leaves Zanzibar for Dresden to study dentistry, he has a chance to visit his long-term German penfriend Jan and his mother, Elleke, in their home. When he arrives there, Latif is exhausted and frostbitten, and his feet are bleeding because his thin canvas shoes from Zanzibar have been torn on the soles. As the mother and

the son welcome him, his blood stains the doormat, showcasing a striking, vulnerable image of the young man. Jan's mother interprets this unfortunate entree as a symbolic moment in classical literary antiquity, which retrieves a culturally and linguistically universal scene of hospitality and recognition. Odysseus, awaited in longing, defeats dangers and reaches the shores of Ithaca, disguised as a beggar. As he is hosted by Penelope, Euryclea, Odysseus's maid and former nurse, identifies her long-absent master while washing his feet when she sees the scar on his leg caused by a boar attack in his childhood, and whispers this revelation into his ear:

> as the old nurse cradled his leg and her hands passed down
> she felt it, knew it, suddenly let his foot fall—
> down it dropped in the basin—the bronze clanged,
> tipping over, spilling water across the floor.
> Joy and torment gripped her heart at once,
> tears rushed to her eyes—voice choked in her throat
> she reached for Odysseus' chin and whispered quickly,
> "Yes, yes! you are Odysseus [...]. (Homer, *Odyssey* 19.386–507)

This incident exemplifies recontextualization, an aspect of intertextuality, where various contexts are translated (Bazerman 83). Recontextualisation corresponds to Kristeva's idea of transposition, which suggests the rewriting of texts when they enter new social, historical, or ideological contexts (Kristeva, *Desire* 15). To put it in another way, when words from one text are used in a new context, the earlier words are recontextualized, and they gain a meaning anew. In *By the Sea*, Latif Mahmud's German penfriend's mother, Elleke, establishes a parallelism while cleaning the wound on Latif's feet by washing them, saying, "I thought I would meet you, although I didn't know it was you" (*BTS* 127). Interestingly, she evokes that moment of intimate recognition Homer wrote about, although she and Latif are strangers:

> 'Euryclea,' Jan said at last, unhurried, and then read a sentence. '"As soon as Euryclea had got the scarred limb in her hands and had well hold of it, she recognized it and dropped the foot at once." 'Exactly her,' she said. 'Euryclea. The old woman crouched in the shadows of Penelope's garden. Auerbach does such wonderful things with that passage? Do you know Auerbach's discussion of that incident? Oh, I will lend it to you.' (*BTS* 127–28)

Here, Elleke's mention of Erich Auerbach's interpretation of Homer's writing layers the intertextuality because the significant relation between the foot washing moment

directly associates with the German literary critic's view. He underscores that this particular gesture "is the first duty of hospitality toward a tired traveler" in all stories of antiquity, including one mention of it in Genesis of the Old Testament (Auerbach 1). In accordance with Steiner's observation of "[t]angled threads of diverse narratives, multiple languages and voices, echoes and resonances, old stories that need to be reread and retold" in Gurnah's oeuvre throughout, the repetitive pattern of "[t]he duty of hospitality toward the stranger" is outstanding (Steiner, "Euryclea's Greeting" 404). Gurnah has been unwaveringly insistent that the responsibility of Europeans for compassion, welcome, and the humane treatment of asylum seekers and refugees should not be the exception but the norm in Europe's engagement with those who arrive at its shores (Steiner, "Euryclea's Greeting" 404). As previously mentioned in the case of Bartleby's famous catchphrase, Elleke's words recalling *Odyssey* can exemplify Riffaterre's hypogram here once more, since the author does not directly quote an underlying source text, but the reader subconsciously identifies it (Riffaterre 76). In this respect, the allusion to *Odyssey* functions very efficiently in enabling the reader to make connections between the experiences of protagonists both drawing parallels and underscoring differences.

While intertextualising Homer's *Odyssey* as a narrative framework, Gurnah's first allusion to William Shakespeare is made through the most explicitly racist incident in the novel. At the most unexpected time, as Latif Mahmud is rushing to teach his lecture in a London university, he faces brutal discrimination in the street by an Englishman, who calls him "you grinning blackamoor" (*BTS* 72). Upon this incident, Latif Mahmud does extensive research to understand the peculiar, antiquated term "blackamoor," consulting the Oxford English Dictionary at the library. There, he learns that the word, which means "Negro," has appeared in print since 1501 and was used by writers such as Sir Philip Sidney, William Shakespeare, and Samuel Pepys,[5] "ma[king him] feel that [he] had been present in all those strenuous ages […], grinning through the canon

[5] To illustrate, in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (1590), Sidney refers to "a blackamoor maid" (186); in *Othello* (1604), Shakespeare does not use "blackamoor" verbatim, but employs "the Moor" when Iago refers to Othello (*Othello* 1.1.40); in *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (entry of August 22nd, 1664), Pepys mentions "a blackamoor girl" (Pepys 254).

for centuries" (*BTS* 73). In this striking scene, Latif Mahmud's realisation mirrors Franz Fanon's disturbing moment of becoming aware of his own blackness, his Otherness, through the gaze of the white Other. When a White French child points at Fanon shouting "[l]ook a Negro ... Mama, see the Negro!" the famous psychiatrist contextualises this as "masochism […] making the Negro the 'predestined depository of aggression" (*Black Skin* xvii, xxvi). On this incident of verbal abuse by a white man, Latif Mahmud speculates:

> I had not expected to see so much black black black on a page like that. Stumbling on it so unprepared was a bigger shock than being called you gwinning blackamoor by a man who looked like a disgruntled, dated movie persona. it made me feel hated, suddenly weak with a kind of terror at such associations. This is the house I live in, I thought, a language which barks and scorns at me behind every third corner. (*BTS* 72-73)

This indirect referencing of Shakespeare is of great significance because it suggests that Gurnah does not approach the Western canon as something to be uncritically admired; rather, he emphasises its inseparable connection with racialised discourse and its capacity to reproduce ostracising ideologies. This calls to mind Edward Said's emphasis on "contrapuntal reading" of the Western canon for the same purpose (*Culture and Imperialism* 59—78). Even after many years in England, Latif Mahmud, now a naturalised academician and awarded poet in England, still experiences the unpleasant repercussions of the previous colonial period. The random insult directed at him in the street makes him continue suffering from the consequences of historical injustice and leaks into his personal memory.

Notwithstanding his hard work and achievements as an immigrant, Latif Mahmud cannot avoid having the "ambivalence of mimicry" as Homi K. Bhabha conceptualises (*The Location of Culture* 86). In his everlasting ambiguous identity, he faces the possibility of being perceived as a "grinning blackamoor" by the local white English people while being "a processed stooge" to his fellow Zanzibaris (*BTS* 73). Fragmented by these two perceptions, Latif Mahmud finds himself in-between, "where he is too assimilated to be accepted by Africans and too visibly different to be embraced by many Britons" (Hand, "Untangling Stories" 79). Nevertheless, Latif Mahmud does not despair despite experiencing ambivalence and fracture, instead he grows stronger as Homi Bhabha claims that creativity can also stem from

"unhomeliness" (*The Location of Culture* 18). His resilience allows Latif to overcome the complexities of identity and belonging caused by historical and cultural forces.

Building on this engagement with personal and postcolonial tensions, Gurnah draws on two more works by Shakespeare: *The Tempest* and *Julius Caesar*. In fact, Gurnah commonly establishes intertextual connections with Shakespearean themes and characters, reflecting the extensive scope of the education given to colonial subjects, and recognising how well Shakespeare expresses the complexities of human nature. In an interview, he states that

> we can think ourselves fortunate to have a Shakespeare to turn to and say ah! I've heard this before! Isn't this familiar or isn't this like that? So not only does it demonstrate a kind of shared readership but it actually, I'm trying to avoid saying it in a blunt way, all happened, these are not stories that are peculiar to Zanzibar or to whatever, but these are cycles of events that we simply have to look at now from a different perspective, and see them, understand things that we didn't understand.(Steiner, "A Conversation" 166)

The next reference to Shakespeare is made again in an intricate manner to evoke empathy in the reader. When the elderly Saleh Omar arrives in the UK as an asylum seeker with the false identity having the name Rajab Shaaban Mahmud, social workers for refugees begin looking for an interpreter for him. Learning that someone with his father's name has arrived in England and requires an interpreter makes Latif Mahmud recall Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. He recites "[t]hose are pearls that were his eyes," a line from the airy spirit's, Ariel's, song. By what Ariel says, Ferdinand is deceived into believing his father has drowned:

> Full fathom five thy father lies;
> Of his bones are coral made;
> Those are pearls that were his eyes:
> Nothing of him that doth fade
> But doth suffer a sea-change. (Shakespeare, *The Tempest* 1.2.397–401)

However, in the play, Ferdinand's father is still alive, unlike Latif Mahmud's. All the same, Latif's spontaneous response to hearing his father's name enlivens the fragile hope that his own father might somehow still be alive. Intertextualising *The Tempest* also relates to the theme of homecoming in that Prospero and Miranda's victorious return to Milan, where they reclaim their rightful place after years of exile, contrasts sharply with Latif Mahmud's situation (Mondo 9). When the idea of his return arises,

he interrogates: "'[a]re you suggesting I should go back too? To claim my share?' he asked, a broad derisive grin on his face" (*BTS* 239). His reaction expresses the impossibility of such a joyful or healing homecoming for him due to his traumatic past filled with familial misfortunes and a distressing childhood.

Julius Caesar, the second Shakespearean hypotext in the novel, does not serve merely as a decorative citation; it has a profound impact on the deeper meaning of the novel, emphasising another oppressed character's story. Unlike other hypotexts, the play establishes a connection to the characters' past in Zanzibar, specifically to Latif Mahmoud and his elder brother Hassan's school years. The representation of colonial education in *By the Sea* emphasises the hybrid cultural formation that Homi Bhabha conceptualises as the "third space," in which colonial regulation and indigenous identity are negotiated rather than simply opposed (*The Location of Culture* 37).

Though not in a pure or stable form, the internalisation and reproduction of colonial discourse in Bhabha's definition of the third space is effectively reflected in the part Latif Mahmud remembers their time at school. Believing the creative prospects of the third space, Bhabha holds that "[i]t is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (*The Location of Culture* 2). The English teacher from the local community is a perfectly "recognizable other" in his traditional clothes (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 86), and he is portrayed as an effective example of this ambivalent stance:

> [T]he teacher of English at school, who was as English as you and I, who came to work in a kanzu and kofia, and who was a pious Muslim and ardent Anglophile without contradiction or anxiety. He loved for his students to learn passages from great works by heart, and recite them day after after day, one after the other, class after class, njce work if you can get it." (*BTS* 78)

When Latif Mahmud describes their Zanzibari English teacher as someone "who [is] as English as you and I," Gurnah, in fact, makes an ironic remark, underscoring the big differences between the cultures of Britain and Zanzibar, but not ignoring the constructive side of cultural hybridity. Even though the teacher is far from being English in his looks, judged by his command of English literature, or the amount of delight he is reported to take while teaching it, he is "almost the same but not quite" in

Bhabha's terms (*The Location of Culture* 86). Blending his Zanzibari Muslim identity with English literary culture, and transforming the classroom into a third space of negotiation and cultural translation, Hassan's teacher becomes a living example of hybridity, moving the concept beyond a theoretical abstraction. The second direct reference to *Julius Caesar* is when everybody appreciates Hassan's recitation of the same tirade by Brutus at home:

> Romans, countrymen and lovers! hear me for my cause; and be silent that you may hear: believe me for mine honour; and have respect for mine honour that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom; and awake your senses that you may be the better judge. (Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* 3.2.13–17)

Latif Mahmud recalls how his elder brother acts the role, which he was required to memorise by their English teacher, blending mockery with admiration, "holding his arm cocked across his chest like a senator from Ancient Rome and with his chin lifted and angled in a sagacious pose" (*BTS* 78). This brings to mind another concept of Homi K. Bhabha's, that of mimicry, which requires at once resemblance to the coloniser's culture and menace to it (*The Location of Culture* 88). It means that pure sameness is never produced by colonial imitation; instead, it destabilises authority while appearing to reproduce it.

Substantially differing from Bhabha's creative and subversive conception of mimicry, Fanon is critical of the fragmentation in the psyche of the colonised as an inevitable outcome of being coercively exposed to the coloniser's language. He argues that the colonised are alienated from their own culture in their false belief that "[t]he Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter, that is, he will come closer to being a real human being, in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (*Black Skin* 18). Fanon even furthers his criticism against the adoption of the culture and language of the coloniser by pointing out the false degrading thought in the psyche of the colonised: "[t]he colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards" (*Black Skin* 18). In the same critical vein, Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin draw attention to the perils of complete immersion in the imported culture if the colonised "attempt to become more English than the English" (4). However, Gurnah represents his immigrant characters as immune to the inferiority complex of the colonised as described by Fanon. Although they face similar

challenges as the colonised, they are mostly able to subvert the alienation in their psyche into promising hybridity by remaining resilient and dignified. Thus, Hassan's performance of Brutus's speech cannot be translated as simplistic assimilation but an ambivalent cultural performance in which colonial power is both restated and slightly restructured through hybrid subjectivity in Bhabha's view.

The connection between the story in the novel and *Julius Caesar* is particularly poignant when the irony of this appreciation for Hassan's recitation of Brutus's speech is considered. The chain of events leading to the destruction of the Mahmud household begins with Latif Mahmud's father, Rajab Shaaban's establishing both friendly and commercial relations with the Persian trader Hussein. Rajab Shaaban, who initially mentions Hussein as "my good friend," later invites him to live in their home for a month and commands his children to call him "Uncle Hussein" (*BTS* 82). Although this gesture of sincerity could be interpreted as a sign of Rajab Shaaban's naïve faith in humanity and a display of hospitality, it turns out to be an absolutely inconsiderate act, given his overall irresponsible behaviour as a father and a husband. By letting a complete stranger into the privacy of his family life, exposing his wife and children to the potential harm from a stranger, and even by entering into a business venture with him, Shaaban allows Hussein, whose devious intentions are gradually revealed, to ruin the lives of every member of his family.

