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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

REFUGEES AS A MEANS TO DEBATE PAUL GILROY'S CONVIVIALITY IN CARYL PHILLIPS'S A DISTANT SHORE

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ÖZ

CARYL PHILLIPS' IN A DISTANT SHORE ADLI ESERİNDE PAUL GILROY'UN CONVIVIALITY'SİNİ DÜŞÜNMENİN YOLU OLARAK MÜLTECİLER

PINAR KARADUMAN

Bu tez, Paul Gilroy'un Postcolonial Melancholia adlı eserinde değindiği birlikte yaşama (conviviality) kavramının mümkün olup olmadığını, Caryl Phillips'in A Distant Shore adlı romanındaki yansımaları aracılığıyla incelemektedir. Çalışmanın merkezinde, mülteci bedenlerinin insanlıktan çıkarılması ve bedenlerinden kutsallığın esirgenerek şiddet ve acı nesnelerine indirgenmesi yer almaktadır.

Mülteci figürünün anlatıda nasıl çerçevelendiğini inceleyen bu çalışma, bu tür temsillerin, modernite eleştirisinde Samir Amin ve Enrique Dussel gibi düşünürlerin fikirlerinden de yararlanılarak Avrupa merkezcilik eleştirisini nasıl doğruladığını sorgulamaktadır.

Phillips'in romanı, Britanya'daki çok kültürlü yaşam deneyimlerini yansıtma becerisiyle önem taşımaktadır. A Distant Shore bu karşılaşmaları yakalarken, bir yandan da mülteci figürlerini sessizleştirerek ve onların insanlığını görünmez kılarak, gerçek bir conviviality imkânını düşündürtmektedir.

Bu çalışma, romana yakın okumalar yaparak, Phillips'in anlatısının, mültecinin uğradığı fiziksel şiddetle yükselttiği halde, aynı mültecinin nasıl ve neden eylemliliğinin bastırıldığını ve onları salt birer acı nesnesine indirgendiğini sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Mülteci temsiline ilişkin mevcut akademik incelemelerde de, bu şiddet eksenli indirgemeci yapının yeterince görünür kılınmadığını belirtilmektedir.

Tez, A Distant Shore'u, Avrupa merkezcilik ve modernite mitini eleştirisinin bir parçası olarak konumlandırmakta, bu doğrultuda bazı kuramsal çerçevelerden yararlanarak ilerlemektedir. Şiddet dolu imgelerin, indirgemeci temsillerin mültecileri nasıl birer Paul Gilroy'un ifadesi ile "atılabilir" ve seyirlik nesneye dönüştürdüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Tez, Homi Bhabha'nın fiziksel olarak orada olan ama anlatı

tarafından görünmez veya sessiz bırakılan beden ve işaret-sembol kavramlarından yararlanarak, mültecinin fiziksel olarak mevcut ancak özne oldurulamadığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Mülteci karakterlerin, insanlıktan ve özneleşmeden mahrum bırakılarak yalnızca acının nesneleri haline getirildiği iddia edilip gösterilmiştir. Ayrıca Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak'ın "Madun Konuşabilir mi?" çalışması ışığında, romanın Batı merkezli özne konumunu görünüşte sorgularken, gerçekte bu egemenlik yapısını yeniden ürettiği ileri sürülmüştür.

Sonuç olarak bu tez, A Distant Shore romanında, birlikte yaşama anlarının yakalanmasına rağmen, Paul Gilroy'un işaret ettiği anlamda bir conviviality'nin; mültecilerin sessizleştirilmesi, nesneleştirilmesi ve modernitenin dışlayıcı yapılarının yeniden üretilmesi yüzünden mümkün olmadığını iddia etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Caryl Phillips, **A Distant Shore**, mülteci, Paul Gilroy, **conviviality**, sömürgecilik sonrası, Avrupa merkezcilik, trans-modernite, insanlıktan çıkarma, kutsallığı esirgeme

ABSTRACT
REFUGEES AS A MEANS TO DEBATE PAUL GILROY'S CONVIVIALITY IN CARYL PHILLIPS'S A DISTANT SHORE

PINAR KARADUMAN

This thesis explores the possibility of conviviality, as discussed in Paul Gilroy's Postcolonial Melancholia, through its reflections in Caryl Phillips's novel A Distant Shore. At the centre of the study is the dehumanization of refugee bodies and their reduction to objects of violence and pity through the desacralization of the body.

The thesis examines how refugees are framed within the narrative, and questions how these representations substantiate critiques of Eurocentrism drawing on the ideas of thinkers such as Samir Amin and Enrique Dussel.

Phillips's novel is significant in its ability to portray multicultural experiences in contemporary Britain. While it captures moments of cross-cultural encounters, it simultaneously silences refugee figures and renders their humanity invisible, thereby casting doubt on the possibility of genuine conviviality.

Through close reading of A Distant Shore, the study highlights how refugee agency is suppressed despite the centrality of their suffering, and how the spectacle of violence is used to elevate the narrative. It also identifies a gap in the existing academic discourse, which often overlooks this violence-centred reduction. The thesis positions A Distant Shore as part of a broader critique of Eurocentrism and the myth of modernity, employing selected theoretical frameworks accordingly. It further demonstrates how violent imagery, and reductive representations transform refugees into what Paul Gilroy describes as "refuse".

Using Homi Bhabha's concepts of the "present-absent body" and "sign" and "symbol", the thesis reveal that the refugee is present physically but couldn't be turned into subjects. Being rendered physically present yet being denied narrative subjectivity, the thesis builds on the argument that refugees are turned into objects of

pain. It further argues, following Gayatri Spivak's Can the Subaltern Speak? that while the novel appears to critique Western subjectivity, it ultimately reproduces it.

In conclusion, the thesis contends that even though in A Distant Shore moments of coexistence are captured, conviviality in the sense Paul Gilroy uses looks to remain unachievable due to the silencing, objectification, and reproduction of exclusionary structures of modernity.

Keywords: Caryl Phillips, **A Distant Shore,** refugee, Paul Gilroy, conviviality, postcolonialism, Eurocentrism, trans-modernity, dehumanization, desacralisation

PREFACE

This thesis aims to examine the possibility of conviviality, as conceptualized by Paul Gilroy in Postcolonial Melancholia, through its reflections in Caryl Phillips's A Distant Shore. Through close readings and theoretical inquiry, the study focuses on the narrative construction of refugee figures and explores how modernity's exclusionary structures shape their representation. The research draws on thinkers such as Gilroy, Spivak, and Bhabha, and engages with postcolonial critiques of Eurocentrism.

This study was undertaken to explore the concept of conviviality as articulated by Paul Gilroy in **Postcolonial Melancholia** and to examine its reflections in Caryl Phillips's **A Distant Shore**. While engaging with various texts, I found the hope and courage to approach these themes. However, throughout my journey, I realised that my perspective was colonised, as I was struggling to articulate what unsettled me about the texts. Eventually, these readings opened new horizons for me, offering liberation from my preconceived notions.

Over the course of writing this thesis, analysing the literary and societal construction of refugee bodies has been both an enlightening and challenging experience. In particular, studying the dehumanisation and instrumentalisation of refugee figures in a certain text enabled me to approach the existing discourse from a critical lens.

I am immensely grateful to my children – Ömer, for his support and for listening to my "aha moments", and Bahar and Hayat, for offering their support and understanding during this process. My students also deserve special acknowledgment for their patience throughout this challenging process. This thesis would not have been possible without Ümmühan Yücel's persistent and always encouraging support. I would also like to thank my advisor, Dr. Ferah İncesu, for her reviews and feedback during the thesis process. Finally, I owe this work to the bravery and resilience of those who are resisting for freedom. Their courage has been a source of inspiration in my life.

This thesis represents not only an academic endeavour but also a unique journey of learning and discovery. I hope readers will find theoretical as well as human insights in the discussions presented here.

Pınar Karaduman

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***et al.*:** and others

ISM: International Solidarity Movement

Trans: Translated by

ONCHR: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

RAF: Royal Air Force

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues that Caryl Phillips's novel **A Distant Shore** offers a narrative framework through which Paul Gilroy's concept of **conviviality** can be explored while simultaneously exposing the exclusionary structures embedded in modernity. The novel engages with themes of migration, belonging, displacement and racialised exclusion, reflecting the lived experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in contemporary Britain.

The portrayal of characters such as Said, Solomon, Bright, Solomon's family, Amma and Joshua, whose subjectivities are either diminished or erased – mirrors the systemic violence and dehumanisation perpetuated by Eurocentric modernity. Phillips's depiction of these characters does not merely evoke empathy; rather, it highlights the mechanisms through which non-European identities are rendered incomplete and disposable.

Conviviality, as defined by Paul Gilroy, refers to the potential to create a new life "without fear among otherness".

> "I use this to refer to the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life in Britain's urban areas and in postcolonial cities elsewhere." (Gilroy, 2005: XV)

In this context, the spontaneous encounters between individuals and members of society – represented in Phillips's narrative – create a space to evaluate whether such a form of coexistence is achievable or illusory.

Drawing on Gilroy's notion of convivial culture and situating it within the broader critique of modernity, this thesis investigates whether Phillips's novel presents refugees as active agents within a convivial society or as symbolic figures that further expose the limits of Western modernity. While the novel occasionally gestures towards coexistence, its narrative makes us reconsider the treatment of certain individuals within the frame of postcolonial thinking.

In doing so, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how literature reflects, critiques and reshapes our perceptions of identity, belonging and the

promises – as well as failures – of modernity. The theoretical foundation of this thesis is rooted in Paul Gilroy's critique of Eurocentric modernity, particularly in his concept of conviviality, and supported by related discussions in postcolonial and decolonial thought. Gilroy's work, especially in **Postcolonial Melancholia** and **The Black Atlantic**, presents modernity not as a universal, inclusive progression of human civilisation but as a selective and exclusionary system that privileges White, European subjectivity while marginalising other subjectivities.

In her chapter of **Conviviality at the Crossroads** that discusses "convivial" in the works of Ivan Illich, Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez, a professor of sociology with a research focus on postcolonial theory and migration, writes that, etymologically, the word "convivial" originates from the Latin verb **convivere** and its Spanish derivation **convivencia**. While the English interpretation of "convivial" emphasises a "joyful coming together", the Spanish term carries a deeper ethical and moral dimension, referring to respectful and caring coexistence within a shared habitat. Drawing to the context in which Illich used the term, Rodríguéz, notes that convivial extends beyond mere cohabitation to underline communal and ethical ways of living together. (Rodríguéz, 2020:107-109).

According to the editors of **Conviviality at the Crossroads**, it was "largely inspired by the 2015 refugee migration" (Hemer *et al.*, 2020: 2). Although the book deals with conviviality, it is noteworthy that it uses the context of how, in 2015, the photograph depicting Alan Kurdi's small, lifeless body lying on Turkey's seashore created an international outrage at the bodies of refugees who got lost at sea while trying to escape to Europe. This refugee crisis had already started in 2011.

In her chapter, Rodríguéz draws attention to the deepening gap between the rich and the poor and "the families evicted from their homes and to the human beings held in refugee camps or in a limbo of human and citizenship rights". (Rodríguéz, 2020: 112)

In Rodríguéz's view, it is essential today to create new words for conviviality, given the current refugee crisis. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCRA), a United Nations (UN) agency that supports displaced people, the number of displaced people in 2023 was as high as 117.3 million. Those people, including children, had to run away from "violence, human right violations,

persecutions and conflicts events seriously disturbing the public order" (UNHCR, 2023).

Rodríguéz's earlier concern about families being evicted and denied citizenship rights seems to materialise in the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Palestine. Despite the International Humanitarian Law that protects civilian rights in wars, the death toll amid the ongoing war in Palestine is alarming. The Gaza Health Ministry reported that at least 51,000 Palestinians have been killed as a result of Israeli attacks since 7 October 2023, highlighting the severe humanitarian crisis in the region (The New York Times, 2025). Furthermore, the ongoing genocide against Palestinians, who were already living in refugee camps, is also adding to the number of displaced peoples (OHCHR, 2024).

A few years before the latest humanitarian crisis in Palestine, Rodríguéz had noticed that the "context" would get darker and called for "an intrinsic ethical value based on the moral common good", stating,

> "It is this spirit that Paul Gilroy (2004) captured thirty years later in his work on the melancholia of Empire in British society." (Rodríguéz, 2020)[1]

According to her, Gilroy sees everyday interactions between differences in Britain and his perspective "has sparked and inspired research in anthropology, sociology. (Rodríguéz, 2020:112)

At the core of Gilroy's argument lies a rejection of the sanitised narrative of modernity, a narrative that ignores the colonial violence and racial hierarchies embedded within it. He challenges the idea that multiculturalism in Britain has successfully embraced difference. Instead, he highlights how racial exclusion and systemic inequalities continue to shape everyday life, even in so-called liberal and progressive societies.

One of the key aspects of Gilroy's argument is that most modern works about modernity don't talk about race or ethnicity, and "racial slavery was integral to western civilization" (Gilroy, 1993: X). It is discussed here by closely reading how that reality

[1] While Ivan Illich's concept of conviviality, developed in the 1970s, reflects a utopian Western Marxist critique of industrial modernity – emphasising communal access to tools as a safeguard against technocratic domination – Gilroy's later approach builds on a more affective, ethically grounded vision of conviviality shaped by the legacies of empire and race (Rodríguez, 2020; Illich, 1975: 25).

looms large in the main character and the society that surrounds her. Gilroy critiques Britain's engagement with multiculturalism, arguing that it fails to move beyond superficial inclusion and continues to reproduce exclusionary practices. He also argues that Britain never fully embraced multiculturalism as a political or cultural project; instead, the language of multiculturalism was used to manage the appearance of diversity without confronting the structural roots of racism – a condition he describes as a form of postmulticultural melancholy.

Moreover, Gilroy draws attention to cultural symbols that reveal the persistence of racial exclusion in British society. For instance, he critiques the nostalgic resurgence of the 1955 wartime film **The Dam Busters**, particularly the uncritical celebration of a dog bearing a racial slur as its name – a symbol which, disturbingly, continued to echo in stadium chants decades later. This example illustrates how deep-seated racial associations continue to shape the cultural landscape, undermining superficial claims of a post-racial or multicultural Britain. Besides, this instance serves as a striking example of Gilroy's broader critique of modernity and textuality, as articulated in **The Black Atlantic**, where Gilroy challenges the dominance of written texts as the primary mode of cultural expression, advocating instead for the inclusion of lived experiences, music and oral forms of expression. The stadium chant, which reproduces racist discourse not through traditional textual forms but through performative, embodied acts, exemplifies how cultural meaning and exclusion are enacted beyond the page. It also affirms Gilroy's argument that cultural oppression often operates outside written texts, thus refuting the textualist assumption that what is not written cannot be analysed or critiqued. This moment validates his call for alternative modes of understanding life beyond the confines of textuality. Therefore, we might argue that conviviality is itself a challenge to textuality, giving agency and voice to the refugee in the confined zones of city life.

Gilroy's engagement with postcolonial theory also draws on the works of thinkers such as Homi Bhabha, whose concept of "writing outside the sentence", as introduced in his essay "Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt", echoes this challenge to textuality. Bhabha critiques the hierarchical and didactic structures of conventional discourse, advocating instead for a fragmented, affective form of articulation that emerges from the temporal dislocation of postcolonial subjectivity.

Like Gilroy, Bhabha insists that meaning is not confined to the written word, as it also resides in the emotional, performative and bodily experiences that resist being fully captured by textual representation. This notion becomes particularly relevant when analysing Phillips's narrative, which often leaves the stories of refugee characters – such as Solomon, Said and Mahmud – partially untold, muddled or inconsistently presented. Their bodies are present in the story, yet their voices remain absent or subdued, which turns them into what Bhabha might describe as "exorbitant objects", or figures that disturb the narrative order and highlight its limits.

Solomon is allowed a brief moment of emotional presence, such as when he listens to music while Dorothy silently observes:

> And then, as I enter the cul-de-sac, I see Solomon. As usual, by himself, washing his car, oblivious to everything around him. He has a habit of keeping the car radio on, and a window wound down just a little bit, so that he can listen to light music on Radio 2. I hate this kind of mindless commercial rubbish, but I've never told hm this for fear of offending him. He puts it on when he drives me, although he makes a point of asking first. I'm always accommodating and I say "fine," so it's obviously my own fault. I'm sure he isn't going to throw a fit or anything if I say, "No, I don't like t," but generally I try to be pleasant. As I come up to hm I realise that today there's no music. He's washing his car in silence. (Phillips, 2005: 18)

On the other side, this kind of space is never opened for Mahmood.