In this part of the story, narrated by Latif Mahmoud, special emphasis is placed on Hassan, whose attractive looks are described as "effortless, subtle *beauty*" (emphasis added; *BTS* 95). Unlike his peers, who engage in other boyish activities, Hassan is interested in the English language and literature, and does not spend time with his peers. As mentioned above, he is made to memorise a tirade from Shakespeare and highly praised for his recitation of it. During his stay, Hussein enchants everyone with his stories from faraway lands and wins the hearts of the family members through various gifts and money. In fact, Hussein is one of "Gurnah's maligned homosexuals," according to Houlden, and he "operate[s] from a position of power, in contrast to those 'passive' women and men over whom they exert control" (92). While he comfortably resides in the downstairs room assigned to him, Hassan, like the rest of the family, is made to serve him. For instance, taking Hussein's lunch tray downstairs is mostly

Hassan's everyday duty. One afternoon, Rajab Shaaban insists that Hassan recite Brutus's speech for the merchant, and "[u]ncle Hussein [becomes] impressed to such effect that he suggest[s] [giving] daily afternoon [English] lessons to him" to improve his language skills (*BTS* 89). In this manner, Hassan enthusiastically starts frequenting the merchant's room, grows impatient to go there every day, and loses interest in "the gang of boys he has been one of" (*BTS* 95). Because Hussein is a financially powerful and well-travelled man with a comprehensive knowledge of the English language and culture, he is accorded unconditional respect by the Zanzibaris. Hassan is entrusted by his father into this stranger's hands, without any further thought. The dupable father even sends him to stay the night in the merchant's room "for extra English lessons," while Latif lies sick in the room the two brothers share (*BTS* 92). It is during this period that Hussein continuously seduces Hassan, and rumours regarding this dishonourable situation start to spread. At the time, Latif is too late to pick up the clues and make the logical connections to understand what is going on between the merchant and his elder brother. He narrates the bitter remembrance:

> I was taunted about them by the boys at school. They said our guest had eaten Hassan, had eaten honey there. It was a way of saying something cruder, and they said it crudely, too. One of Hassan's secondary school mates, who had been a former friend, chased after me in the street as I was walking to Koran school to ask me if it was true that I had a new father. When I passed a group of adults lounging at street corners, which they seemed forever to be doing, I thought they smirked behind me, I feared they did. (*BTS* 95)

Gurnah does not explicitly reveal Hassan's homosexual relations with Hussein, but he implies it through an atmosphere of rumour and suspicion. For instance, Saleh Omar recalls Hussein's one particular visit to his furniture shop, looking for a gift for a mysterious loved one, and later it turns out that the ebony table he chooses is meant to be for Hassan (*BTS* 22). Also, Latif Mahmud remembers traumatically how Hassan is abused in the street after these rumours by random locals whom he describes as "plunderers of flesh" or those with "predatory smiles" offering Hassan money or gifts in return for sex (*BTS* 95). When Latif Mahmud is harassed by school kids saying their guest, Hussein, has eaten Hassan, considering the power imbalance between a wealthy merchant and a teenage boy, the indirect revelation of Hassan's position and the suggestive insult are understood. Hassan is powerless, and the community's whispers

both conceal and amplify his suffering. It is a subtle but devastating way Gurnah critiques how silence and rumour can perpetuate abuse.

Latif Mahmud also notices the weird intimacy between Hussein and his mother too late. As revealed later, during the month Hussein stays with the family, he has sexual relations with Latif's beautiful mother, Asha, too. The rumour has it that Asha lets him do this to save his son from his perversion. It is only when Hussein lures Hassan to go to the Gulf with him that Latif Mahmud realises with astonishment that Hassan "was able to collect himself like that and follow a man as if he were a young *bride*" (emphasis added; *BTS* 96).

Revathi Krishnaswami, postcolonial literary critic, connects the feminine behaviour of the marginalised people, like Hassan, to colonialism, claiming "the trope of effeminacy was developed to express the assumed 'racial, physical, moral and cultural weakness' of the colonized" (31). Taking the fact that the coloniser associated the colonised land with the female body to be taken advantage of, effeminising the colonised men as Krishnaswami argues, in other words, making them less than men, aligns fully with the ideology of colonialism. Regarding these rumours about Hassan, Saleh Omar acknowledges:

> I knew, everyone knew that Hussein was wooing the *beautiful* son of Rajab Shaaban Mahmud. […] For all I knew he had already corrupted that glowing youth [….] I had no idea of the disruption Hussein would cause in that house, that he would spirit that young man away and force the mother into such humiliation[…]. Hussein was pursing the young man to great effect when he was staying with the family, and because the mother suspected something like this, she offered herself to him if he would leave her son alone. (emphasis added; *BTS* 160)

Houlden argues that "the positioning of Hassan and his mother in this [sexually] 'passive' role, serves to underscore the shame inflicted on the family," therefore, the mother's "abas[ing] herself in order to protect both her son and the family's honour" can only create adversary effect (94). It could be observed that, in the Zanzibari society ruled by a corrupt government, "sexuality functions as a signifier for power relations," so Hussein has the power, entitling him to easily sexually exploit and marginalise the mother and the son, and humiliating the father (Sedgwick 7).

These series of unfortunate events in the family, which result in Hassan's leaving his family and country for Hussein, connect the story, albeit loosely, to the betrayal theme in *Julius Caesar*. Gurnah's mentioning of *Julius Caesar* and Brutus does more than directly referencing the play; it generates an additional meaning simultaneously by intertextual layering, which Riffaterre calls syllepsis (Riffaterre 115). In this context, the previously mentioned term means that intertextuality is beyond being a writer's strategy to an explicative tool enabling readers to interpret later texts by linking them to renowned pretexts and creating meaning intertextually. Thus, the reader is required to interpret a series of unfortunate incidents regarding the Mahmud family in connection with the themes in *Julius Caesar*, as a minor source text to *By the Sea*. As his son is taken away and his wife is sexually exploited, Rajab Shaaban's misplaced trust in Hussein becomes the means for his downfall, bringing about both moral corruption and devastating financial ruin. Hussein's deviant treachery is a reminder of the Shakespearean theme of betrayal. The classical archetype of a trusted friend turning into a traitor is often associated with the relationship between Julius Caesar and Brutus, whose betrayal causes both physical and spiritual injury. In this respect, Hussein's heinous behaviour undermines Rajab Shabaan's trust and loyalty, and his deceit resembles Brutus's dagger, a symbol of how misplaced trust can destroy not only individuals but also the ethical structure expected in human relationships.

It would be wrong to limit intertextual relations solely to explicit literary references or parallels between plots. Bakhtin emphasises that language and discourse are intrinsically embedded in social interactions at every level, which makes it impossible to think of any text or utterance as separate from its broader socio-cultural grounding, "[f]orm and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon-social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 259). In other words, the fact that the ways in which cultural discourses, social norms, and moral conventions are also woven into and through texts must be taken into consideration.

In the light of this view, apart from protagonists, Latif Mahmud's father, Rajab Shaaban Mahmud, as a marginalised figure, or as a "cuckold" to be mocked, as Gurnah

words it, must also be voiced within the scope of this study (*BTS* 161). In addition to the written source texts for the intertextuality in *By the Sea*, the prevalent literary trope of cuckoldry, ever since Chaucer's "Miller's Tale" in the fourteenth century, is also present in the novel as an important cultural reference. Gurnah directly uses the derogatory term when Latif Mahmud narrates how his father lost their family home to Hussein, who has not only seduced his brother, but also had sexual intercourse with his mother, in a false business deal designed "to mock the cuckold" (*BTS* 161). Latif's mother, "a seductress of sorts," is already known to have adulterous affairs even before the arrival of the wealthy merchant Hussein at their household (Goddard and Goddard 4). Latif Mahmud remembers when he was nine years old, his mother "groomed herself for her afternoon sorties among friends and lovers," and came back home in the evening, and his father was "a shameful failure," an alcoholic who drank every night after his working day while he could have chosen to be decent as a clerk working in the Public Works Department (*BTS* 81, 88). As Sinclair asserts, in almost all cultures "[the] cuckold passes from being a husband whose wife is unfaithful to being 'less than a man'" (qtd. in Bosman, "A Fiction" 178), and Rajab Shaaban's deplorable state is described in extremely negative and humiliating words of other characters in the novel particularly because he bears his situation and continues his marriage with the adulterous wife. Latif remembers his mother "despises" his father and finds him "negligent" (*BTS* 77). He is considered to deserve his shameful position, as he must be an impotent and inept man who looks diminished (Bosman, "A Fiction" 179). In addition to these stereotypical traits of a cuckold, he is regarded as a "complete fool" (*BTS* 34) by the Muslim community he belongs to due to his alcoholism, which Islam strictly forbids. After Hassan follows Hussein and leaves Zanzibar, Rajab suddenly becomes a religious man, while his already notorious wife becomes a powerful political figure's mistress. His shifting position in society is even more interesting when Hassan returns years later as a man of means. Judging by the cuckold figures Gurnah employs in both novels, it is vital to understand that individuals are "simply framed by power, but they are rather able to fluctuate among positions of power" (Patterson 22). Then, he feels strengthened again and starts to shout in the streets about his cuckolding when his wife's lover, Abdalla Khalfan, flees the country to save his

life. Because of his shifting personality, Rajab Shaaban always appears as a figure of ridicule.

It could be deduced that Gurnah highlights various subjectivities through the moral decadence of Latif's mother, his father's alcoholism and overall weak character, and his brother's eloping with the Persian merchant in *By the Sea* to underscore indirect consequences of colonialism. Since colonialists' claim of superiority over the colonised is evident in their conviction that modern masculinity is morally, physically, and culturally superior to the supposedly physically and morally degenerate colonised people (Olaussen 240), making the silenced and marginalised individuals regain their voices appears as an inevitable mission for the postcolonial author.

Similar to the handling of "Bartleby the Scrivener" in the novel, *A Thousand and One Nights*, the large compilation of Arabic and Persian tales, is also intertextualised by the author as both an allusion and an embedded contextual and structural component. Out of other source texts Gurnah draws upon in *By the Sea*, these tales are of particular significance. This intertextual connection situates Zanzibar within a more extensive cosmopolitan context by evoking the shared oral storytelling tradition of the broader Middle Eastern and South Asian worlds. Through references to the characters, settings, and themes in these tales, the novel emphasises storytelling as both a means of survival and a means of cultural preservation.

Gurnah's interest in literature was first sparked in his childhood by the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights*, also known as *The Arabian Nights*. Remembering they were first told to him by his mother and grandmother, he recalls that he believed for years that they were the stories of his homeland, and was really surprised when he read them in an abridged Kiswahili translation titled *Alfu Leila u Leila*, meaning the Arabian nights (Steiner, "Euryclea's Greeting" 398). After discovering this fact, he reports that "it never occurred to [him] to ask why they told each other stories about these many other faraway countries, but these places existed in [their] imaginary world, because the sea routes made [them] part of the wider world" (Chambers 115). This early encounter with these folk tales introduced him to the mixed storytelling traditions of the Indian Ocean, and significantly moulded his storytelling with a

tremendous effect on his literary imagination (Gurnah, “The Books of My Life”). That is why in his oeuvre, these tales often resurface.

The first and direct allusion to *A Thousand and One Nights* is noticed when Saleh Omar reflects on his recent arrival in England: “I imagine it like this: that to get here I had wriggled through a passage that closed in behind me. Too many *A Thousand and One Nights* stories when I was younger perhaps, that image of the passage” (*BTS* 63). This imagination visualises migration as a mythical transition, assuming displacement occurs through the wonder of transformation. For a sixty-five-year-old asylum seeker, his journey from his hometown to the bed and breakfast place of Celia’s in the UK is an enormous change in his life; therefore, it feels impossible and somehow mystical as in the tale. A second instance of allusion to the tales appears when Saleh Omar likens the immigration officer Kevin Edelman to “the bawab of Europe,” though not by naming the title of the tales (*BTS* 31). Using the word *bawab,* which means a doorkeeper, gatekeeper or threshold guardian who controls entry to palaces, treasure chambers, or enchanted realms (“Bawab”), Saleh criticises Edelman’s speech that ostracises non-Europeans by defining him as “the gatekeeper to the orchards in the family courtyard, the same gate which had released the hordes that went out to consume the world and to which we have come sliming up to beg admittance” (*BTS* 31). Another direct reference to the tales comes from Latif Mahmud when he mentions the time he goes to Saleh’s house and is stopped by Saleh Omar’s doorman named Faru, a man “like one of those scowling bawabs you read about in the stories of *A Thousand and One Nights*, a big fleshy black man guarding his master’s doorway” (*BTS* 152). His portrayal of the man evokes the stereotype of the eunuch figure in the tales; nevertheless, the association it invokes retrieves some dark memories in Latif’s mind because he remembers Faru as one of the abusers of his brother. Through this remembrance of Latif, Gurnah exemplifies how a common story and a personal memory are intertwined. After references to the figure of the *bawab* in *A Thousand and One Nights* are made twice by both protagonists, it might be considered to have a broader interpretation as suggested by Olaussen, who argues that “the *bawab,* the eunuch doorkeeper, evokes both literal and symbolic castration, recalling Zanzibar’s history of exploitation by Persian and European powers” (238).

Towards the end of the daily conversations of the two protagonists, one last invocation of *A Thousand and One Nights* occurs when Latif explains to Saleh how he felt upon hearing his arrival in the UK carrying his father's name. In their heated exchange, Latif says he imagined Saleh "fuming ineffectually like a jinn raised from infernal depths," and Saleh guesses the jinn in Latif's imagination is Qamar Zaman, whom he describes as the "stillest, shiftiest jinn in the whole *A Thousand and One Nights*. With a horn in the middle of his forehead. [His] favourite jinn, an utter grotesque, which is how [Latif] imagined [him]" (*BTS* 169–70). Through such powerful visualisation, these mystical tales become a means for them to express feelings and reconcile in the diaspora.