> "And then he left her, and the quietness intensified and threatened to overwhelm her until she noticed Mahmood." (Phillips, 2005: 115)

What makes this more striking is the fact that although Dorothy had an intimate relationship with Mahmud, the narrative offers no depth or emotional texture to that connection. Mahmood suddenly appears with a name and a pronoun – "he" – after being previously mentioned only in the line: "All things considered, she planned her assault quite well."

This disturbing phrasing places Dorothy not in a position of vulnerability but in one of strategic control, as if executing a planned move. Long before Mahmood is given any narrative depth, Dorothy frames the encounter as a form of conquest, drawing the reader into a shared complicity through her internal voice.

This reflects how the novel structurally privileges the White, Western, liberal female narrator while reducing the Muslim, racialised male figure to an ambiguous, almost empty presence. His absence/presence is only through flat references and

orientalist clichés, leaving the reader with no sense of who he is beyond these stereotypes. Mahmood is not given a voice, a history or even a moment of interiority; instead, the narrative establishes a power dynamic from the outset in which Dorothy acts as a kind of colonial subject, asserting dominance not through direct violence but through narrative framing.

As Paul Gilroy's reading of Hegel's master–slave dialectic suggests, recognition in modernity often emerges through domination rather than reciprocity. Here, the violence is not just historical or political; it is embedded in narrative choice and representational silence.

Mahmood's quiet act of removing his shoes and placing them side by side upon entering Dorothy's home is not only a sign of politeness, it also marks a cultural boundary – one that contrasts sharply with the Western norm where shoes are worn deep into the domestic space, even up to the bed. In many Muslim and Eastern households, the act of removing shoes at the door is not only a matter of hygiene but also a sign of respect or love for the home. Indeed, the novel pauses on this moment, offering a level of emphasis rarely given to Mahmood elsewhere in the narrative, although with an insulting point of view. This insulting point of view does not only belong to the protagonist but also to the entire structure of the novel's discourse by ignoring Said, Mahmod and Solomon/Gabriel. This ignorance is also evident in the literature reviews focusing on the work.

What makes this more striking is the fact that Dorothy shares sexual encounters with Mahmood, but the narrative offers no intimacy, emotional texture or any mutual vulnerability. In fact, intimacy, in its true sense of reciprocal emotional openness, is entirely absent in the text. What remains is a detached experience filtered through Dorothy's ironic, even mocking, internal monologue.

> At 7 p.m. he knocks twice, and then he rattles the letterbox so that the flap clatters nosily. She has lost count of the number of times she has suggested to hm that knocking at the doors sufficient, but he seems to be helplessly addicted to the letterbox. However, as she quickly draws the curtains and then pads her way to the door, she reminds herself that this annoying little habit of his s just another part of their ritual. (Phillips, 2005: 115)

At one point, she suggests he should read "improving books" that he does not understand. All her encounters were expressed like a summary, including his "personal

titbits" that she could take as signs of intimacy. His half sentences, such as "they call us Asians", come during sexual encounters, which renders the situation comic. These instances reinforce a patronising and racialised framing that prevents any authentic connection from developing.

Another telling moment in the narrative occurs when Dorothy, moments before Mahmood's arrival, deliberately draws the curtains and lights the candles. While on the surface this may appear as a gesture to create an intimate ambiance, it instead constructs a scene where Mahmood's presence is physically dimmed, mirroring his obscured status within the narrative. The act of controlling light and shadow, thus, becomes symbolic: he is not allowed to enter a space of clarity or reciprocity but rather is received into a carefully curated half-light, both literally and figuratively. Mahmood, like other racialised male figures in the novel, is cast not as a full subject with emotional or intellectual depth but as a silent presence whose body is permitted while his voice is erased. This spatial manipulation – where light is muted and control remains with the host – reinforces Mahmood's status as a "present-absent" figure.

Using Homi Bhabha's concept of the exorbitant object and affective space of enunciation, Mahmood's experience illustrates how the body can be present without agency or dialogue. In the same vein, Gilroy's analysis of cultural expression in **The Black Atlantic**, especially his critique of modernity's dependence on rationality and visibility, helps us perceive this scene as one in which bodily gestures and spatial dynamics substitute for suppressed narrative presence. The flickering candlelight becomes a metaphor for narrative instability, a scene that pretends to offer warmth but, in truth, obscures and silences.

While Solomon is given a certain degree of narrative intimacy and emotional depth, which will be explored in the conclusion, Mahmood is in a discourse of silences, orientalist tropes and spatial marginalisation. It is only in his bookstore that we feel the looming presence of his wife and Dorothy's candle-lit room. In scenes rich with sensory and affective details, "affective space of enunciation is missing" (Bhabha, 1992). For instance, Dorothy watches him wash his car, describing the buzz of the radio, sunlight forming a halo over Solomon's head and the nice gesture of giving a "biscuit" following a cup of tea (Phillips, 2003: 18–19). These little narrative moments not only humanise Solomon but also give him a relational dimension, as he looks,

listens, and responds. This is in sharp contrast to Mahmood, whose life is often seen via Dorothy's sarcastic inner voice and whose identity is always shaped by her cultural biases.

> She loved his smell, which was, which was strangely sweet and cloying, but she knew that it did not mask anything unpleasant. Mahmood was scrupulously clean, and she understood that whatever oils or lotions he rubbed into his skin were in all likelihood related to his culture, and she did not mind. In fact, back then she did not mind anything about him. (Phillips, 2005: 115)

While Mahmood is limited to ritual encounters and symbolic silence, Solomon participates in collective memory and meaning-making. This disparity draws attention to the chosen nature of emotive writing in Phillips's work and exposes the exclusionary logic natural in the narrative framework. Although the book offers Solomon fleeting periods of emotional expression, such as when he is in Dorothy's company, Mahmud is denied any similar emotional or social space despite their sexual intercourse with Dorothy. Even in situations that might have made him more human, Mahmud is a narrative void lacking voice and complexity. This uneven narrative – the book hints at conviviality while restricting its changing power to certain bodies, leaving others disposable – is revealed by this selective distribution of emotional depth.

This moment, when read through the lens of Norbert Elias's theory of civilising processes, signals how bodily discipline and spatial awareness reflect deeply internalised cultural distinctions. While the modern Western subject seeks liberation in the narrowing space of the bedroom – where even intimacy becomes a form of resistance to external control – Mahmood enacts a form of respect and self-regulation from the threshold by placing his shoes like a soldier. Mahmood's gesture, though silent, holds a present absent space that Homi Bhabha addresses. This reminds us Gilroy's critique of "textuality" in **Black Atlantic,** where he says the following:

> "Urged on by the post-structuralist critiques of the metaphysics of presence, contemporary debates have moved beyond citing language as the fundamental analogy for comprehending all signifying practices to a position where textuality (especially when wrenched open through the concept of difference) expands and merges with totality. Paying careful attention to the structures of feeling which underpin black expressive cultures can show how this critique is incomplete. It gets blocked by this invocation of all-encompassing textuality. Textuality becomes a means to evacuate the problem of human agency, a means to specify the death (by fragmentation) of the

> subject and, in the same manoeuvre, to enthrone the literary critic as mistress or mjster of the domain of creative human communication." (Gilroy, 1993: 77)

In the novel, we see his agency being taken out by the enunciation, in Bhabha's terms, where Mahmod is turned into a sign – a tool. This text helps eradicate his subjectivity. Although this gesture that he shows at the beginning of their affair loses its meaning for him, it has a meaning that signifies an obedience of the East. Any voice that would be heard from that side that might say that his showing respect and wanting this respect to be shown is impossible to hear. As this gesture falls on the side of backwardness, any other meaning is lost. The meaning is at the hands of the writer, who has the textual power of creating meanings for his middle-class English readers.

Paul Gilroy criticises the dominance of textuality in representations of cultural life, arguing that experiences, music and oral narratives often fall outside the textual framework and, therefore, the text cannot carry cultural meaning on its own. Similarly, Bhabha also questions the traditional, hierarchical and sententious discourse structure in his article "Postcolonial Authority and Postmodern Guilt", where Bhabha, introduces the idea of "writing outside the sentence", proposing an affective form of writing that arises from the fragmented and discontinuous temporal structure of postcolonial subjectivity. His emphasis on the "affective space of enunciation" aligns with Gilroy's arguments that we must move beyond the written word. Both thinkers emphasise that cultural meaning cannot be conveyed solely through text, arguing that embodied, emotional and performative dimensions are the main elements carrying cultural resistance and subcultural experience. Therefore, it is not that Mahmod places his "shoes like a soldier". Here, conviviality offers a unique opportunity to break the chains of the textual framework, and Phillips describes the scenes in England where we can discuss this in his narrative. Therefore, Phillips's narrative is very important to weigh against Gilroy's idea of conviviality.

Here, it is necessary to explore the limits of language and cultural meaning by looking closer at Bhabha's highly influential article "Post Colonial Authority and Post Colonial Guilt", which uses Roland Barthes's time in Tangier as an example. Barthes, who talks about the many sounds around him, suggests that broken and jumbled speech becomes important when language goes beyond its usual patterns. Bhabha says that

cultural meaning entails not merely what is written down but also how people feel and what they do (Bhabha, 1992:56).

> "It turns 'outside' the sentence to inscribe the boundaries of meaning (not its depths) but in the affective language of cultural difference." (Bhabha, 1992: 56)

In this sentence, Bhabha says that language no longer operates in the depths of meaning but at the boundaries of meaning. What is important here is not the depth of meaning but the emotional ("affective") expression of cultural difference. This expression has a notable emphasis within Bhabha's own theoretical framework, as he stresses that cultural differences emerge not from deep and fixed meanings but from borders and points of encounter. Emotional language (or "affective language") constructs meaning through emotional experiences rather than rational and logical ones.

1.1 Biased Stories

Reading **A Distant Shore**'s narrative structure through the lens of Bhabha's concept of "outside the sentence" reveals that meaning is created not just in the text's explicit statements but also in the stories that are left unfinished, muddled and excessively detailed. The author purposefully leaves important details like Solomon's encounter with Denise unclear, even as she structures Dorothy's victimhood in a way that is immediately readable with empathy. The reader is left wondering about Solomon's possible guilt. It is, therefore, questionable if the author intends to genuinely criticise this narrative bias or to take advantage of it by using a narrative technique to replicate these biases. because the novel's narrative approach to its immigrant characters is not consistent. The author's use of different approaches for Said and Mahmoud's narratives gives the impression that he is both taking advantage of and criticising the narrative prejudices against Black people and immigrants. In truth, it points to the possibility that he is replicating the exclusionary narrative structure of modernity.

Gilroy's notion of conviviality emerges as a counterpoint to these exclusions. Conviviality, in his framework, refers to everyday, unstructured interactions between people of different racial and cultural backgrounds. Unlike state-imposed multicultural policies, which often reinforce racial boundaries, conviviality allows for spontaneous,

horizontal exchanges. However, Gilroy also acknowledges its fragility, as contemporary resurgences of nationalism and systemic racism continually threaten its existence.

Gilroy's notion of conviviality offers an alternative framework that refers to the spontaneous, everyday interactions between people of different racial and cultural backgrounds – interactions that occur beyond state policies and official multicultural discourse. He envisions these encounters as possibilities for a more humane, inclusive society. However, as Gilroy himself acknowledges, conviviality is fragile and constantly under threat from resurging nationalisms and institutionalised racism.

Gilroy's work also engages critically with Hegel's master–slave dialectic, revealing how modernity constructs subjectivity through exclusion. In this dialectic, the self gains recognition only through domination over the other. Applied to a racialised context, this framework helps us understand how Black and migrant identities are often rendered incomplete and contingent upon their recognition by the dominant subject: the White European.

This hierarchical logic is also echoed in **Cartesian dualism**, another pillar of Western modernity. The Cartesian separation of mind and body, as well as the self and other, has contributed to a philosophical tradition that fragments human experience and reinforces binaries such as civilised/uncivilised, rational/irrational and human/subhuman. Scholars such as Enrique Dussel further problematise this epistemological framework, arguing that modernity's claim to universality is inherently colonial and rooted in the marginalisation of other forms of knowledge.

Dussel, a prominent figure in Latin American liberation philosophy, positions modernity as a project born out of domination, beginning with the conquest of the Americas in 1492. His critique exposes how Eurocentric thought constructs history as having a beginning in Europe, thereby erasing the contributions and worldviews of non-European civilisations. He further argues that modernity's rationality is not neutral but rather structured by exclusion and exploitation.

In parallel with Paul Gilroy's critique of Eurocentric modernity, this thesis also benefits from the works of Samir Amin, whom both Gilroy and Amin cite in their discussion on the creation of a manufactured European identity. Gilroy reminds us about Dussel's transmodern perspective, which offers a profound deconstruction of

modernity's claim to universality by emphasising the historical entanglement of modernity with colonial domination beginning in 1492. The exclusion and exploitation which Dussel, Amin and Gilroy draw attention to were made possible by framing Europe in a central role. Dussel highlights that this was possible by creating a fictive narrative of European superiority by giving the quest for the Americas to the Europeans and creating a false imagery of scientific success concerning the barbaric colonisation of the Americas.

On the other hand, Samir Amin shows that the Euro-centric understanding of the world was made possible is worth noting.

> The moment at which Europe began the break with its past is known as the Renaissance. It had nothing to do with a rebirth; it was simply a question of birth. The term 'Renaissance,' which the Europeans themselves gave to this moment of their history, is thus misleading. It is the product of an ideological construction that claims Greco Roman Antiquity to have been familiar with the principle of modernity, which was subsequently buried in the Middle Ages (the 'middle' between ancient modernity and new modernity) by religious obscurantism. This is a mythical view of Antiquity. It is, in turn, the foundation for Eurocentrism: Europe claims to go back to its past, return to the sources (hence, the Renaissance), whereas in fact it is making a break with its own history. The European Renaissance was the product of an internal social process, the solution to contradictions in the Europe of that era by the invention of capitalism. (Amin, 1989: 66)

This is very much like the selective memory of Dorothy, whose memory refused to recall the incestuous attack done to her sister by their father, instead creating a narrative of a teenage rebellion. In other words, the childlike way addressing of her father as "dad" starts at the very beginning (Phillips, 2007: 5), and the abuse suffered by her sister is disguised as a normal family having a rebellious teenager.

> I knew I wasn't much use to Sheila, but when my sister started to smoke, and then stay out late, even though Dad had told her that she had to be back by ten, then I began to see his point of view. She was acting up, there was no question about it, and then I went and made it all worse by going off to universty and leaving her alone with the two of them. I often wonder if things would have worked out differently if I'd stayed at home, or gone to the local college, or just got a job. Maybe I could have been more help to them all. (Phillips, 2007: 58)

A perfect imagery of a family "lying together, even after death" persists in her narrative, which shapes our understanding of her past:

> They lie side by side, Mum having died first and then Dad a year later. They planned this final resting-place together, and they arrived in almost perfect harmony. One day,

> while Dad was down at his allotment, Mum's heart gave out. He sad goodbye to her in the morning and left the house which they had shared for almost fifty years. (Phillips, 2005: 15)

Later in the novel, we learn that Dorothy knows what her sister had to go through, yet she left her alone at the moment the novel starts. We are not made to judge her. Their conversation in Dorothy's dorm shows us that she was told what had happened. This conversation was cut in the middle just at the moment she was going to admit to herself the truth about her past, which reflects her selective memory. This, one might argue, is identical to how Europe remembers only the ancient Greeks as their past but not the Black Death, for example.

Just as Dorothy remembers her past, her eyes begin "to fill with tears that eventually spilled out and ran down her gaunt cheeks" (Phillips, 2005:16). The scene is cut here with a new paragraph staring with "I must have lingered too long at the graveside", also cutting an important element in her flow of consciousness and heightening the tension for the reader who needs to turn the page to see. Then, only after Solomon is killed that she can she face the past and an account of the past is given to us. This account, even though it is highly tragic, gives away the pathological condition Dorothy is in.

> I swung my legs down off the side of the single bed and felt the damp chill of the floor. I remembered something else about single 41 beds that I didn't like. They reminded me of when Sheila turned up at university with her rucksack. After I'd cancelled my music practice for that evening, I sat back on the edge of my bed with her and we both cradled our cups of tea in our hands. And then she told me. I knew I should have made more effort to help her instead of just staring at her, but it wasn't easy to hear what she had to say. I kept trying to get the conversation back onto more pleasant things like Mum's embarrassing attempts at singing, but Sheila would have none of it. She kept asking me why I wouldn't believe her, and why dd I think that she would lie about something like that? "You know he used to take me to the allotments with him. I mean, what's the matter with you? Why can't you believe me?" The problem, of course, was that I did believe her. I knew she was right when she sad that the fact that it had stopped now didn't make it any better, but underneath it all the real question that I wanted answered was how come I escaped his attention? Did he love her more than me? I knew that he loved me more than he loved Mum, but why take Sheila down to the allotments with him? (Phillips, 2005: 42)

However, as Amin points out how, for Europe, the Renaissance represents a break with its past, we see Dorothy's breaking up with her real past but making up a

mythic one as akin to how Europe created its own past by attaching itself to Greek antiquity.