When the two men meet in England, Saleh Omar decides to tell Latif Mahmud his accounts of what happened back in Zanzibar to unravel the reasons of the familial strife between the two. What these intertextual links further achieve is to weave a strong web between the novel's protagonists' challenges and enduring literary themes of resistance, resilience, isolation, and power versus marginalisation. In this respect, with Saleh Omar identifying with Shahrazad during his storytelling, *A Thousand and One Nights* resonates loudly and clearly in *By the Sea*, which evokes a sense of Middle Eastern storytelling, thereby enriching the cultural setting and elaborating on characters and their points of view. Additionally, the novel's fragmented structure shows further resemblance to Scheherazade's art of postponing and continuing. When Latif Mahmud impatiently asks Saleh Omar to continue telling the injustices of the past, which relate both to the old refugee and his father, Saleh replies, "[t]hat's a long story, and perhaps it will be a difficult one to listen to. Hasn't enough been said for today?" (*BTS* 171). His episodic storytelling, day after day, recalls Scheherazade's tales told to the Sultan every night. Similar to Shahrazad's endeavour to be saved from execution, Saleh makes significant efforts to recount the true events of the past to secure his acquittal by Latif. Upon Latif's insistence that Salih continue telling him about their shared past in Zanzibar, the latter remarks, "even Shahrazad managed to get some rest every sunrise," thereby connecting their situation to the stories and presenting his fragmented narration as both confession and endurance (*BTS* 171). Like Scheherazade whose survival depends on telling stories to the Sultan, Saleh Omar feels obligated to narrate his side of the events from their interconnected past, and, thus, justify himself in the eyes of Latif, who believes to have been wronged:

> I knew I would tell him. I needed to be shriven. Not to be forgiven or to be cleansed of my sins, which were ones of pettiness and vanity rather than wickedness, and whose consequences had already been steep for me and for others. Little could be done to lighten those sins, I needed to be shriven of the burden of events and stories which I have never been able to tell, and which by telling would fulfil the craving I feel to be listened to with understanding. He was my shriver, and I knew I would tell him what he had asked of me. Then after telling him, I would have found a good place to stop and tell him that even Shahrazad managed to get some rest every sunrise. I was just pressing home my advantage, pretending greater reluctance than I really felt, to make sure he would go after I answered him. And he had spoken well about himself, and I did not wish to seem ungiving in return. So I made a pot of sweet black tea and resumed. (*BTS* 171)

Actually, both protagonists need to justify their past in each other's perspective by telling their stories. Storytelling initially stems from the two men's need to justify their past behaviour in the eyes of the other, and later becomes an act of reconciliation that relieves them of the heavy burden of their shared past in Zanzibar. The dialogue between the tales in *A Thousand and One Nights* and the novel is reminiscent of the term "poetics of passage," which suggests that storytelling has a function of "solidify[ing] or sully[ing] the bonds between or encasing subjects" (Samuelson 78). Here, what enables displaced individuals to survive and maintain solidarity is storytelling rather than silence. Unlike Melville's *Bartleby*, in which silence is a form of resistance, Gurnah's displaced characters show resilience through their exchanges of individual narratives, transforming memories into accounts of the past.

At its core, Gurnah's intertextualising of *A Thousand and One Nights* in *By the Sea* reshapes a literary strain that extends beyond colonial boundaries. It locates African and Middle Eastern storytelling within world literature, affirms storytelling as a means of survival, and shows how borrowed tales can give voice to displaced, marginalised people, guilt, and belonging. Scheherazade's forever-echoing voice enables Gurnah to transform the act of telling stories into a way of resistance and reconciliation.

Moreover, the voice of the marginalised is amplified through other truthful contexts as well in *By the Sea*, which abounds in references to the political and social upheavals of the time. Deriving from such historical facts in his depictions, Gurnah employs the recorded regional history as an intertext for the novel. Imperial records were the only written source to draw upon since colonised subjects "do not have access to the historiographic that would enable their narratives to be written as histories"

(Ramanathan 17). In this context, another minor intertextual engagement of *By the Sea* is linked to the colonial archive documenting Zanzibar's transition to British protectorate. As a solid historical record, Saleh recalls the colonial maps, "I often found myself speaking to the maps and sometimes they spoke back" (*BTS* 35). How colonial mapmaking dispersed indigenous cultural identities and communities is reflected while Saleh contemplates that the maps created by the colonisers did not just chart the land, but they divided and displaced its people: "[a]nd later when it became necessary, geography became biology in order to construct a hierarchy in which to place the people who lived in their inaccessibility and primitiveness in other places on the map" (*BTS* 35). Such recollections reveal how vulnerable the locals of the land become when their territories are reshaped and cultures are fragmented by colonialists.

It can be observed that Latif Mahmud's quest for self, crisis of identity, and sense of dislocation partly reflect the influence of colonialism. He recalls how colonial culture was imposed on school pupils, saying "[i]n school, we were taught a history that belittled our own. It was as if they had remade us, and in ways that we no longer had any recourse but to accept" (*BTS* 18). The primary goal of the inescapable colonial education system was to alter and mould the self-perception of the subjects. Nevertheless, those imposed Western texts obviously provided Gurnah with an opportunity to make Westerners hear the voice of the marginalised and share the pain of displacement that the immigrants suffer in his novels.

The Islamic heritage, indissolubly connected to the monsoon trade across the Indian Ocean and Zanzibar, which Gurnah introduces in detail, shapes the norms of the characters' lives and how they perceive the world. In an interview with Steiner, he explains, "[w]hat makes Islamic culture or the Indian Ocean exchange system important is that it actually forms the story of the world for people in those cultures" (qtd. in Steiner, "A Conversation" 163). Therefore, *the Qur'an* appears as another significant intertext in *By the Sea*. Latif Mahmud narrates that the holy book was learnt and read by Zanzibari children when they were sent to *Qur'an* schools traditionally and compulsorily by their families. Latif Mahmud recalls going there regularly in the afternoon following the lessons at the secular state schools in the morning. Emphasising the obligation, he explains, "I had to go to Koran school after lunch,

every day, whether it was wet or dry or storming (*BTS* 89). Gurnah's incorporation of the history and culture of Islam in *By the Sea* connects the characters' personal histories to a broader cultural narrative in alignment with the views of Bakhtin, who laid the foundation for the current theory of intertextuality by treating language as an active system embodying societal relations and values (Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination* 259).

The corresponding interaction between cultural memory and individual identity is noticeable in another religious allusion Gurnah makes as Rajab, his borrowed name, reminds Saleh of the Miraj, the Prophet Muhammad's night journey through the heavens. It could imply that Saleh Omar, who is seeking asylum in his old age, aspires to be elevated to a lofty place, as the Prophet ascended into the sky during the holy month of Rajab. Embedding this Islamic story not only contextualises the theme of journey and transformation in the plot but also clarifies the character's identity, linking his personal history to a broader cultural narrative by metaphorically likening his journey to a holy odyssey from displacement toward divine ascension.

Moreover, Gurnah draws explicitly on the Islamic practice of inheritance division to explain some familial rifts in the story. In this manner, he prompts readers to consider the impact of religious and social regulations on people's lives, which can often lead to injustice and interpersonal conflict. Through the explanation on the mentioned inheritance laws of Islam, Saleh Omar emphasises the obligation for Zanzibaris to obey the rules of the Sharia. He elaborates on this issue:

> When a person died, his property was disposed of in this manner: 1) the debts of the deceased had to be repaid, as well as any other business or public obligations; 2) half of the remaining inheritance was to be divided equally between surviving male children; 3) a third was to be divided between surviving wives; 4) the rest was to be divided between the daughters. . . . the law was clear on this matter, set out in detail in the Book [. . .] That was why God's Book specified the portion of inheritance each relative was to have, to avoid the injustices of the time of ignorance. (*BTS* 179)

In his secular and postcolonial story, by the invocation of *the Qur'an* as "the Book," Gurnah draws attention to the Islamic law that makes way to the confiscation of an unborn son's birthright by his opportunist male relatives through a story told by Saleh Omar. The incident relating to his aunt Bi Maryam's orphaned husband tells about how he was denied inheritance after his father's death by his greedy kins (*BTS* 178).

This narration of injustice serves Gurnah as an opportunity to place a moral compass in the ethics of his own religious culture rather than in Western rationalism, and fairly show how individuals can be severely marginalised within the Muslim community itself, too.

Building on this perspective, Gurnah cites several other titles from American, Russian, and German works of literature and Chinese writing in Latif's story. This serves to underscore the confusion in young minds caused by abrupt cultural shifts resulting from turbulent politics in Zanzibar. These works of literature could also be considered minor intertexts in *By the Sea*, with all their associations and connotations, contributing to the ambivalence of individual identity and marginalising them in this manner. Latif Mahmud mentions all the foreign works he has been exposed to during his education in Zanzibar. After British writers were studied in the colonial education system, they became informed about some American authors through libraries established by the US Information Service. He remarks that they are the names:

> [the]colonial education had never uttered. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Frederick Douglass, Edgar Allan Poe, names that excited a noble curiosity because they were not contaminated by a discourse of tutelage and hierarchy. It was incredible to be allowed to take such books home, to put them on the upturned crate which served as my table, and to see how they humbled the paltriness of everything else in my room. (*BTS* 106)

Later, Latif recalls his experience at school when the government became Socialist, and they

> had the chance to read Mikhail Sholokov (*Quiet Flows the Don*) and Anton Chekov (Selected Stories), whose work appeared for sale in cheap editions or browse through boxed sets of Schiller in eastern Germany Information Institute (copies not for loan). And of course, we could have copies of *The Little Red Book* and lapel badges of Chairman Mao for the asking. (*BTS* 107)

Everything that Latif narrates regarding the somewhat disconnected range of literary works a Zanzibari youth is exposed to may imply that, once the integrity of culture is attacked and fragmented by colonial powers, trying to create it anew feels futile.

With the non-linear, fragmented structure of *By the Sea*, the exploration of the protagonists' complicated memories and experiences is made possible. This style is

reminiscent of the fragmented structure of the postcolonial condition, in which the formerly colonised constantly try to reconcile the past with the present and struggle to rebuild identity. The technique of multiple perspectives, alternating between the voices of Saleh Omar and Latif Mahmud, facilitates a deeper understanding of their personalities and the complicated chain of events in the plot. Besides, voicing both protagonists as first-person narrators emphasises that memory is subjective, and that incidents of the past can be interpreted differently. Diversity of perspectives is also a result of the layered and fractured identities of the formerly colonised, which emphasises that there are differing narratives of displacement and exile in *By the Sea*, which is supported by many works of literature, such as classical epics, religious narratives, folk tales, the Western canon, and current refugee narratives. By placing his novel within a web of intertextuality, Gurnah provides a broader context for a deeper understanding of the characters and events. Therefore, intertextuality is not only a decorative literary technique but also a significant tool of narration to reveal, reframe and eventually restore agency to the marginalised protagonists in the novel. Gurnah's engagement with Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener" is the most important example in the novel that explains this process. By aligning Saleh Omar's chosen silence with Bartleby's passive resistance, Gurnah situates the refugee's quiet endurance within a larger tradition of dissent that transcends cultural and temporal boundaries, a connection strengthened by the author's own comments on the relevance of Melville's story to Saleh Omar's condition. However, the novel reaches beyond Melville and creates a multi-layered dialogic field in which Saleh and Latif's personal histories are contextualised within global literary, religious, and cultural traditions extending from *A Thousand and One Nights* to *Odyssey,* from Shakespeare to *the Qur'an,* and even to the ancient trope of cuckoldry. In this way, Gurnah structures an intertextual weaving that not only deepens the texture of the narrative but also reclaims for the oppressed characters a voice and space of interpretive power. Their stories, located amid canonical texts and cultural myths, relate to the hegemonic discourses that once confined them to silence. Ultimately, through its assemblage of literary and cultural echoes, *By the Sea* transforms silence into an impactful form of testimony, allowing the marginalised not simply to be heard but to redefine the fictional framework.

CHAPTER 2

TEXTUAL ECHOES, HIDDEN LIVES: REVOICING THE MARGINALISED IN *GRAVEL HEART*

> I've always been interested in the way families work, particularly the way both power and kindness go along together.
>
> -from Abdulrazak Gurnah's
> Nobel Prize Interview, 2021.

Gravel Heart, Abdulrazak Gurnah's ninth novel (2017), portrays the experiences of marginalised Zanzibari individuals in the context of the political transformations that followed the independence and the Revolution, spanning several decades from the 1960s to the end of the 1990s. Dealing with the imbalance of power and subsequent oppression in the aftermath of decolonisation in Zanzibar, and the hardships of immigration in Britain, the novel explores themes of identity, belonging, and exclusion. In *Gravel Heart*, Gurnah highlights the conditions leading to the oppression of the characters by politics, patriarchy, tradition and culture through his re-contextualisation of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, as the major hypotext, and other minor hypotexts. These minor hypotexts include *A Thousand and One Nights*, which have been also covered in the previous chapter, holy books *the Bible* and *the Qur'an*, and the cultural context of cuckoldry as a literary trope. Additionally, despite their brief mention, Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and several other literary works are also analysed intertextually in terms of their function in enabling the voice of the marginalised to be heard. Within postcolonial context, this chapter aims to emphasise the significance of the use of intertextual strategies in foregrounding the predicaments of the marginalised, creating universal empathy for them, and restoring their voices in *Gravel Heart* by analysing the referential links between the novel and its hypotexts.

Set between the alternating sites of Zanzibar and England, *Gravel Heart* follows the life of a boy named Salim from a traumatic childhood to young adulthood. In this sense, it may be referred to as a coming-of-age novel narrating the complicated story of Salim, whose childhood is haunted by a dark mystery. Beyond his story, the novel can be regarded as "the author's earnest plea to understand and forgive human failings by disclosing the corrupt intricacies of public and private life" (Hand and Pujolràs-Noguer 20). During his childhood and early adulthood, Salim cannot rationalise why his father, Masud, abruptly left their family home and never returned. He never grasps why his father isolates himself from the society afterwards, why he is sent off every noon to take him lunch, or how a new man appears in his mother's life. Even after his mother, Saida, bears the daughter of this new man a few years later, she continues to be secretive about what started the series of these devastating incidents. From the age of seven, when this familial downfall occurs, Salim is condemned to a life of uncertainty. He incessantly searches for his identity, a sense of belonging, and the truth hidden behind this dark family secret. "Salim, is a reconfiguration of Latif Mahmud," Hand and Pujolràs-Noguer assert, finding a point in common between the young protagonists of *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* in having been educated in colonial systems yet excluded from full belonging, and in their search to reveal familial enigmas (Hand and Pujolràs-Noguer 20). His story, told in first-person with occasional flashbacks, explores reticence, shame, exile, fragmented families, and the enduring burden of colonialism and the postcolonial period on both individuals and society.