This selective memory continued in other ways as well.

> On the dogmatic level, all the great reformers called for a return to sources and, among other things, in this spirit, rehabilitated the Old Testament, which Catholicism and Orthodoxy had marginalized. It developed above the idea that Christianity had, in effect, been constituted not in continuity with Judaism but as a rupture with it. The current use of the term Judeo-Christian, popularized by the expansion of a particular Protestant discourse (specific to the United States for the most part), implies a reversal in how the relations between these two monotheistic religions are viewed, to which the Catholics (but still not yet the Orthodox) have belatedly rallied, though more through political opportunism than out of conviction. (Amin, 1989: 45)

The Bible, the sacred text of Christians, is divided into two main sections, the first of which is the Old Testament. Significantly, it aligns with the Jewish sacred text, the Tanakh. Judaism considers the Old Testament to be its sacred text, while Christianity has included it in its canon. The Old Testament in Christianity represents the first covenant that God made with humanity. Genesis, the Prophets, Psalms, the Chronicles, the Mosaic writings (Torah/Pentateuch) and ethical and legal principles are all included in it. On the other hand, the New Testament, which begins the main body of Christian literature known as the Bible, is about the life and teachings of Jesus. Amin claims that Christianity attempted to reconstruct its foundations by connecting them to Judaism during the Reformation movements, especially Protestantism. However, historically, this link was not emphasised, especially in Catholic and Orthodox traditions. In this context, the term "Judeo-Christian" comes from Protestant discourse and later takes on political meanings.

In addition, it is worth noting that Enrique Dussel refers to Amin's Eurocentrism to support his criticism of modernity. Therefore, we need to understand more about what Amin says about modernity. According to Amin, modernity is connected to capitalism, even though it seems to be based on ideas of "reason and emancipation". He argues that during the Enlightenment, reason was not always freeing for everyone but worked within a bourgeois framework shaped by economic needs. Amin says that what seems to be emancipating logic is just a selective ideology that supports property, liberty and market forces instead of real egalitarianism. His idea of "emancipating reason" is rethought critically as a historically placed rather than

a universal construct that is deeply involved in power imbalances around the world. By connecting reason to property and capitalism, Amin shows the ideological flaws in modernity from a European point of view.

In line with these critiques, Amin offers a distinctive perspective on the evolution of modernity by arguing that capitalism constitutes a radical rupture in the structure of social organisation. Unlike earlier tributary systems, where the process of economic exploitation was directly observable and intertwined with political and ideological power, capitalism introduces a new mode of hidden exploitation. According to Amin, pre-capitalist societies operated through transparent mechanisms such as rents or labour duties, with economic relations clearly subordinated to political and ideological authority. However, with the rise of capitalism, the economic sphere becomes dominant yet opaque, as wage labour and market exchange disguise the mechanisms of surplus extraction. This shift marks a fundamental inversion in the relationship between economy and ideology, making capitalist modernity not just an economic transformation but a deeply ideological project that mystifies exploitation under the guise of freedom and equality. Amin's concept of tributary societies, thus, provides a valuable analytical contrast that highlights how modernity's claim to progress is built on concealed hierarchies rather than genuine emancipation.

As a striking example from the Phillips's novel shows, Dorothy's parents' confined lives do not represent a life of emancipation. This is a closer engagement with Amin's notion of capitalism as a system of concealed exploitation. In **A Distant Shore**, the portrayal of Dorothy's father, who spent a lifetime only leaving the borders of his own country once, exemplifies the invisible limitations imposed by capitalist modernity. While the home is presented as a space of safety and stability, it simultaneously becomes a site of subtle confinement, reflecting the hidden mechanisms of structural restriction. In line with Amin's analysis, this domestic portrayal illustrates how capitalism masks its exploitative nature under the guise of familiarity and routine, binding individuals not through overt coercion but normalised economic necessity. Thus, the seemingly ordinary figure of Dorothy's father emerges as a symbolic representation of the silent yet pervasive constraints embedded in modern capitalist life.

This adds to Dussel's argument that modernity was not a project for all civilisations but rather a European claim to power that began in 1492. This parallelity between Dussel and Amin, showing the idea that modernity's claims of being the centre and having superiority in creating epistemological knowledge, brings us to Gilroy's argument about race thinking in Europe.

Scholars such as Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez add an ethical and moral dimension to conviviality by revisiting its etymological roots in the Latin **convivere** and the Spanish **convivencia**. Unlike the English understanding of conviviality as mere sociability, **convivencia** emphasises shared responsibility, care and coexistence. Rodríguez notes that in an age marked by deepening inequalities, displacement and humanitarian crises, rethinking conviviality is not only relevant but necessary.

By bringing together these critical perspectives, this thesis positions **A Distant Shore** as not merely as a narrative of migration but a site of philosophical and political contestation, where the limits of modernity's universality are exposed and the potential of conviviality is both imagined and interrogated.

1.2 The Absent Future: Youth and Children as the Silenced Others

Some critical readings have approached the novel through Paul Gilroy's concept of **conviviality** as developed in **Postcolonial Melancholia**, where Gilroy observes the spontaneous, everyday forms of living together across racial and cultural differences in contemporary England and reflects on them as sources of hope.

Building on this framework, some critics have attempted to read **A Distant Shore** as a fictional exploration of the possibilities – and limitations – of such convivial relationships. My thesis engages with these readings not to confirm the novel's success in this regard but to question whether the narrative structure, character representation and affective landscape of the novel genuinely support such a vision.

One major shortcoming lies in the narrative treatment of young people. While the novel gives fragmented but emotionally textured accounts of adult characters like Gabriel Solomon and Dorothy, younger characters are depicted primarily through lenses of desire, threat or delinquency**.** Their inner worlds are not explored; instead,

they are rendered as disruptive energies rather than participants in a shared cultural future.

Even more striking is the complete absence of children or infants in the narrative. This absence signifies more than a mere narrative choice; it reflects the novel's inability or unwillingness to imagine a future that includes the next generation. Without the presence of children, the concept of conviviality loses its temporal depth. It becomes a conversation between broken adults, isolated from continuity and regeneration.

Thus, while Gilroy's concept is rooted in spontaneous, lived and hopeful interconnections, **A Distant Shore** offers a more sombre and limited portrayal of co-existence. The exclusion of youth and children from the narrative weakens the novel's ability to engage fully with the possibilities of convivial life.

CHAPTER ONE
REFUGEES AS "STUCK IN PRESENT, DEVOID OF HISTORICITY"

> Gabriel wipes the blood from his friend's eyes. An hour earlier Said had fallen from the bottom bunk and onto the hard concrete floor, and although Gabriel had immediately jumped down and made an effort to haul Said back into bed, he soon realised that his friend should not be moved. Sad had hit his head as he fell, and Gabrel continues to mop the petals of blood from the floor with a paper tissue. Said does not seem to notice the blood, and he lacks the energy to wipe the vomit from his mouth. For much of the past hour Gabriel has been kneeling beside this man, and hoping that Said might talk to him. When not kneeling beside hm, Gabriel has been holding on to the bars of the cell and begging the night warder to call for a doctor. But the night warder continues to watch television with his boots up on the desk, his legs crossed casually at his ankles and the flickering glow of the screen illuminating his face. Suddenly Gabriel looks up as the man in the next cell once more kicks the wall. (Phillips, 2005: 44)

Homi Bhabha thinks that the struggle between sign and symbol is at the heart of the postcolonial setting, and the figure of Said in **A Distant Shore** shows this. At first glance, "Said" seems to be just an Arabic male name – a sign. However, in the story, this sign is more of a broken remnant than a fully formed thing because it lacks cultural meaning and symbolic power. The religious and language codes that are usually linked to his name, like **inshallah** or any spiritual reference as a source of resilience, are clearly missing. Instead, he is only shown to be physically declining, speaking incoherently and giving up in silence.

This lack, or erasing, puts Said in what Bhabha calls the "seizure of the sign", a break in time where symbolic systems do not allow for subjectivity. In this "time-lag", where identity hangs between narrative meaning and linguistic reality, Said becomes a sign that is both dispossessed and robbed. It is a presence without depth and a name without a voice. Bhabha says that this kind of division calls into question how Western symbolic systems work together and makes room for rethinking postcolonial subjectivity through emotional and mixed expressions (Bhabha, 1992).