The novel is in three parts, each encompassing a significant phase in Salim's life. It opens with his childhood in a household where he lives together with his parents and his mother's grown-up brother, Amir, in the 1970s. Salim's parents Saida and Masud's story before their marriage sadly foreshadows their further vulnerability from the very beginning. The reader is informed that, due to political opposition, Saida's father was executed, and Masud's father, a scholar of Islam, lost his teaching position with the state and migrated to the Gulf, and then to Kuala Lumpur, leaving Zanzibar forever. Amir is depicted as a brash, street-smart, and energetic person. Despite Masud's insistence that Amir must find a job and leave their house to have his own life, he ignores it in the comfort of the knowledge that his sister rejects this idea altogether. Then, the mysterious event that breaks up the family occurs, and Masud curiously

stops working for the state, leaves the family home, and starts living in the extension of the grocery shop of one of his friends, where he also works part-time. As her husband, Masud, begins to lead an alienated life, in shame and humiliation, Saida starts a relationship with a politically powerful man, keeps her affair for many years, bears his child, eventually marries him after her son Salim leaves home for England, and seems to lead a comfortable life afterwards, even though with suppressed pangs of conscience. Although Saida continues this affair, she makes sure that this man never meets her son Salim. During this period, Salim's life is unquestionably shaped by his uncle, Amir, who makes the most critical decisions regarding him. Amir, in the meantime, marries the former Vice President's daughter, Asha, and ascends in his career at an unprecedented pace by being assigned to a high-ranking bureaucratic post in London. Only then, Salim discovers Asha is the sister of the man with whom his mother has an affair.

The second phase of Salim's life spans his years of education in Britain, during which he is initially hosted by Amir, who lives in prestige and impunity as a senior diplomat in England. After following Business Studies for a while at a London university on scholarship Amir has arranged, Salim changes his academic field of study to English Literature against his uncle's will. Inevitably confronting Amir, he is shunned by him from his household. Afterwards, he begins to endure all the challenges of immigrant life on his own. During those years, he is obligated to overcome the academic, interpersonal, and other social hardships of being an immigrant for a long while.

The third phase of his life in the novel starts when he returns to Zanzibar upon being informed of his mother's death from a sudden stroke. There, he reunites with his father, who has also returned to the homeland probably for the same reason. Determined to unearth the truth behind his family's mysteries, Salim asks his father to explain everything. Based on his father's narration, he learns that his father's abrupt withdrawal from the family and society was due to a heinous act by his uncle Amir. It is revealed that Saida had to compensate for Amir's alleged raping of the underage daughter of the Vice President, Asha, by complying with the indecent proposal from the Protocol Manager of the government, Hakim, the Vice President's son, and Asha's brother. When Saida tells Masud what Hakim demands of her to secure Amir's release,

he strongly opposes, arguing that there is no need for her to sacrifice her honour and family, since Asha loves Amir and will secure his release eventually. However, according to Masud, Saida does not resist much and accepts Hakim's immoral proposal. As government cars start picking up and dropping off Saida, this immoral affair is exposed, and Masud is, therefore, ostracised in shame, remaining helpless against the powerful individuals supported by the corrupt government. After ten years, Salim leaves for the UK, and Masud leaves Zanzibar for Kuala Lumpur at his father's invitation. While Saida is torn apart from her family life, Salim is destined to lead an ambiguous life, seeking himself, his belonging, and answers to critical questions to solve this dark familial enigma.

The eventual revelation of long-kept family secrets is not healing for Salim; however, it still serves to re-evaluate everything he has believed to be true about his parents' and his own life. The novel has a neutral closure with Salim's understanding of love, its complexities, sacrifice, betrayal, and resilience. In his quest for his identity, Salim learns how to live on with the weight of an ambiguous past, decides to return to England, though reluctantly, and chooses to build a life despite all the challenges. In *Gravel Heart*, the reader witnesses how the restlessness and corruption in the country infuse individual lives, and how public disorder can victimise people. Gurnah also wants "the burden of secrets" to be understood (qtd. in East) in all their devastating impacts. The novel leads the reader to question whether the darkest secrets must be shared with the family, and whether hiding them is an act of care or negligence, since reticence deprives a young person of the clarity vital to his search for self and belonging.

Historically, while European colonisers oppressed indigenous peoples by forcing cultural, political, and economic systems on them to suppress and erase their indigenous cultures and identities, the colonised were denied power and the right to speak even in their own communities. For these marginalised masses, however, the postcolonial situation was not promising, either. Among them, entrenched disparities in wealth, authority, and social standing persisted, producing a society in which certain groups dominated while others were pushed to the margins, subjected to cultural domination and economic exploitation. In this light, it is necessary first to analyse the

specific politics in Zanzibar at the time the novel is set to identify domineering and unjust structures of governance and those who are afflicted by them.

After independence in 1963, the same power imbalance between rulers and the ruled fostered the gap between the classes to which characters belong, and this appears to be the primary factor shaping their lives and inevitable destinies in *Gravel Heart*, as in many other novels by Gurnah. The novel accommodates the elite, middle, and lower classes together, each of which is multi-layered with subcategories. To illustrate, in the post-independence period, lower-class members are usually Zanzibaris of Arab origin, whose positions in the state have been abolished, and whose property has been confiscated by the new Black African powerholders after the Revolution. The ones forming the middle class are mostly those who continue their civil service meekly, in absolute obedience to the ruling class. The elite in the novel could be divided into two subgroups: the intellectual and the wealthy. The former comprises briefly mentioned former Islamic scholars and thinkers before the Revolution, as well as Zanzibari intellectuals in the UK diaspora. The others are obviously the African parvenus, new post-revolution powerholders. As a result of various interactions of these classes, power is arbitrarily distributed among the supporters of the new government. While there is merciless oppression for some, for others, climbing the social ladder and upgrading their social class in this way is quite possible when they tirelessly try to decrypt the operational systems of power and finally adjust them to their own advantage. For example, Amir, in the postcolonial setting of Zanzibar, ambitiously devises his ways to move from the middle to the elite class, later enjoying all the conveniences of a high-ranking Zanzibari diplomat in the UK.

It is observed that the social classes in the novel are not static but shifting. As characters in the story step up or down on the social ladder, their lives change substantially. To illustrate, Saida, born into an upper-class family, becomes lower-middle-class after marrying Masud. Then, she is elevated to the upper strata in her second marriage when she becomes Hakim’s wife. Her brother rapidly climbs from the lower to the upper class through opportunism, immorality, and an extreme desire for wealth. Salim, from a lower-middle-class family, takes one step further than his peers in Africa when he migrates to England to study and later finds himself at the

threshold of elite cultural circles after choosing to study English literature. In this way, the novel shows that an individual's social class is changeable, as it can be constructed over time. As the gaps in the social structure can be used to elevate people socially, the economic levels people belong to are just temporary. Accordingly, places are significant for highlighting individuals' or groups' standing within social classes. Saida's family home before the Revolution was in an affluent section of the city, "near the Court-House" because her father was a comparatively cultivated and well-travelled man of the upper-class (*GH* 14). After the Revolution and her father's death, she had to move to a relative's house with her mother and brother. This house, which also became the house she lived in after her marriage to Masud and the only home that Salim knew in Zanzibar, was in a poorer area, where shabby houses lined narrow streets without names. In sharp contrast, Hakim's house, where she ended up, was again in a wealthy neighbourhood.

Because ruling powers of Zanzibar have constantly changed throughout history due to its strategic location, so have the oppressor-oppressed pairs. There have been power holders misusing their authorities, and those whose rights have been breached. Accordingly, while identifying the marginalised characters in the novel, it must be remembered that they are not only "transnational" protagonists, both in Zanzibar and in the English diaspora, and their core families, but also the former generation, the parents of the characters that are oppressed and marginalised. The persecution of these earlier generations reveals that colonial domination is not restricted to a single historical phase but instead produces substantial structural effects that persist through generations. As Said contends in *Culture and Imperialism*, it is not possible to write a post-imperial or non-imperial history without falling into either naive utopianism or hopeless pessimism because "embroiled actuality of domination in the Third World" continues (280). Because the novel's narration of the difficulties its characters face in the aftermath of the Zanzibar Revolution showcases the cascading effects of colonialism, the oppression inflicted upon Salim's grandparents is required to be centrally analysed.

From this perspective, the reader is informed that Saida's father, Ahmed Musa Ibrahim, had a good education and held revolutionary ideas, making him a member of

the social elite, an opponent of economic elitism, and a socialist at heart. Thus, being an influential, revered citizen in the Arab community before the Revolution, he was targeted and persecuted by the new Afro-Shirazi Party, causing Salim's maternal grandmother to die soon out of grief and leaving Saida and Amir as orphans with traumas. Salim's paternal grandfather, Maalim Yahya, was also one of the leading figures of the Arab community before the Revolution; however, he had a narrow escape to the Gulf with his family before the new government persecuted him, leaving only Salim's father behind in Zanzibar. Even though decades have passed since the arrest and killing of one grandfather and the other's escape from the country, these past events create a chain reaction directly influencing the critical choices made by Salim's mother, which cause, in turn, his father's abandonment, eventually having severe repercussions in Salim's life. This proves once again that, beneath all that happens in the novel, the rippling effects of colonialism are clear.

Gurnah states his primary purpose in writing and the impact he wants to have as to be engaged with and contest the colonial and the postcolonial narrative in the part of the world he knows about (Gurnah qtd. in Brown). As the author believes that literature does more than entertain by continually raising questions that transcend historical periods, intertextuality renders itself convenient for him. He asserts that the enduring relevance of literature with frequent returns to age-old works deepens our understanding of historical and social realities. Motivated as such, Gurnah draws on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* as the major hypotext to vocalise that the government is corrupt, morality in the society is in decline, and women are commodified in Zanzibar at the time *Gravel Heart* takes place. The intertextuality between the two works is of great significance in that it shows, even centuries apart, that the worst kind of degeneration is the one within the governance of a community. As a hypertext, the novel does not only draw on the canonical Shakespearean play but also transforms it with a critiquing response.

Some critics describe *Gravel Heart* as a rewriting of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* in a limited sense, as Gurnah does not draw only on the title but also on themes such as morality, justice, sacrifice, and relational ethics to reframe some of the play's moral dilemmas in a postcolonial context. Susi Wyss states that *Gravel Heart*

can be regarded as a "modern retelling of Shakespeare's play" in her review. Hand and Pujolràs-Noguer also contend that *Gravel Heart* "to a certain degree rewrites Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, albeit with a less happy ending, showing, once again, an indebtedness to a hybrid textual heritage that stems from Indoceanic storytelling and the Western literary tradition" (18). In order to clarify the different ways *Gravel Heart* can relate to *Measure for Measure*, the nuance between intertextuality and rewriting should be clarified. Rewriting is the deliberate transformation of the whole earlier work into a new one, using the original text as a structural model, or the integral reference point. In contrast, intertextuality is a broader concept that involves a network of references and echoes between texts, where there could be partial allusions. In other words, "[i]ntertextuality is broader than rewriting: Rewriting is one specific practice within intertextual relations. Intertextuality also includes allusion, quotation, reference, transformation, and thematic modelling" (Fokkema 27). *Gravel Heart* illustrates this kind of intertextuality by not retelling all of *Measure for Measure* scene by scene, but echoes a central dilemma. Therefore, *Gravel Heart* can rather be considered as a re-interpretation or re-contextualisation of Shakespeare's themes in *Measure for Measure* in a new intertextual milieu rather than a line-by-line retelling.

It is noticed immediately that the title of Gurnah's novel is a direct allusion to a phrase in *Measure for Measure*, where the protagonist utters this phrase about a prisoner on death row: "[u]nfit to live or die: oh gravel heart!" (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* 4.3.55). Thus, *Gravel Heart* as a novel establishes from the start its strong intertextual connection to *Measure for Measure*. One reason Gurnah chose this phrase as the title of his novel might be that he wanted to point to the victimised members of Salim's broken family in different ways. Similar to the death row prisoner, whom the Duke calls out in the play, Salim is neither dead nor completely alive, but a prisoner of the dark mystery hidden by his family. Besides, his father, Masud, living in a death-like isolation due to the unbearable humiliation caused by not being able to protect his family and being cuckolded, is another character in a degraded status. In this regard, he, too, is unfit to live or die, like "a gravel heart." Thirdly, an indirect reference is noted when Saida tells Amir that he has "a heart of stone," associating with the phrase "gravel heart," in response to her brother's insistence that she must accept Hakim's

indecent proposal to save him from prison (*GH* 256). She accuses her brother of having a stone heart because he is entirely self-centred and insensitive to others' misfortunes, for which he is himself responsible.

Measure for Measure functions as a powerful tool in *Gravel Heart* to highlight the precarity of the marginalised in the face of corrupt state administration and the lack of justice, as politicians prioritise solely their own interests. More specifically, this play "serves to elucidate the darkness at the heart of Salim's family" (Bosman, *Rejection* 65). The play is directly mentioned only in the third section of the novel, when Salim reunites with his father, and he uses the revelation of their dark family secrets to establish a direct relationship between the play and the events that lead to the breakdown of his family. In the two works, there are almost identical resemblances between the corrupt governors, sisters facing indecent proposals by these influential people, and being forced into subjugation in return for their brothers' release from prison or execution due to the crimes attributed to them. In a one-to-one comparison between *Measure for Measure* and *Gravel Heart*, the corresponding characters are easily identified as Isabella and Saida, Lord Angelo and Hakim, and Claudio and Amir.

This close alignment of characters also draws attention to the play's layered tone and thematic depth. Light comic elements, forgiveness, and reconciliation mostly by marriages at the end of the play do not suffice to make *Measure for Measure* a romantic comedy, because serious themes in Shakespearean tragedies, such as morality, justice, and misuse of power, are also present. Therefore, it is considered a Shakespearean problem play, as Shakespeare's problem plays are characterised by genre blending, open-ended structures, and the exploration of complex moral, social, political, religious and cultural questions (Leech 66-73). Set in the seventeenth-century Vienna, where moral decay among the public is on the increase, *Measure for Measure* opens with Duke Vincentio's scheming of a plot to inspect how his favourite Lord Angelo governs the city as his deputy in his pretended absence by disguising himself as a friar (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* 1.3.46). The Duke, with a sharp sense of intuition, states his opinions regarding Angelo and his motive in this disguise:

> Lord Angelo is precise,
> Stands at a guard with envy, scarce confesses
> That his blood flows, or that his appetite

> Is more to bread than stone. Hence shall we see,
> If power change purpose, what our seemers be. (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* 1.3.50–55)

In other words, the Duke thinks that Angelo carefully guards his reputation as a strict moralist, and he seems to deny all human desires through his disciplined demeanour. He predicts that the plot he has devised will show whether power changes Angelo's virtuous standing and reveal who he truly is. In this way, Shakespeare aims at exposing the hypocrisy of moral "seemers."