This erasure of cultural subjectivity through symbols fits with Bhabha's notion of the seizure of the sign, in which identity is broken and historical connection is held in the air. There is neither dialectical sublimation nor the "empty" signifier, says

Bhabha. Instead, there is a contestation of the given symbols of authority that changes the ground of conflict (Bhabha, 1992:63).

> Said does not seem to notice the blood, and he lacks the energy to wipe the vomit from his mouth. (Phillips, 2005: 44)

This narrative presents us with a body that is both insensitive and isolated from pain. It is as if it has been introduced not as a human but as an object or a "thing". This is a clear example of the "infrahuman" representation criticised by Paul Gilroy and Spivak's figure of the subaltern in "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

> That vulnerable figure could merge easily with those of the infrahuman native and the racial slave, the negro, the aboriginal and the indigene. At that fateful point, the colonial project not only manifested a new kind of geopolitical space but filled it with a new cast of readily racialized characters. (Gilroy, 2005: 49)

With these racialised characters – and this time not only Black people – we see "the governmental practice" having "a pragmatic exercise on its colonial power" (Gilroy, 2005: 45) by exercising its power on poor Said, making an issue of his alleged theft, which would put him in prison, while ignoring Denise's abuse at home or leaving Sheila alone with sick parents unprotected.

Drawing on Gayatri Spivak's theory of representation, we may say that Said is represented but never allowed to speak for himself. He is visible, even mourned by the narrative, but ultimately voiceless. The result is a character whose name functions simultaneously as a sign of origin and a symbol of marginality, marking him as both present and erased, named yet not heard, figured yet not felt. This contradictory positioning exemplifies the mechanism through which postcolonial texts may reproduce the very silencing they seek to expose.

Despite the severity of Said's suffering – his incarceration, illness, vomiting and hallucinations – he never utters a single religious or spiritual expression. The absence of even the simplest cultural markers like "inshallah" or "bismillah" is not a neutral narrative choice. In Muslim societies, even those who are not devout typically retain such phrases in everyday language. Their omission here signals a deeper symbolic erasure: a deliberate removal of the character's religious and cultural interiority, a resilience against the bad reducing him to a body in pain rather than a subject with belief, history or depth.

This aligns with the orientalist gaze, which Edward Said defines as the construction of the Muslim Other as voiceless, emotionless or, at best, exotic. However, Said is not even exoticised, he is dehumanised through his silence. In this context, the name "Said" becomes doubly ironic. Not only is its pronunciation altered and disfigured (going from "Sa'id" to "Said"), but the semantic and cultural resonance of the name is hollowed out. Thus, it becomes a symbol of absence, a name that has lost both its voice and its soul.

In **A Distant Shore**, the character Said embodies what Bhabha calls "the repetition of the sign that represents the place of psychic ambivalence and social contingency". This repetition, Bhabha argues, emerges in the symbolic structures of identity where the sign no longer fully synchronises with the meaning it supposedly conveys. In Said's case, we see a man in pain – falling, vomiting and bleeding – yet never speaking from or through a cultural or spiritual self. Despite presumably being from an Islamic background, not a single phrase, not even a reflexive "inshallah", escapes his lips. His name, Said – once charged with cultural and religious meaning – becomes an empty sign stripped of agency. Said is not allowed the dignity of being a subject in pain; instead, he is narrated through a language that turns him into a passive object, an emblem of loss without voice. This erasure signals how postcolonial subjects can be denied even the right to their own symbols, their own affect and their own histories.

While the character Said is stripped of voice and agency, his name reduced to a bare sign and detached from the symbolic and cultural system it emerges from, the figure of Mahmud reflects a similar condition of symbolic absence. Bhabha reminds us that "in each achieved symbol of cultural/political identity or synchronicity there is always the repetition of the sign that represents the place of psychic ambivalence and social contingency". Yet, Mahmud never achieves even this repetition, remaining a passive figure suspended between desires he cannot articulate and roles he does not fully inhabit. His silence in moments of personal or cultural significance – his marriage, migration, business or relationship with Dorothy – marks not only a lack of voice but also the failure of the narrative to allow him symbolic presence. Like Said, Mahmud is framed from the outside, his cultural depth flattened and his symbolic potential deferred.

This symbolic delay in identifying Said's origin mirrors the character's broader narrative disempowerment. Said first appears not through his cultural background but through his wounds. Gabriel "wipes the blood from his friend's eyes, kneels beside him, pleads for help", yet we, as readers, remain unaware of who "he" is or where he is from. The name Said is offered early on does not humanise him; rather, it establishes his status as the "Oriental Other". In fact, his national origin, Iraq, is only disclosed shortly before his death. The narrative grants him a name but withholds the context that would render him intelligible as a historical subject. This is not affective writing aimed at intimacy but a form of symbolic framing that uses his Arabic name as a tool for cultural coding. He is introduced as affect, framed as injury and only recognised – too late – as a man from a country marked by war and displacement.

> From Iraq I travel like this like an animal, but maybe worse than an animal, but I do not care for I know that in England they will give me money and some kind of voucher and let me work. Everybody wants to keep out the Muslim, but in England freedom is everything. They can change the law, but you cannot change the culture of the people and so I am not afraid. British people are good. I have friends who tell me the truth. I do not hate Americans, but they are not gentlemen. Why should I be afraid? (Phillips, 2005: 45)

Although **A Distant Shore** was published shortly after the US-led invasion of Iraq, the novel deliberately avoids any direct reference to this globally known political reality. Instead of situating Said's suffering within the specific context of the war, the narrative allows a vague sense of dread and exile to dominate. In the novel, Said pleads, "Please do not send me back to my country. Not there." However, he refuses to explain what happened in Iraq, saying that he will lose his "appetite" if he does. This silence, however, is not innocent. According to Bhabha, "In each achieved symbol of cultural/political identity, there is always the repetition of the sign that represents the place of psychic ambivalence and social contingency." The novel, thus, renders Iraq as an unspeakable space while enabling the Western reader to comfortably assume it is a despotic land, indirectly reaffirming the hegemonic narrative of the "rescuer West". This, paradoxically, strips Said of political agency while simultaneously allowing the novel to avoid addressing the complicity of Britain or the US in the destruction of Iraq.

The narrative's delay in revealing Said's Iraqi origin, together with his open disdain for America and admiration for British culture, demonstrates what Bhabha calls "the seizure of the sign": a moment where cultural identity is represented through narrative rupture rather than coherence. Although we learn the origin of the narrator from the very beginning of the novel – as the novel starts with the statement, "England has changed" (Phillips, 2005: 1) – it is only 900 words after Said's introduction to the narrative that we learn specifically that he is from Iraq.

This delay does not simply reflect narrative suspense; rather, it constitutes a silencing of geopolitical context. Said's origin remains unspoken until his final moments, rendering him culturally disembodied and politically neutered. According to Bhabha, this is not incidental but symptomatic of postcolonial narrative structures that privilege affect over history and reduce the migrant subject to a passive signifier rather than a symbolic actor.

If an argument is to be developed on the issue of Said not being the main character, it would be inadequate since the emphasis should not just be on who the main character is but also on who is allowed a nuanced representation. Denise, for instance, is not a main character in the novel, but the narrative technique helps the reader empathise with her. After all, even secondary characters could be well-rounded. This is to maintain asymmetry in representation by portraying a character's identity as fragmented or dramatizing their origin without true empathy.

In postcolonial narrative, what matters is not just the presence of representation but how that representation is constructed. If a character's inner voice is suppressed, their past is compressed into a dramatic effect and we are not allowed to empathise with them, then that character is still considered "unrepresented" even if they are on stage. Therefore, my argument is that, whether deliberately or unintentionally, the minimisation of Said's identity to dramatic consequences reflects an orientalist viewpoint and an asymmetry in representation.

While Bhabha emphasises the internal identity upheavals, Gilroy provides a more comprehensive transnational perspective that places the self inside historical "routes" instead of static cultural bases. Bhabha's theory is a useful conceptual tool for grasping the representation of refugee characters in **A Distant Shore** by disturbing the traditional link between the signifier and the signified. Said is depicted as a figure

who cannot be integrated into a consistent story; his identity is fractured, unfinished and constantly denied subjectivity. Mahmud's tale, too, is one of absence, disruption and narrative holes. These broken images point to a kind of subjectivity that eludes the contemporary need for a consistent and united self. Bhabha would have us view this ambivalence as a place to question colonial discourse.

"The objective of colonial discourse", writes Bhabha, "is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction" (Bhabha, 1994: 70). Therefore, we can see stereotyping of Muslims in the characters of Mahmood and Said and the African people in the characters of Amma and Solomon's sisters. In the following quotation, John McLeod successfully explains Bhabha's claim that colonialism is informed by a series of assumptions to justify its view of other lands and people:

> On the one hand, the discourse of colonialism would have it that the Oriental (or, in Bhabha's parlance, the 'colonised subject') is a radically strange creature whose bizarre and eccentric nature is the cause for both curiosity and concern. The colonised are considered the 'other' of the Westerner (or the 'colonising subject'), essentially outside Western culture and civilisation. Yet, on the other hand, the discourse of colonialism attempts to domesticate colonised subjects and abolish their radical 'otherness', bringing them inside Western understanding through the Orientalist project of constructing knowledge about them. The construction of 'otherness' is thus split by the contradictory positioning of the colonised simultaneously inside and outside Western knowledge. Hence, in Bhabha's terms, 'colonial discourse produces the colonised as a social reality which is at once an "other" and yet entirely knowable and visible' (Bhabha 1994 pp. 70-1). So, on the one hand, stereotypes translate the unfamiliar into coherent terms by seeming to account for the strangeness of other peoples: the Irish are inevitably stupid; the Chinese are always inscrutable; the Arabs essentially violent. The distance between the colonisers and the colonised is lessened, as the colonised are brought within the boundaries of Western knowledge. But, on the other hand, colonial stereotypes also function counterwise to maintain this sense of distance. The colonisers must never admit that other people are not really very different from themselves, as this would undercut the ideological project of colonialism. (McLeod, 2000: 52)

This is why the stereotypical construction of Mahmood's narrative is instrumental in the novel, which seems to expose racist tendencies of modern England while also creating another "infrahuman" figure, to borrow the term Gilroy often used in **Postcolonial Melancholia**. The sentence "They call us Asians" and where it comes has less to do with giving him voice and more to do with turning him into a more

Western-looking figure, which has been normalised in hookup culture and brings him closer to the Western knowledge. However, the long distance and interesting emotional baggage that this name would have is of no interest, even though he had to marry a girl when he was a child and he is said to have come from a place of deep social traditional background. It is necessary to note here that the religious background is in mute, even though he is told to come from a nation with a story of being divided from another nation based on religion.

Any reading of Gabriel Solomon benefits greatly from Gilroy's distinction between roots and routes in **The Black Atlantic** in this setting. The narrative of identity is shaped by mobility, displacement and fleeting ties rather than a set beginning or national belonging. Gilroy contends that diasporic identities are constantly shaped by transnational cultural pathways rather than stable geographical origins. Solomon's identification is still unclear and unsettled. He neither completely belongs to where he came from nor to the location he presently occupies. This fluid structure of selfhood questions the modern attachment to stability and rootedness.

The modern understanding of subjectivity is grounded in assumptions such as fixed national identity, essentialist notions of racial or ethnic authenticity (Gilroy, 1993) and rational coherence. This structure is rooted in Enlightenment thought and nourished by Cartesian notions of selfhood. The postcolonial subject, on the other hand, is frequently seen as broken, uprooted and changing. In this regard, **A Distant Shore** should be looked at through constraints of contemporary subject-making, reminding us of Gilroy's expression: "an embeddedness to Enlightenment assumptions" (Gilroy, 2005: 53). This is used for Hill Collins to illustrate how even alternative standpoints may unconsciously reproduce Enlightenment categories. A similar tension is found in Phillips's narrative. His attempt to critique racism occasionally echoes the very discursive structures he seeks to challenge.

The novel appears to draw attention to migrants and to make their suffering visible. The same positive sentiment towards migrants can be observed in Phillips's interview, where he states:

> "The asylum seekers, in particular, have migration forced upon them. It doesn't involve chains, it doesn't involve manacles, it doesn't involve physically brutal labor, but the psychological trauma can fester for years. These are not economic migrants

> who have bought a ticket. Europe is full of people who are psychologically scarred, having cut the umbilical cord with their countries and their languages, as viciously and as traumatically as people did in the past with slavery. You see it most clearly, to my mind, in the Mediterranean." (Pulitano, 2009: 378)

Having cited these lines from the interview, which was conducted in New York—a place where Phillips himself is an immigrant, yet an immigrant with "choices" (Pulitano, 2009: 375) unlike forced migrants—Deniz Kırpıklı claims in her doctoral thesis that "Phillips places more emphasis on the issue of identity in this (**A Distant Shore**) work than he does on racial prejudice in his previous works." (Kırpıklı, 2021: 115) She continues that the juxtaposition of Solomon and Dorothy aims to expose the superficiality of national identity categories. While she observes that Phillips provides both characters with certain traits to represent a discourse of the displaced subject, her argument falls short of maintaining the same critical standards for the portrayal of other refugees within the narrative.

In the deeper structure of the narrative, the novel portrays Mahmud, Said, and Amma once again as objectified, diminished, and stripped of subjectivity. This would be a striking example of what Spivak analyses as the West seemingly engaging in self-critique while in fact maintaining its hegemonic subject-position.

In her seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, a leading figure in postcolonial theory, questions whether marginalized subjects can truly attain agency and voice within dominant Western frameworks of knowledge. She argues that even critical theories that claim to dismantle Western subjectivity often end up reinforcing the hegemonic position of the Western subject:

> "The theory of pluralized 'subject-effects' gives an illusion of undermining subjective sovereignty while often providing a cover for this subject of knowledge." (Spivak, 1988: 271)

There is an important technical difference in the novel for Dorothy's narration and Amma's.

> Gabriel looks over at the young woman in the corner. She had been in one of the other groups, but had apparently found it difficult to understand everything that they were saying because she did not share the same language. When she heard Joshua's group on the boat she realised that they might help her. (Phillips 2003, 61)

The narrator knows the inner workings of Amma's mind directly, thinking in her place. So, it doesn't allow for a subject position; it defines it itself. The narrator doesn't give her a chance to speak; the narrator directly conveys what he thinks she feels and thinks. “She realises”. However, in characters like Dorothy, Carla or Denise or Gabriel-Solomon to some extend: They directly create dialogues in their own words, or the narrator offers a freer internal observation from their perspective. Especially Dorothy's traumas or moments of loneliness are conveyed more through her inner monologues.

On the other side for example Carla speaks directly in her own voice: "They’ll kill me Miss, if they find out I’m here."(Phillips 2005:32) Dorothy is asking direct questions: "Who’s 'they', Carl, ?" Carla is answering. The narrator is also observing Carla from Dorothy's perspective: "I looked closely at Carla, who was now leaning forward..."

"I watched as Carla left the room..."The whole narrative structure is established through upon Carla's own words and Dorothy's external observation.

In the book, Amma is present with her suffering. Though she is physically there, her inner universe is never clearly expressed. This narrative choice shows a deeper ideological structure rather than just a stylistic preference; as Spivak contends, it maintains the power of the Western subject even while claiming to empathize with the “migrant”.

Amma’s child has no name taking the chance to be personified. While it could be argued that there is never a clear idea if he is a baby being breastfed or a child as the text calls him child many times. The physical and emotional development stages of a baby have been disregarded. A baby doesn't stay quiet and motionless for such a long time, for example. Although breastfeeding scene of a migrant woman Amma is detailed, the fact that how a baby kept silent during days and night in the most difficult travelling conditions is never a problem for the narrative. He has no voice: The child has no reaction at all. Neither crying, nor moving, nor making a sound. This shows that the child's only function in the narrative is to be a "burden" or "object of suffering" carried by Amma. Amma's motherhood is not presented as a genuine human relationship.

The mother-child bond is not at the centre of the narrative. The child is merely a visual and emotional decoration, existing to evoke a sense of "pity" in the reader. This is also as Spivak pointed out: The lower class's own human connections, their own subjectivity, their own story are not made visible. Instead, it is turned into an object of representation.

> "Gabriel looks at Amma, who lies sprawled on the back seat of the bus, her child so tightly wrapped up in the folds of her dress that it is impossible to see him." (Phillips,2005: 77)

Hegemonic discourse distorts the representation subaltern's human relationships and experiences, replacing them with externally created stories that fulfil dominant ideology goals.