Disturbed by decadent morals among the public, Angelo puts old laws into effect at once, imprisoning a young man called Claudio to be executed for impregnating his fiancée, Juliet, before getting married. Claudio's sister, Isabella, who is in training to become a nun, implores Angelo to release her brother. Despite his reputation for being virtuous, Angelo has a weakness for women. He is overwhelmed by lustful feelings for Isabella, and suggests forgiving Claudio on the condition that the prospective young nun sleeps with him. Just then, the Duke overhears the indecent proposal and Isabella's uncompromising rejection, and tremendously impressed by her virtue, he decides to help her by devising a clever plan. As part of the "bed trick" he arranges, Mariana, Angelo's former fiancée, whom he had left heartbroken for unfair reasons, replaces Isabella in the dark room. After that night, Angelo does not change his order for Claudio's execution to hide his corruption. However, the Duke grants Claudio clemency and later publicly reveals his true identity, exposing Angelo's hypocrisy. Then, order seems to be peacefully restored. Angelo is made to marry Mariana, who still loves him. Claudio reunites with Juliet, and the Duke proposes to Isabella to become his wife, even though her reply is unknown. At its core, the play explores the perils of authorities' abuse of power over individuals and society, the conflicts between justice and mercy, and the complex dilemma between virtue and lust, which makes it the most appropriate hypotext to be referred to while pointing to the corruption and amplifying the thoughts of the oppressed subjectivities in Zanzibar after the Revolution.

The indecent proposals made to Saida and Isabella form the central plot lines in both works. Saida's subjection to the proposal of Hakim, the Vice President's son, to save her brother Amir from torture and imprisonment, is parallel to what befalls Isabella in

Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure,* who is likewise subjected to the demands of a man in a position of high authority. In other words, *Measure for Measure* and *Gravel Heart* share the issues of abuse of authority, and the subjugation of the weak by the powerful. In both works, Isabella and Saida are the women who are positioned to be easily sacrificed to save their brothers' lives. Their oppressors have names that evoke the sense of superiority: the "Lord" title of Angelo in the play, and "Hakim" in the novel, meaning the master or the sovereign, represent ultimate dominance. When she has no other way but to visit the Lord and ask for her brother's redemption, Isabella, like Saida, "[knows] like everyone else, that to get the smallest thing you desire, unless you are born to it, you have to plead and beg," as Salim comments while summarising the play to his father (*GH* 255). Apparently, even centuries apart, the unyielding injustice between the oppressor and the oppressed persists, and both Shakespeare and Gurnah are appealing to common sense and justice for the oppressed characters in their works in question.

Thus, while both texts share a common thread in their critique of prevailing injustice, they simultaneously differ in terms of the characters' situations and their narrative structures. In fact, such clashing circumstances in analysis are considered positive because tensions created by diverging views and contexts in the hypotext and hypertext are likely to aid the state of intertextuality. In this respect, a plethora of significant differences could be foregrounded. Even though unacceptable indecency by the ruling authorities and the damage it causes both for individuals and the trustworthiness of the state is the core of the plot in *Measure for Measure*, and the main reason why Salim's family is destroyed after what Amir causes, *Gravel Heart* also deals with other significant issues such as migrancy, marginality, the quest for self, memory, and the devastating effects of secrets.

The most important distinction between the two texts is the overall scope of the impact of corruption and the misuse of power. In *Measure for Measure*, only two individuals directly suffer from the state authority that misuses its power: Claudio, who is unjustly accused of impregnating a single woman outside marriage, and his sister Isabella, who is forced to sacrifice her honour to be able to save her brother from execution. Governmental corruption brings about injustice and torture at the individual level in

Shakespeare's play. On the other hand, in *Gravel Heart,* the whole family is dismantled due to the immorality of a bureaucrat and general corruption in the state. Isabella, the nun to be in *Measure for Measure,* is not married and does not have a child. Even if the Deputy Governor sexually subjugated her, this would mostly only affect her. However, in the case of Saida, who has to yield to Hakim's indecent proposal, not only does the act tarnish her chastity in the traditional society, but it also leads her whole family to its doom, influencing both her husband, Masud, and her son, Salim, deeply. Saida occupies the most crucial part in the intertextuality between the play and the novel as she is victimised by the same kind of gender oppression inflicted on Isabella, albeit in a much more severe way.

The gravity of gender oppression between the two works noticeably differ as one party has never suffered the impacts of colonialism while the other dramatically has. Isabella, as a prospective nun in training, is portrayed as a woman whose virtue cannot be questioned. Isabella confidently protests the grounds of Claudio's accusation by asserting that nobody has been killed for the natural sin that many people have committed, and she says Angelo must not use a giant's strength tyrannically, even though he has it, which highlights the meticulous care statesmen must show while making critical decisions (Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure* 2.2.110-13). Actually, her strong will while resisting the indecent proposal and preserving her chastity is further supported by the Duke and the clever scheme he devises to save her honour. In contrast, Saida suffers a moral dilemma testing her virtue against the indecent proposal of Hakim. At first glance, her submission to indecency seems to easily come. It can be simply concluded that she is defeated with ease by surrendering to infidelity as a married woman. By prioritising her brother instead of her husband and her son, she could be perceived as the ultimate culprit to destroy the whole family. However, it must not be ignored that neither her husband nor a higher authority than Hakim is there to support her in her resistance to protect her honour. With all these factors contributing, Saida becomes more vulnerable than Isabella.

To save her brother Amir, Saida can only ask to see the Vice President in his office to plead for her brother, in an attempt to avoid the fate of her mother, who died "wretchedly" because they did not do anything when her father was taken to execution

(*GH* 242). Because she has witnessed the atrocities inflicted on the powerless by the powerful, Saida's awareness reflects what Sartre defines as "murderous rampage," which is "the collective unconscious of the colonized," whose intra rivalries are catalysed by the colonial policy" (Sartre lii). Therefore, she cautiously and politely requests her brother's release. However, Hakim tells her audaciously that he wants to make love to her, not just once, but to his satisfaction in return for Amir's acquittal. As a response to his lewd proposal, all Saida can do is to resist weakly by saying, "[y]ou humiliate me. I am a married woman and a mother. I love my husband above any other person in this world, and I will not bring shame to his home and my son's home" (*GH* 253). In this way, Gurnah portrays Saida as excusable for not being entirely responsible for her husband's downfall. Whenever Salim asks whether it was Hakim who caused his father to leave, Saida "would walk away and lock herself in her room and sob," saying at other times "[she] cannot undo what [she has] done. [She] did not know he would ruin his life" (*GH* 43). Apparently, both her personal impasses and corrupt national politics after decolonisation force her into a regretful life. Deducing from the deep moral anguish she suffers in the aftermath of this familial catastrophe, it could be said that Saida, whose behaviour contradicts her thoughts, is an ambivalent character.

Despite the fact that Saida is the key character in the plot, who causes the break-up of the family and the victimisation of its members starts with her inevitable subjugation to Hakim, her perspective on what happens is never heard throughout the story, except for what her husband or her son narrates on her behalf. While both Salim, as the first person narrator, and briefly Masud, in conversation with his son, are heard directly, Saida's voicelessness is loud to the reader, revealing immensely about the fate of women in a male-dominated society. Taken this fact into account, it could be thought that Gurnah silences Saida, too. However, the author mostly has a neutral stance; he neither vilifies nor justifies her actions. Hand and Pujolràs-Noguer state that "[t]he postcolonial reworking in a Muslim context of the exploitation of women underscores another of Gurnah's projects, that is to shed light on the plight of women in certain Islamic societies where patriarchy subjects them not only to discursive but also to systematic physical violence" (20). Therefore, Gurnah's representation of Saida is a

realistic one, reflecting the patriarchal post-independence Zanzibari society and the limited place the women have in it.

At a young age, witnessing her father's execution due to his political stance, her mother's subsequent death out of grief, and being left all alone with her younger brother teaches Saida not to resist the powerful at all. However, it is understood from a dialogue narrated by Masud that, she once had some agency as a single young girl. In a culture where young women are thought to aspire to be the wife of some wealthy man and bear his children, Saida, as a single young girl, rejects the idea, saying that what all women actually "think about [is] getting on with their lives" (*GH* 205). In this conversation, "[she] subtly portrays women's attempts to assert their autonomy […] even in oppressive environments," emphasising "the fact that women have lives beyond their family roles and that marriage is not their sole purpose in life. This underscores the importance of giving women a voice and representation in society" (Antonsen 29). However, patriarchal society speaks louder later in her life, and she is dragged along life mostly by obligatory circumstances.

It is unignorable that the dominant colonial culture lingering in the media, which lures individuals into a luxurious lifestyle, also facilitates Saida's submission to Hakim. While mentioning his mother, Salim once says, "She liked to watch the news, and then endless dramas with women in long dresses and men sitting behind huge desks, all of them living in enormous mansions and driving long, gleaming cars" (*GH* 34). Doubtlessly, Saida may have the same feebleness in her desire to be an elite as many other individuals in the lower segment of society do. To standardise and centralise its culture, the TV channel propagandises for the revolutionary government and strongly disseminates the elite's affluent lifestyle through soap operas, which Saida loves watching. The reproduction of elite culture via media reflects a postcolonial condition in which colonial hierarchies persist through cultural rather than explicit political domination. It can be deduced that the nationalist government after the Revolution desires to replace the coloniser rather than abolish the remnants of colonial structures (Ogaga 142). The new government's propagandising wealthy lifestyles on its media reflects the inherent dream of the colonised "of taking the place of the colonist", Fanon argues that "[t]he colonized man is an envious man" (*The Wretched* 5). The lack of an

alternative narrative of resistance seems to contribute to the predestination and normalisation of Saida's aspirations. Whether she, influenced by the media, is inclined to trade her decency for a much more comfortable life, or whether she could somehow reject Hakim's indecent proposal, may stand as the biggest question of the narrative, because prioritising her brother at the expense of her core family is too difficult to rationalise.

What appears to be her choice is, in reality, what is forced on her since she is a marginalised woman devoid of any voice and agency in the postcolonial world. Spivak specifically underscores the double-oppression based on gender and colonialisation, exemplifying the lack of agency and voicelessness of Indian Sati women facing the most severe form of oppression within the colonial and patriarchal context (Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" 275). These widows, who traditionally immolate themselves, are torn between two antagonistic poles: indigenous Indian patriarchy or the colonisers, the benevolent white men who want to outlaw this tradition by wearing the mask of humanism (Louai 7). This double oppression on the Sati widows, emphasised by Spivak, leaves them voiceless since nobody cares to hear what these women have to say. She holds that "[w]omen in many societies have been relegated to the position of 'Other', marginalized and, in a metaphorical sense, 'colonized'" (Spivak, *In Other Worlds*, 207). She highlights the big problem of representation of "the voice of the Other," which inescapably arises out of the mediation of the intellectuals, who ignore the fact that "the colonized subaltern subject is irretrievably heterogeneous" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 38). Thus, she defies monolithic presentations of the subaltern, emphasising that each subjectivity has its own peculiar conditions.

In accordance with this opinion of Spivak's, Gurnah underscores that social stratification of marginality differs noticeably across the oppressed groups through Saida's example, judging by the different ways men and women are subjugated in post-revolutionary Zanzibar. As a woman from a lower economic class living through a colonial existence, Saida is doubly oppressed. However, once her status as the Vice President's son's mistress is confirmed, her position is morally irreversible but socially untouchable. Psychologically suppressed condition of Saida may imply that she does

not have the agency to deal with her moral dilemma about the indecent proposal by Hakim. She seems to be carried along in a phase of personal liminality during a period of political transition. In the bigger picture, due to the corruption gnawing at the government and the society at large, women found themselves more helpless in the face of sexual attacks as modernisation and the adoption of Western ideology were happening in Africa in the phase after decolonisation. Salim narrates:

> [the] new owners of the government and its offices did so contemptuously, pursuing women they desired without fear of causing offence, or perhaps they did so with such indiscretion deliberately to cause offence […]. For the women, it was sometimes impossible to say no, because of the insistence of the men or because of threat to their loved ones or the needs of the family, and because they understood their obligations. (*GH* 203)

As can be realised, the current upholders of power in Zanzibar are utterly inconsistent with their claim of being socialists. They have the same capitalist mindset of colonialists, seeing the female body as a kind of commodity, in contrast to socialism, which, in line with its ideals, should aim to erase such inequalities. As the colonised land is perceived as a female body to be owned, mastered, and penetrated (McClintock 12-13), when power changes hands, new rulers continue the legacy of colonisation, which is deeply connected to patriarchy. Spivak argues accordingly that the subaltern female body becomes a metaphorical ground for both imperial and patriarchal domination, silenced and possessed as if it were the colonised land itself ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 62). In the Zanzibari society where the male gaze and commodification of women are normalised (Antonsen 29-30), the biggest explanation for her passivity might be her internalised helplessness caused by not witnessing any woman's strong resistance to the patriarchal system, and the socio-political structure oppressing women and leaving them with no agency.

Building on the intertextual comparison of Saida to Isabella, and foregrounding both the similar and the contrasting aspects between them, the male figures of authority in *Gravel Heart* and *Measure for Measure* must also be focused on. Even though Lord Angelo and Hakim are similar in ignoring common sense, morals, and, most importantly, the law, they differ in their initial qualifications for a high-ranking governmental post. Although Angelo has the Duke's trust as a statesman, given his inspection in disguise, the Duke must have been suspicious of some flaws in his

character, because it is well known in Vienna that Angelo left his fiancée because she had lost her wealth, which proves he is a materialistic person. On the other hand, it is certainly through nepotism that Hakim was appointed as the government's Protocols Manager, which raises questions about his qualifications for his post. While the Lord Angelo struggles with a moral dilemma briefly about lusting after Isabella, Hakim never has such a quandary, as far as we know based on what is reported of him. While Hakim is not a direct character in the novel, Lord Angelo in the play is one, whom we hear in the first person. Wilson Knight concludes that Angelo represents the man enslaved by his instincts and falsely grounded intellectual ethics (89). As a Lord, while he seems to be a devoted man to law and righteousness, he cannot cloak his inner frailties under his virtuous façade once granted authority. As a result, his weaknesses destroy his sense of justice. On the other hand, Hakim does not appear to have any sense of justice or self-restraint from the very beginning of his encounter with Saida. All he does is deliberate on his lust and desire to be with Saida despite her marital status by raising the level of threats against her brother. Unlike Angelo or Escalus, Hakim's authority cannot be overruled by anyone because he derives his power not only from being a representative of a nationalist ruler but also from nepotism. He can behave much more arbitrarily in his penal actions than the deputies in the play because he is protected by the corruption and nepotism of the revolutionary government "to ensure the security of their plunder" (*GH* 225). Therefore, the degree of oppression is limitless and far graver in the socio-political circumstances of postcolonial Zanzibar. As a further difference, in *Measure for Measure*, what appears is not the vengeance that the new rulers aim to take on the members of the previously strong section of society, but rather the unearthing of human weakness in the acquisition of power. Still, both works elaborately show what frailties in human psychology power poisoning may lead to.

The other paralleling male figures in the two works are Claudio and Amir. The brothers, respectively in the play and the novel, for whose acquittals their sisters' chastity and honour are to be sacrificed, differ on their initial reasons for being imprisoned. What Claudio is accused of is not actually a crime, but rather quite natural between two single individuals who love each other and intend to marry later. Although Claudio's crime is confirmed, the same cannot be said for Amir's. It is only

alleged by Hakim, the powerful bureaucrat and the brother of the so-called victim, that Amir has raped his underage sister. Considering Amir's reputation with the opposite sex, as Masud's friend Yusuf informs, it is quite possible that the incident was an act of mutual consent where marriages could legally be carried out as early as fourteen (*GH* 242).

In addition, both brothers seem to be utterly selfish, asking their sisters to sacrifice their chastity to save themselves. Both Claudio and Amir react similarly on hearing the indecent proposals made to their sisters by the influential statesmen who have accused and imprisoned them. When Isabella is furious with Claudio's request of her, her brother underestimates the importance of morals compared to staying alive. Likewise, Amir talks Saida into the adulterous affair by advocating that it is a "noble and courageous" act to "save a brother's life" (*GH* 256). However, the two differ in terms of what they aspire to in life. Apparently, Claudio only wants to be happy with the woman he loves; however, Amir's expectations for life are much higher than familial bliss because he wants all that life can offer. He lacks a dignified character but has a high opinion of himself, considering himself among the best "people with personality and style" to be selected for a "prestigious" government programme at an English university, "to be fast-tracked to the top" (*GH* 33), whereas it is known that he is favoured by Hakim and his family as the prospective husband for his sister. As a consequence of Saida's acceptance of Hakim's proposal, not only is Amir's life saved, but he also becomes a direct beneficiary of the nepotism in the government. Fuelled by the ambition of being a low-income member of the lower class, Amir never hesitates to act in a socially deviant manner to reach his goals. His determination to be among the elite is so tremendous that he can use all the means to be placed among these powerful social circles. He can even bring a catastrophe upon his sister's family, ruin their lives by scattering each member around just to get what he wants, and never regretting afterwards. The only favour for the family is to arrange a government scholarship for Salim to study at a university in London and to host him at his home to pay his debt to Saida. However, this also means that the fact that Salim is able to get an education in London is also an indirect result of his mother's acceptance of Hakim's proposal, so it comes at the cost of his family's disintegration.

Having drawn parallels between Amir and Claudio, it is also of vital importance to consider Salim and his father, who, unlike them, do not have clear counterparts in *Measure for Measure*, and introduce a different dimension to the comparison for this reason. The protagonist, Salim, and his father are the other figures at the core of the narrative in *Gravel Heart*, and they are victimised by psychological distress. Salim has experienced parental deprivation from the age of seven in the most undeserving manner, while his father's passivity may be regarded as his culpability in their family drama. After Saida, Masud might seem as the most unfortunate, therefore, the most marginalised character crushed under the cultural values of worthlessness ascribed to himself. Even his own son, Salim, thinks that he is a "spineless and defeated" man (*GH* 40). Regarding his depressing visits to his father back then, Salim recalls that his father was not forthcoming at all to his son. "He was about thirty and the signs of age in his young face made people stare at him…[Salim] was ashamed of his abjectness and lethargy" (*GH* 30). The tormenting pain of Saida's infidelity is multiplied by the feeling of utter shame, which is demanded of him culturally. Although his lack of agency, observed when he retreats passively into a corner and keeps hiding, is caused by his insufficient economic means and certainty that the powerful rulers always obtain what they want, he is still expected to fight more as a husband and a father to protect his family. Once thought disgraced and humiliated by his wife's adulterous affair with another man while she is married, Masud is emotionally castrated and inevitably ostracised from the patriarchal Zanzibari society, finding himself at the very margins. In reality, however, ordinary people in post-revolutionary Zanzibar find themselves disempowered, at the mercy of the new government and its bureaucrats, who are too powerful to fight. When Saida and Masud go to meet Hakim together upon Amir's arrest, Hakim strides proudly and angrily in his room in a gesture of showing his power. Masud explains: "All this walking about was intended to demonstrate that he had complete mastery of the situation, that we were powerless before him. It was something we understood anyway" (*GH* 233). Therefore, he feels too inadequate to attempt to resist the power and feels compelled to yield to the newly constructed social hierarchy.

It is vital to note that as two characters that do not have a counterpart in the plot of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, Salim and his father Masud are the ones that

make direct references to the play in the novel. These direct references take place rather late, in the third part of the novel when the father and the son eventually unite in Zanzibar and start to share memories. This structurally recalls the way Gurnah does not openly refer to Bartleby until the last section of *By the Sea*. While narrating the past, Masud says he did not live after his separation but "lived with the misery of love gone wrong, and [he] almost lost [his] life" (*GH* 260). During their conversations, Salim pieces the puzzle together and establishes a direct relevance between what his parents really lived and the plot in *Measure for Measure*. When Salim tells his father that when he "first read the play [he] heard an echo which made [him] think of Mama", the reader who has not yet linked the two texts is given a clear signal of the intertextualisation (*GH* 254). Curious about the similarity between their family history and the play, Masud wants to hear the story, and his son summarises the play by emphasising the parts of the "sexual blackmail story" that show the clearest links to *Gravel Heart* (Bawcutt 56). Very poignantly, Salim concludes:

> There was no Duke to put things right for this Isabella [Saida], no one to restrain the man of appetite, who, once he had her in his grip, never let her slip away. Nor was there any role for you in the play, Baba, because Shakespeare had already reserved the heroine for the Duke. (*GH* 256)

Then, Masud, who has been curious up to that moment, gives up on his decision to read the play by saying he will not bother to read it if there is not a part for himself in his usual fatalistic acceptance, the major flaw in his character. Although neither the father nor the son in this story plays a part in Shakespeare's play, both have significant roles in the scheme that Hakim cruelly devises, and that Amir contributes to.

The two works differ in the way they end, too. This divergence is not limited to the fate of the oppressors, but also affects other characters. In comparison with *Gravel Heart*, there is a seemingly restored moral order in *Measure for Measure*, as the Duke returns by revealing his disguise, and reasserts his authority in order to re-establish social and ethical balance. Lord Angelo is exposed and compelled to account for his abuse of power, Isabella preserves her moral integrity, and Claudio is released, allowing the play to conclude with partial reconciliation. However, being a Shakespearean problem-play, *Measure for Measure*'s open-ended aspect prevails because it is impossible to claim that all the parties are completely reconciled, and ultimate justice is ensured in the play. Eventual fates of many characters are vague as

well as it is unclear whether or not Isabella accepts the Duke's marriage proposal, or if they will be blissfully married in case she does. Angelo and Marianna's obligatory marriage does not seem promising, either, or Lucio's capital punishment proves the lack of freedom of expression in the society. Despite all odds, as a result of the duke's efforts to calm the society down, the situation appears to have settled while *Gravel Heart* resists such ending. As a consequence of the disorder brought about by colonial history and the turmoil that followed independence, the oppressors in *Gravel Heart* have unchecked and unchallenged authority powered by nepotism, so they get away with the unrestrained injustice that they inflict, never receiving retribution, or never feeling remorse. This lack of retributive justice has repercussions in the experiences of other characters, particularly those of Salim, whose story ends not in resolution but in emotional fragmentation. Unlike Shakespeare's play, the novel sustains disorder by foregrounding silence, repression, and unresolved trauma. In doing so, Gurnah critiques power in a more disquieting manner, suggesting that injustice persists forever in systems where authority is absolute and unopposed.

Like his father, Salim has no counterpart in *Measure for Measure*; nevertheless, he, as the first-person narrator and the victim of this family drama, surely assumes a significant role in creating intertextual echoes between all the literary works he has read both as a result of his love for books and the colonial education he has received. These contextual links between the books he has read serve to reflect the broader subjectivities and vocalise the oppression inflicted on them by colonists and their own corrupt government. Condemned to a life of uncertainty without any agency overshadowing his life from the age of seven until his twenties, Salim continuously struggles to find the truth and himself in it. The major influences on his fragmented character come from his family, which is devastated by the practices of ruthless, immoral members of the post-revolutionary government.

However, the only factor leading Salim to feel fragmented is not merely his familial situation since colonisation is the culprit unearthing whatever misfortune that happens in Zanzibar. As in the other former British protectorates, the education system based on the British norms is followed in Zanzibar, and it is not in conformity with the Muslim-African culture Salim belongs to. What children in Zanzibar are taught

escalates their feelings of incongruity with the "civilised" rest of the world, making them feel marginalised even from early childhood. As can be inferred, the Zanzibari youth are made to visualise Western civilisation as a land where the grass seems much greener. Gradually, African students are oriented into the Western way of thought, which is always portrayed as bright and hopeful, and made to perceive the colonial culture as the norm. Therefore, Gurnah problematises the colonial education system that is imposed on the colonised.

Within this framework, an incident that Gurnah allots considerable space in *Gravel Heart* relates to a composition assignment from Salim's English Language textbook at school, which is intertextualised in context and objective. The topic from the textbook asks the students to write about what they did on their holidays. Salim finds the assignment quite illogical because the life he leads differs substantially from that of the characters drawn in the idealised picture below the writing task. Muslim children in Zanzibar do not have luxuries such as seaside or mountain holidays as they already inhabit littoral, which is not a holiday resort for them. Their perception of holidays is completely different from Westerners' because, for them, "[h]olidays were when the government school was closed, because there was no holiday from Qur'an school and the Word of God except for the days of Idd and Maulid, or because of the bed-ridden illness." Besides, "adult women" do not wear "sleeveless blouses" as in the picture in the textbook, or "[the Zanzibari children's] freezing curly hair do not stream behind [them] as [they run] (*GH* 11). Although Salim stops attending the Qur'an school during holidays after mastering the reading of it, he explains he did

> [nothing] in particular. […] But[he] was asked to write about [his] holiday highlights, not to grumble about the absurdity of the task. So [he] made up a story about a cycle ride to the country and named the trees that provided [him] with shade and described the boy who pointed [him] in the right direction when [he] got lost and the girl [he] spoke to but who disappeared before [he] could find out her name and the blinding whiteness of the stand when [he] reached the sea. (*GH* 11-12)

Salim's story about a cycle ride to the country is praised by both his teacher and the headmaster, and displayed on the school's noticeboard. Through this incident Salim's act of composing a Western-style holiday story clashing his own reality, embodies Homi Bhabha's notion of "sly civility," which he mentions in *The Location of Culture*.

This subtle form of resistance used by colonised subjects under colonial rule refers to the occasions when the colonised appear polite, cooperative, and "civil," yet use that performance to undermine colonial authority intricately. Bhabha argues that as language and culture become tools of domination, they also become the sites of resistance for colonised subjects:

> My contention, elaborated in my writings on postcolonial discourse in terms of mimicry, hybridity, sly civility, is that this liminal moment of identification – eluding resemblance – produces a subversive strategy of subaltern agency that negotiates its own authority through a process of iterative 'unpicking' and incommensurable, insurgent relinking. (*The Location of Culture* 185)

In other words, Bhabha's mention of sly civility, previously adopted by colonists as a manipulation strategy, can, benefit the colonised through the same slyness, too. By being made to construct an idealised holiday like Westerners' within the colonial educational system, the colonised protagonist is pushed into a form of resistance that is not obvious but strategically calculated. This example of sly civility reveals the complexities of identity and resistance within the colonial context by demonstrating how Salim manoeuvres and negotiates the imposed system. Thus, his composition can be interpreted as a subtle form of subversion, confirming Bhabha's theory of hybrid identities and the ambivalence of colonial power.

Still, not fully aware of the fact that colonial oppression is primarily responsible for fragmenting the identities of colonised subjects, as a child, Salim initially blames both his parents for his deprivation. While he is still trying to recover from the disappointment caused by his father, and discover the reasons for the misfortune that befell his family, he recalls the time he is once again shaken by his mother's happy announcement of a coming sibling she has conceived from a powerful bureaucrat in the government. Salim says, "[he] could not bear the smile on [his mother's] face as she said his name" (*GH* 41). Perhaps partly because of this, he does not show any resistance while being sent to the UK to study business at university.

When he arrives in England, Salim is hosted by his now-diplomatic uncle, who has been skyrocketed in his career through the corrupt and nepotistic practices of the national bourgeoisie, which "appropriat[es] the old traditions of colonialism" because

"[t]he national bourgeoisie, which takes over power at the end of the colonial regime, is an underdeveloped bourgeoisie" (Fanon, *The Wretched* 76, 98). In his household, Amir imposes extreme authority on Salim, assuming the role of his nephew's protector and benefactor, dictating every aspect of his life. The young man does not feel glad because of being able to study in England; on the contrary, he finds his uncle's insistence quite meaningless and does not want to be subjected to his authority at all.

As if his disappointed endeavours to stitch the scars in his heart of familial separation have not been enough, the fact that he is not welcomed in London aggravates Salim's grief of living far away from his homeland even more. He accentuates his feeling as an outsider, expressing that "[he] learnt to live in London, to avoid being intimidated by crowds and by rudeness, to avoid curiosity, not to feel desolate at hostile stares and to walk purposefully wherever [he] went. […] He tried but couldn't join the city's human carnival" (*GH* 66). It can be inferred that, Salim, as a racialised outsider in London, has adopted survival mechanisms and emotional restraint yet still cannot belong there. Through the Fanonian point of view, this reflects how the colonised subject is shaped by the white gaze and becomes "overdetermined from without" (Fanon, *Black Skin* 116). The hostile stares and self-monitoring echo Fanon's account of being reduced to sight to see, in the same way Latif experiences in *By the Sea*, where identity is imposed externally rather than formed freely (Fanon, *Black Skin* 109; *BTS* 72). Salim's self-consciousness and sense of alienation reflect Fanon's claim that "in the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema"(*Black Skin* 12). His inability to join the "human carnival" also parallels the denial of recognition Fanon describes: "[t]he Black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man" (*Black Skin* 110). As a result, he exists in a fractured condition, burdened with "the responsib[ility] for [his] body, for [his] race, for [his] ancestors" (*Black Skin* 112).

Within this unwelcoming setting, Salim's experience becomes more intelligible: the longer he lives with Amir and Asha, the more intolerance and opposition he develops for elitism and their belittling attitude toward the lower classes. Being humane, well-read, and realistic, Salim is intellectually superior to his economically superior uncle and his wife. His life in diaspora is uncomfortable for him because he feels unwelcome

as an immigrant; he cannot get used to the new culture, where airs and styles matter more than genuine relationships. Moreover, he cannot bear being needy and weak relative under the auspices of Amir, who has the parvenu elitist attitude of the "ex-colonized bourgeoisie," as Fanon classifies. One day, Asha blurts out that they are indebted to Saida for her sacrifices, and that her brother fell in love with Saida and wanted her. Then, Salim asks if his mother had a choice to reject him, knowing that at that time in Zanzibar, "[a] lot of wives and daughters had been forced to make themselves available to the powerful" (*GH* 74). Asha becomes very irritated and asks Salim what he means. Salim's silence makes her more aggressive, and she starts to insult him, "her voice trembling with rage":

> Nobody forced her, do you understand? You can ask her yourself. How can you say such a thing about your mother You have no respect. You don't even know what you are talking about. How can you say such a thing? How can you even think such a thing? You are an enemy, you are a snake. And what does that make Amir? How dare you! How dare you! You are a despicable, dirty insect You are an ungrateful, filthy boy. How can you live in the man's house and say such a thing? He has been like a father to you. How can you eat the food we put in front of you and think like this? "(*GH* 74)

In response to her aggression and insults, Salim thinks to himself, absolutely aware of his mother's and his own marginalisation by the powerful now:

> Because I am feeble and shameless, and I have taught myself to eat shit I thought but did not say, could not say. Because I have been fed deference and defeat in my mother's milk. Because my mother wanted this for me and she has seen enough sadness. Now I am here like a vagabond at your mercy […] The meaning of Auntie Asha's rage … had something to do with my father leaving. (*GH* 74)

The young man feels the oppression further aggravated because he finds himself targeted in Britain at a time when nationalism is surging, racism against immigrants has peaked, and UK nationalists labelled Muslim migrants as "fanatics and terrorists" (*GH* 150). After being oppressed in the homeland, continuing it in the diaspora, and having to live under the dictate of the people whom he feels have a share in his family's devastation is too heavy for him to shoulder, and deepens his estrangement. Soon after, Salim finalises his mental cultural war and takes the initial step to emancipate himself by telling his uncle that he will quit Business Studies, as Amir wishes, but he will study literature where his real interest lies. Not surprisingly, raging Amir dismisses Salim from his household. Amir's irrational anger here and accusing Salim of ingratitude

sounds very similar to the benevolence of the white man in a colonial setting as "[a] black man [who] wants to be white" (Fanon, *Black Skin* 11). Although they initially come from the same social class, the ex-colonised bourgeoisie becomes the oppressor and tries to make economically weak Salim the subaltern. Regardless of the fact that there is the adjective "socialist" in the name of the party ruling Zanzibar at that time, the society has capitalistic features, so it is not socialist as could be expected after a triumphant national revolution (Sartre, xlvii). As in all capitalistic societies, power and wealth are in direct relation with each other: the rise in one makes the other rise in return, and the powerful always oppress the weaker.

Long before his attempt to emancipate from his uncle's command, and prior to his decision to change his academic area to literature, Salim's love for books is emphasised many times in *Gravel Heart*. He explains how long he has aspired to study literature:

> By the time I left for London, I had worked my way through most of my father's books, had made good progress through the school library shelves, had borrowed and exchanged books with friends, and I thought myself as someone with proven credentials as a future student of literature. (*GH* 58)

Salim's love for literature actually serves more than a proof of how well-read he is, since a sophisticated reader can trace many intertextual hints in the mentioned books. Salim recounts many works of literature that he has read, among which Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, Zane Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sage* are especially noteworthy in that they converge around shared thematic concerns, most notably marginalisation, forbidden love, and fractured identity, although these texts come from separate cultural and historical contexts. Salim's mother embodies the silenced figure whose life is shaped by a patriarch, proving how colonial and familial structures marginalise women. Likewise, in *Riders of the Purple Sage*, Jane Withersteen is suppressed by her Mormon community, her independence and forbidden relationships are monitored by religious authority as the Mormon religious leader wants to make her his third wife. Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, with her transgressive love punished by the rigid moral codes of Russian society, also offers a classical parallel to *Gravel Heart*. Additionally, *David Copperfield* and *Gravel Heart* share a common portrayal of childhood as a formative phase of marginalisation.

Dickens portrays David's early years ruined by the fear instilled in him and his mother by his stepfather with verbal and physical abuses, while Gurnah presents Salim's childhood scarred by family secrets and the lack of paternal support. In both novels, the child internalises unbelonging and exclusion, which shows the ways systemic hierarchies, class in Victorian England, and colonial and familial legacies in post-revolutionary Zanzibar lead to fragmented identities from very early ages. While both novels stress the part that early experiences of marginalisation play in causing fragmented identities, Gurnah broadens this observation beyond childhood years by analysing how displacement in adulthood can also lead to re-evaluation of selfhood.

In *Gravel Heart*, Salim's removal from the emotionally constraining atmosphere of Amir's household signals an attempt at full emancipation. Afterwards, settling in a student house for some time in a "riffraff" part of London, Salim manages to find himself a moderate political ground. He gains a lot of insight into life and many cultures among other students from divergent backgrounds in the OAU house, Organisation of African Unity as the landlord calls it, where young immigrants from Africa are accommodated. Later, to focus more on his studies, he rents a one-bedroom flat, where he lives really thriftily for a long time by working, studying, and saving every penny. In this manner, getting hold of his own finances, his agency strengthens considerably. Thus, Salim manages to reinforce his subjectivity, deliberately sculpting his life to overcome oppressive forces and tightly knit, mutually supportive social structures. In his young adulthood, he is reborn as a "cultural omnivore" since he devours many forms of culture (Boparai 16). In the ex-coloniser's country, he blends his intellectual culture with the popular culture of his working-class friends, as an example of promising hybridity. He also has his own acquisition to portray himself as socially sophisticated, thanks to Amir's position in his diplomatic circles. It would not be wrong to deduce that Salim is somehow powerful in his liminality, thanks to his quick wit for synthesising the events around him. Nevertheless, he cannot be completely content with his life despite the cultural variety his social network provides him with.

Passing through a range of cultures, Salim realises that in the modern world, where a multitude of cultures coexist, there is no dominant culture (Boparai 17). Gurnah

clarifies in *Gravel Heart* that the cultural levels people belong to and the capital they possess are intrinsically connected. By portraying how most characters in the narrative aspire and strive for a higher financial, cultural, or social status by acquiring wealth, knowledge, or social connections to feel proud and secure, Gurnah portrays a sense of restlessness that was caused by the shattered social, cultural, personal, or economic lives as a consequence of postcolonialism. Both in Zanzibar and in the diaspora, the characters are well aware that they need to be financially, culturally, and socially strong to survive, and that only the fittest will survive. Among these, culture lies deeper than financial wealth as the discerning factor for people, because it is only through subjective expressions of individual selves across differing cultures. It is worth an individual to develop a unique culture that represents them, despite mainstream cultural trends. Thus, Salim could be considered a good example of a character in progress who does not internalise any cultural segment at face value but tries to understand the cause-and-effect dynamics behind various incidents and types of behaviour.

As previously mentioned, Gurnah always seems have an agenda when he namedrops other literary works. In *Gravel Heart*, for example, a plethora of minor intertextual connections that also function to amplify the voices of the marginalised can be identified. In this respect, Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, which is connected to one romantic failure of Salim, is significant. From the postcolonial point of view, the play foreshadows the rigid boundaries of social mobility and the resilience of established hierarchies that cause Salim's exclusion by the members of another minority group in England. In Chekhov's play, the character of Lopakhin comes from a family of serfs, who were previously working for the aristocratic family of Ranevskaya. He later achieves to acquire wealth within the shifting hierarchies in the late nineteenth-century Russian society. Although he grasps the opportunity to buy the cherry orchard the Ranevskayas have to sell to overcome their big economic problems, moving upwards financially does not grant Lopakhin respect among the previously rich. Still, he is condescended and excluded by them. Lopakhin's exclusion by these former aristocrats connects to Salim's traumatic experience of rejection in the postcolonial context at a different level.

One evening Salim watches *The Cherry Orchard* at the theatre, where he meets an Indian girl named Billie, and they develop a romantic relationship. While their relationship gradually becomes serious and moves to the point of meeting her family, Salim faces a devastating experience of marginalisation. Billie's mother mentions Salim as "a Muslim nigger from Africa" on the phone with Billie's brother. When the family has an intervention meeting the next day to dissuade her out of this relationship, they freely comment that "[a] nigger is a nigger, however nice he is" (*GH* 157). Billie's family's opposition to Salim's relationship with their daughter exposes how inter-racism persists between minority groups in postcolonial diaspora, which does not offer a promising hybrid or egalitarian social space but is structured through persisting racial hierarchies. Damayanti Das, an academician researching African diaspora in India, points out the racist attitude of Delhiites because they mock and ridicule a local from their own community for dating a black man, proving how deeply they have internalised the colonial legacy of racism. She explains that a racist ideology is imposed on Indians since childhood, and they embrace it unconsciously. Indians would not mind Black individuals as footballers and pop artists, but they would never let African diasporic people in the circles of their families and friends (Das, "Racism Learnt" 140). This mindset has sufficiently exoticised and otherised Africans not only in India but also in the English diaspora.

Regardless of their decent standing in society at present, both Lopakhin in the play and Salim in the novel are ostracised because of another group's false perception of self-superiority. The social experiences of these two characters display similar incidents of exclusion in differing cultural and historical contexts. Despite his economic achievement, Lopakhin remains culturally marginalised due to his serf origins, while Salim, in a postcolonial setting, seeks social recognition by means of education. Yet, neither economic nor cultural improvement enables them to fully belong to their societies. The rigid boundaries of social mobility and the resilience of established hierarchies are underscored through the experiences of both characters.

The hostility Salim receives from Billie's family illustrates how minority groups may reproduce colonial hierarchies by stigmatizing other minorities, thereby reinforcing racial stratification even within non-White communities. This inter-racist rejection

parallels the racist assault directed at Latif Mahmud by an Englishman in *By the Sea*. Nevertheless, Salim's humiliation is particularly striking because it comes from the members of another minority group in Britain, which exemplifies the variations of racial prejudice. Although Billie insists that Salim "[has] to talk about the things that cause [him] pain", she and her family inflict psychological pain on him (*GH* 144). This incident of racist rejection fragments his sense of self , and makes Salim realise that what happens is rather a symbolic reminder of how colonial mentalities endure in intimate and communal spaces, however slightly and cruelly, than just a romantic rejection. The racist rejection Unlike Saleh Omar in *By the Sea*, who reconstructs belonging in the host country, Salim remains isolated, knowing that racism and intra-racism will keep being other obstacles to his sense of belonging in addition to the familial traumas he has within.

Another parallel between Gravel Heart and *The Cherry Orchard* is Lyubov Andreyevna Ranevskaya's leaving her husband for another man and her son's drowning following this incident. This part of the play mirrors Salim's own family circumstances, particularly his mother's infidelity toward his father. As he watches the play, at the moment Lyubov cries, "[i]f only this burden could be taken from me, if only I could forget my past," Salim feels "[his] eyes stinging with distress", probably because of the relation he establishes between the psychological condition of the middle-aged female character and his own mother, especially after his father's departure from the household. Salim's commentary on the play is that "human sorrow was always based on regret and pain in the past, and that neither time nor location nor history made much difference" (*GH* 134), approximating the play's character's grief to his and his family's as oppressed people.

In addition to the intertextual character analyses across various works, it is also essential to examine the religious reference, which contributes to making *Gravel Heart*'s thematic complexity deeper. Gurnah's multilingual diction enables him to make direct and indirect references to the holy books of Islam and Christianity in his novels. Not only do this polyglotism and multireligious approach add style, but they also represent a way of intentional storytelling that mentions universal concepts of ethics, such as sin, justice, retribution, mercy, and forgiveness. In *Gravel Heart*, the

author questions how justice is imagined, enacted, and withheld in post-revolutionary Zanzibar by drawing on these shared moral foundations. The novel's major hypotext, *Measure for Measure*, directly alludes to *the Bible*'s principle that everyone will be punished as they punish, which echoes the Islamic principle of *qisas*, a principle of retributive justice in which the punishment is equal to the crime. Therefore, intertextualisation of the play in *Gravel Heart* highlights the differences between perceptions of justice and mercy, as explored by Shakespeare in the Elizabethan Age and witnessed by the author at their worst in Zanzibar. When the combination of Islamic and Biblical ethics highlights the timeless and universal aspects of moral assessment, it becomes clear that perceptions of injustice are not confined to singular religious or legal systems.

The Biblical principle often summarised as "an eye for an eye" originates in *lex talionis*, meaning "the law of retaliation" (Jura 2), which establishes proportional justice rather than encouraging vengeance. As stated in Leviticus, "When a man blemishes a neighbour… a broken for a broken, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Leviticus 24:19–20), the aim is to prevent excessive punishment. This principle is later reinterpreted in the New Testament through an ethic of moral reflection: "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you" (Matt. 7:1–2), shifting emphasis from retribution to accountability and mercy. A comparable framework appears in the Islamic concept of *qisas*: "O you who believe! Prescribed for you is qisas in cases of murder […] And there is for you in qisas [the saving of] life" (*The Qur'an* 2:178–179), which similarly promotes proportionality while allowing forgiveness. Through this convergence, Gurnah exposes how such ethical systems are undermined when manipulated within unequal power structures. Although both traditions advocate balanced and life-preserving justice, *Gravel Heart* reveals a reality where judgment is uneven and mercy selectively applied, suggesting that justice depends not solely on doctrine but on continuous ethical responsibility and moral courage.

Finally, the compilation of anonymous folk tales, *A Thousand and One Nights*, which often resurfaces in Gurnah's novels as it does in *By the Sea* in the previous chapter, is again intertextualised in *Gravel Heart*. In addition to direct mention of it as *the Arabian*

Nights stories among the books Salim says he was never tired of reading, more subtle hints could be seized in the novel. Because storytelling is utilised as a tool for resistance, survival, and overcoming the problems of postcolonial identity at the heart of Gurnah's narrative, the tales in *A Thousand and One Nights* provide the author with the convenient means to perform this function. The narrative structure in *Gravel Heart*, through Masud's narration of past incidents to Salim on consecutive days and nights, echoes the storytelling in these old folk tales. Like *The Arabian Nights,* this episodic recounting of the past, through the revelation of dark family secrets, eases Salim's mind to some extent, bringing him some closure. Additionally, in his quest for self, Salim undertakes both geographical and psychological journeys, which are similar to the voyages of characters in *A Thousand and One Nights*. Thanks to non-chronological narration, with events told through flashbacks and shifting perspectives, Salim's confrontation with his past, identity, and the repercussion of colonialism is expressed as powerfully as in the tales. Thus, the narrative technique in *Gravel Heart*, where Salim's narration shifts to Masud's episodical narration at the end, speaks to the structure of *A Thousand and One Nights*, where each tale is interwoven with others, making a sophisticated design of stories embedded in other stories.

Overall, this chapter has aimed to explain how Abdulrazak Gurnah uses intertextuality in *Gravel Heart* as a significant literary method to reclaim marginalised voices within the postcolonial setting. By citing and restructuring Shakespeare's canonical *Measure for Measure* most impactfully, as well as alluding to Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, sacred texts such as *the Bible,* and indirectly to *the Qur'an,* and the well-known folk tale *A Thousand and One Nights,* Gurnah enables oppressed subjectivities to express their agency by taking turns to display their perspectives of things. The novel's reinterpretation of the hypotexts exposes the epistemic violence, as Spivak defines, which is indirectly observed in colonial and patriarchal modes of representation, while restoring and embedding the past experiences of those who are hardly remembered in current memory. Gurnah changes the references to a method of confirmation, which enables intertextuality in *Gravel Heart* to revive the cultural and narrative values of the hypo-texts. Proving how intertextual mechanisms can function both aesthetically and politically to voice the marginalised has been the primary motivation in the analyses of this chapter. In doing so, it has referred to Spivak's

concept of the subaltern to highlight the double oppression of gender and colonialisation, Bhabha's concepts of ambivalence and sly civility to shed light on Salim's condition, and Fanon's understanding of the Other and his psychoanalytical approach to fractured identity. By invoking canons through the perspective of the marginalised in postcolonial Zanzibar, and their experiences, *Gravel Heart* stands as proof of the potential of intertextuality to make the silenced regain their voice and to criticise the boundaries that represent them.

CONCLUSION

This thesis demonstrates how intertextuality functions as a deliberate narrative strategy to amplify the silenced voices of the marginalised and challenge dominant narratives of colonialism, nationalism, and migration in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart*. Within the framework of primary theories and techniques relating to intertextuality by Mikhail Bakhtin, Gérard Genette, Michael Riffaterre and Julia Kristeva, the connection of the two novels to a variety of hypotexts has been exhibited. While establishing these connections, this study has emphasised the role of intertextuality in articulating the characters' specific oppressed and (post)colonial situations. It has been noted that, while the author opens dialogic spaces where individual suffering intersects with literary canons, sacred texts, and cultural motifs interwoven with the experiences of displaced Zanzibari characters, there are numerous connotations surrounding key postcolonial concepts such as the Other, hybridity, mimicry, the Third Space, ambivalence, the fragmentation of identity, sly civility, and subalternity. In this manner, marginalised subjectivities in the context of postcolonialism are illuminated, and their narratives are transformed into interventions against colonial violence and cultural dislocation.

By the Sea and *Gravel Heart* scrutinise the complexities of various postcolonial subjectivities in an arena where societal balance is substantially shaken, power dynamics are disrupted, and consequently, the weak and the vulnerable in society are exploited and deprived of their fundamental human rights by the new power holders. Thus, soon after decolonisation, the main characters in both novels inhabit a world where the new order is neither beneficial nor benign, but rather brutally abusive. Being inhumanely treated and marginalised during the violent transition to independence due to ethnic and religious separation, they are forced to leave their homeland behind and hope to make a new living in England, either to seek asylum or get a good education, which they are deprived of in their own country.

It is also important to highlight that the reason why *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* predominantly draw on the Western canon as the major hypotexts can be the legacy of

colonial education. Since Gurnah himself was educated within the colonial education system, his exposure and access to these literary works could have shaped his writing inevitably. Therefore, the dominant intertextualisation of Western works in his novels should not be interpreted as a form of admiration or validation. Rather, it reflects a realistic representation of the intellectual and cultural framework available to the fictional characters like the author himself. In this sense, Gurnah's choice of Western canons for the major hypotexts in the two novels does not emerge from preference, but from the historical conditions that have determined what was accessible and recognisable within a colonial and postcolonial context.

Although governmental corruption and misuse of power after decolonisation are the major culprits that oppress people in both novels, a shift of focus has been noticed between them. It has been observed that marginality is mainly handled in terms of being displaced as an immigrant in *By the Sea.* The primary referential text in the novel, American writer Herman Melville's short story "Bartleby, the Scrivener," is significant for emphasising the issues of non-conformity, identity, alienation, and resistance. Both the character of Bartleby and Saleh Omar are resilient against broader structures that sustain marginalisation through silence. Without deliberating, Saleh Omar starts to behave similarly to Bartleby even before he arrives in the UK as an asylum seeker. He is initially drawn into silence after long years of unjust imprisonment, when he retreats into his shop in a form of reclusion, cutting his communication with the outer world. Later, Saleh Omar recalls Bartleby's choice of passive resistance by not speaking and notices its potential to provide him with safety through immigration procedures, evading any risk of being deported. In his lengthy process of unresponsiveness after taking asylum in England, pretending not to be able to speak English, Saleh Omar can avoid being disturbed in the detention centre or in the pension so that he can contemplate silently for hours after all the hardships he has been through. His interview with the immigration officer, in particular, underscores the refugee's struggle between speech and silence in a postcolonial context. In terms of intertextual techniques, Saleh Omar's utterance of Bartleby's well-known refrain "I would rather not to," has been identified as an example of Riffaterre's concept of syllepsis, where a single phrase produces layered meanings. At another instance when he responds by "I preferred not to," another concept of intertextuality by Riffaterre,

hypogram, is noticed. Hypogram can be defined as an underlying pre-text that the author does not directly quote, but the reader identifies in the new text. Additionally, when the younger protagonist, Latif Mahmud, is informed of Saleh Omar's response worded as "I preferred not to," he is directly reminded of Bartleby's catchphrase. This recalls one of Bakhtin's theories, addressivity, which basically means the conveyance of meaning through words alone, even without visual or face-to-face signs. Yet another example of intertextuality is intra-textuality, which means referring to the words or phrases that have already been used in the same work again. During their later conversations, both Saleh Omar's and Rachel's following references to the context of Bartleby and his famous phrase exemplify this technique.

On the other hand, *Gravel Heart* deals with the issue of marginality primarily by focusing on gender oppression. Aiming to represent how a woman could be double-oppressed by the patriarchy and colonialism in Zanzibar, Gurnah draws on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, the plot of which focuses on the attempt to sacrifice a woman's honour to save a man's life. In addition to the parallelism between the fateful incidents in the plots that determine the flow in the two works, direct allusions to the play are also made in the novel. Thousands of miles and four centuries apart from each other, the striking resemblance enables Gurnah to emphasise how women are primarily subjugated, as a vulnerable group, not only by corrupt powerholders but also by the male members of their own families. To further stress the oppression inflicted on women, even times, places, nations and cultures apart, references to the idea of "the Subaltern" and Spivak's claim that the subaltern cannot speak have been explored as part of this study. Despite the claims of being a rewriting of this Shakespearean play, *Gravel Heart* has major differences from its hypotext in that not all the characters in the novel have their counterparts in the play. Besides, except those of the corrupt statesmen, the conditions that the characters are in, and some motives for their actions are not completely identical, either. In addition to the themes of corruption of the state and abuse of power, *Gravel Heart* also deals with other significant issues such as migrancy, marginality, the quest for self, memory, and the devastating effects of secrets. The clashing circumstances in the two works brings about the concept of transformation, which has significance for intertextual studies because a hypertext that deliberates differences as well as similarities between itself

and the hypotext produces a more informed response that can refute, qualify, extend, limit, or utilise the previously made assertions. Furthermore, the relation between Salim's challenge for belonging, and his othered identity in the big city in diaspora has also been linked to Fanon's psychological analysis in the second chapter.

In addition to foregrounding both the likenesses and the digressions between the two novels and their major hypotexts in their specific chapters, how intertextuality contributes to the closures of the narratives has also been analysed in this thesis. In *By the Sea,* after the vulnerable, elderly asylum seeker gains the legal immigrant status, he recovers his speech. He quits the philosophy of Bartleby, which has assisted him a great deal until then, but does not serve him anymore. As Saleh Omar must actively take part in the host society into which he has been initiated by the noteworthy efforts of Rachel, the immigrant support officer assigned for him, he dispossesses the role model of Bartleby. The resolution of the misunderstanding from their past in Zanzibar with the younger protagonist Latif Mahmud, and assuming a diasporic family bond with him leaves Saleh Omar hopeful about the new chapter of his life in England at the end of the novel. By comparison, *Gravel Heart*'s primary hypotext *Measure for Measure,* does not help Salim to have optimism about his future. Surely, the hypotext serves a significant function by drawing the reader's attention to the devastating outcomes of the corruption in the state, the male oppression of women, and it helps Salim to comprehend love and betrayal universally. However, it does not provide the young protagonist with a role model to overcome at least some of the challenges in his life, nor does it offer a Duke as in *Measure for Measure* to restore the order in the society.

What enables Gurnah to utilise intertextuality effectively is not only his comprehensive education in literature but also his multilingual diction with occasional use of words and phrases in Swahili, Arabic, Hindi, and German, which makes it possible for the author to reference a broader range of written works. *A Thousand and One Nights,* the holy books, *the Qur'an* and *the Bible*, have been observed as the common minor hypotexts that are intertextualised by both *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart.* Structural intertextualising of *A Thousand and One Nights* in both novels provides a space where previously antagonised characters attain reconciliation, or a

critical mystery is resolved through episodic storytelling similar to the way Scheherazade narrates the tales to the Sultan for her salvation. Also, drawing on *the Qur'an* and *the Bible*, Gurnah both appeals to the shared conscience of humanity and critiques arbitrary interpretation of religious regulations by manipulators, which collapses ethics, and leads to systemic victimisation individuals. Another convergence between the two novels is the literary trope of cuckoldry, which serves as a cultural intertext. Taken that both *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* are examples of postcolonial literature, intertextualising cuckoldry as a means of marginalisation serves to significantly showcase the ultimate corruption that colonialism has caused, reminding colonialists' belief that modern masculinity of theirs is morally, physically, and culturally superior to that of the supposedly physically and morally degenerate colonised people.

Both *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* have other minor hypotexts; however, it has been remarked that the former is far more densely interlaced with them. Additionally, the importance of such minor intertexts in the narrative of *By the Sea* outweighs those in that of the latter. To exemplify, the direct and indirect allusions to Homer's *Odyssey* are of foremost importance as they stress the marginalisation of both protagonists. As the source text is subliminally identified in *By the Sea* without a direct allusion, the use of intertextual technique of hypogram has been noted again in this scene. In addition, because various contexts are translated, it has been concluded that the hypotext has been recontextualised in the hypertext. Furthermore, Gurnah also draws extensively on Shakespeare in *By the Sea*, through his plays *The Tempest* and *Julius Caesar*. Within the scope of this study, Latif Mahmud's recitation of Ariel's line, and Hassan's recitation of Brutus's speech emphasising the theme of betrayal have been interpreted through the technique of syllepsis once again, as an explicative tool used for analysing hypertexts by linking them to renowned hypotexts and creating meaning intertextually. In *Gravel Heart*'s case, many other minor references of relatively less importance than those in *By the Sea* are interspersed throughout the novel. Since marginalisation on the basis of social classes is important in the novel, mentioning Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* to highlight Salim's othering by another minority to foreground inter-racism has been noted. The play of the Russian playwright also establishes a link with the novel in the likeness of a middle-aged

mother's betrayal story to Latif Mahmud's mother's. Additionally, some of the books Salim notes that he has read, including Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, Zane Grey's *Riders of the Purple Sag*e implicitly point to the issues such as marginalisation, forbidden love, and fractured identity, which resonate deeply in his life, regardless of the fact that these works are from distinct cultural and historical backgrounds.

In sum, this thesis demonstrates that Abdulrazak Gurnah employs intertextuality in *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart* not only as a style-elevating literary technique but also a significant tool of narration to restore agency and voice to the marginalised protagonists and other characters in the novels. By reinterpreting canonical texts, sacred books, and folk narratives, Gurnah aims to situate the stories of Zanzibari characters within a global literary framework while exposing the epistemic violence of colonial and patriarchal authority. Intertextuality in *By the Sea* and *Gravel Heart*, through the perspective of postcolonialism, has proven to become a tool of restoring narrative dignity to the marginalised and revealing how power writes and distorts the grand narratives.

This thesis may suggest future research which examines whether similar strategies of canonical reworking, episodic narration, and ethical intertextuality are utilised in other novels by Gurnah or shift with changing historical contexts. Another kind of research may also investigate reader reception, particularly how varying degrees of familiarity with Western canons, Islamic traditions, and oral storytelling shape interaction with and interpretation of Gurnah's intertexts, raising questions about inclusivity and interpretive hierarchy. This could be carried out as an interdisciplinary, socio-literary research, examining the differences between an informed reader with a literary background who interprets Gurnah's works and their intertextual manifestations, and a reader who has never read the source texts that inspired these works, thereby critiquing the author's establishment of a hierarchy among readers.

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Tarih: 30/04/2026

Tez Başlığı: Abdulrazak Gurnah'ın *Deniz Kenarında* ve *Kumdan Yürek* Romanlarında Dışlanmışların Sesinin Duyurulmasında Metinlerarasılığın Rolü

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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