The tendency to obscure the refugees' own human connections and agency is, however, largely overlooked in critical discussions of the novel. We could call it that not all refugee figures in the novel are treated equally

Having acknowledged that the novel includes many instances of convivial encounters in Britain, Bhawana Jain, when discussing the scene where Solomon and Denise sit together in the house, observes:

> the scene deconstructs the binary image of the refugee as either a vulnerable victim or a threatening criminal, to reconfigure Solomon as the benefactor who tries to comfort Denise. (Jain, "Rethinking the Figure of the Refugee in Caryl Phillips's **A Distant Shore**")

Her reading is insightful, particularly when she maintains that: "this novel takes a 'convivial turn' in order to reconstruct a hopeful alternative to failing multiculturalism."(Jain,2008) However, by the end of her paper, which is explicitly titled with a focus on refugees, it becomes strikingly evident that she completely overlooks both Said — whose body becomes the primary object of a violent spectacle that the novel supposedly seeks to criticize — and Mahmud, omitting them entirely from her discussion of refugee representation in the novel.

CHAPTER TWO
DEPICTING VIOLENCE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR DEHUMANISATION

In this thesis, thus far, it has been argued that the choice of first-person and third-person narrators, as well as the prominence given to certain voices in the narrative, serves to dehumanise refugee characters like Said and Mahmood. This narrative strategy prevents readers from forming a closer connection with these characters, thereby dehumanising refugees.

In addition to the narrative's choice of perspective, the depiction of violence, the technique and the fast pace play a significant role in the dehumanisation of refugee characters like Said and Mahmood, as well as others.

While sharing a cell with Gabriel, Said's health deteriorates rapidly after falling and hitting his head on the hard floor. Gabriel, desperate to help, repeatedly pleads with the guards to call for a doctor, but his requests are ignored. The guards show indifference to Said's worsening condition and dismiss Gabriel's concerns. As the poor conditions of the cell and intentional denial of medical attention take their toll, Said eventually dies tragically. This, however, raises the question: Is the extreme brutality of the narrated scene necessary? It might be argued that by depicting the violence in stark detail, the author forces readers to confront the brutality of institutional systems and their treatment of refugees. However, this very focus on suffering may risk reinforcing a narrative where refugees like Said are seen primarily as victims, defined solely by their oppression and helplessness.

Additionally, the extremely violent scenes involving Gabriel, Said and, later, Solomon contribute to the desacralisation of the refugee's body. The open and graphic depiction of violence ensures that the tension in the novel remains high, but it contrasts sharply with the more subtle and implied treatment of trauma in Dorothy's narrative, such as the implied incestuous abuse of her sister, Sheila. The fact that extreme brutality against non-White figures in the novel is depicted explicitly while similar elements are merely implied in Dorothy's case calls the narrative's intent into question. For example, the story begins with a normal British day in the life of an English woman who retires and moves to her apartment. Even though we are going to learn that this first narrative about her early retirement that sounded natural is questionable, the first

impression of Dorothy is built with her everyday routine from her life. Only once, in the very beginning, are we made to feel that there is something bleak about her family life and sister; however, through the filtered view of Dorothy, we are not given the same kind of brutal information that we are directly and quite openly introduced to in the cases of the barbarities faced by Said and other refugees.

> Dad liked to talk, but even as a girl it was obvious to me that Mum had given up temper. Instead Dad talked to me, and he tried to treat me like the son he'd never had loved nothing more than to sit with his pipe and his tobacco pouch, pressing rubbed flake into the bowl, and tell me about how he'd lost his own dad in the war, and how his mum had struggled to make ends meet. (Phillips, 2005: 7)

Here, we have everything to empathise with the characters, who seem to have family issues in common, even though we feel sad for the narrator for being treated like a son, which is the first bleak clue of what has happened. However, gradually, the narrative helps us to understand what was behind her sister's behaviour. A little further into our reading, we learn the following:

> Unfortunately, while I seemed to get on with Dad, Sheila barely spoke to him. To with they used to get on. I may have been the 'son,' but she was definitely the much loved daughter. I was actually jealous of her for he used to dote on her, and take her to the allotments, and buy her presents, so much so that I used to call her 'Daddy's little pet.' But as she got older, and grew to know her own mind, Dad seemed to change towards her. I could see what she meant when she said that he seemed to be going out of his way to on her, but she didn't help herself. Any chance to misbehave, she took it, and of course only made things worse. Mum sided with Sheila, but her voice didn't count for my Dad, and so Sheila began to resent Mum's impotence in the household. (Phillips, 2005: 8)

After tension over this bleakness and strangeness is built in the narrative using the subjective first person and the time and location lapses, which are masterfully integrated into the fiction, the reason why Sheila had distanced herself comes to the surface.

> And then she told me. I knew I should have made more effort to help her instead of just staring at her, but it was easy to hear what she had to say. I kept trying to get the conversation back onto more pleasant things like Mum's embarrassing attempts at singing, but Sheila would have none of it. She kept asking me why I wouldn't believe her, and why did I think that she would lie about something like that? "You know he used to take me to the allotments with him,I mean, what's the matter with you? Why can't you believe me? (Phillips, 2005: 42)

The unbearable truth behind the troubled family – that Sheila was abused by her father – is shadowed out, never put in direct words. In a striking contrast, the following is how Gabriel's family is described in the second chapter, after we have been introduced to a shadowy and bleak story of a European English family:

> Now they line up the rest of the family. 'Big Dog' kicks Gabriel's father until he cries out in pain. He is still alive. 'Big Dog' asks him if he will not beg for mercy, like a man? Does he not love his family enough to beg for their lives? Gabriel understands that this is sport. The boys are playing with his father, and then 'Smokin' Joe' puts his gun to the back of Gabriel's father's head. While the others continue to laugh and taunt his father, 'Smokin' Joe' casually pulls the trigger and the skull explodes. Small pieces of brain fly in all directions, and Gabriel's mother and two sisters begin to scream. (Phillips, 2005: 49)

The depiction of the brutality, which "Gabriel is familiar with" (Phillips, 2005: 49), has not reached its peak. After massacring the girls behind their heads, Brutus points with his pistol towards the bleeding girls.

> You want your food, then turn them over and take it. But be quick. 'Brutus' knows that the men are not interested in the mother. 'Jacko' is the last to mount the younger sister, but by now 'Brutus' is losing patience. He claps his hands. 'Enough.' 'Jacko' clambers to his feet, and rearranges himself. colleagues look on and laugh as 'Jacko' struggles to make himself appear decent. Gabriel can see that his youngest sister has a thin ribbon of blood running down the inside leg, which pools near her ankle. She also appears to have lost consciousness 'Finish them off,' says 'Brutus.' (Phillips, 2005:49)

Leaving nothing to the imagination, these scenes immerse the reader in the sheer horror and violence that these characters endure. The description of Gabriel's family being tortured and murdered, followed by the rape of his sisters, is recounted in visceral detail. The introduction of another refugee of the novel, Said, to the reader is no different. The narrative presents him with blood first.

His body is almost always depicted in the passive, horizontal position, in direct contrast with Dorothy's vertical entrance into the narrative and subsequent dominance of her vertical statue. The reader is always meeting with the White, middle class characters of the narrative in either vertical or sitting but ultimately dominant positions. For instance, see how, enjoying his patriarchal status, Dorothy's father "loved nothing more than to sit with his pipe and his tobacco pouch" (Ibid.: 7) Moreover, Dorothy's mother is also presented in a more active position: "Mum never looked back and she would just carry on with whatever she was doing." Her dad falls

in the war, but that is a mere embellishment to his father's story, which ignores why he was in Belgium.

On the other hand, when it comes to Sheila, apart from the muted treatment of her abuse, she is quite active. Like her sister Dorothy, whom we see moving from one place to another, Sheila is only in a sitting position when she wants to openly talk about the abuse she had to receive from her father and the indirect abuse of her mother in the form of neglect. This is also true when Dorothy faces this abuse of her sister (although not her abuse as a child yet). Dorothy remembers the conversation with her sister when Sheila questioned why she did not believe her. A major vulnerable moment occurs when she changes from a horizontal position where she was lying down in that hotel room that smells of mice into a sitting position:

> I swung my legs down off the side of the single bed and I felt the damp chill of the floor. I remembered something else about single beds that I didn't like. They reminded me of when Sheila turned up at university with her rucksack. (Phillips, 2005: 42)

Another vulnerable moment for Sheila happens when she is in a horizontal position: "Conscious almost to the last moment, Sheila lay back, her bald head supported by the pillows" (Ibid.: 153). Not to mention that the White figures can have funerals but neither of those had mentions of their funerals, which was not the case for Gabriele-Solomon, Said, the Chinese men lost in the water and the whole family whose massacre was described in great detail to the reader. Juxtaposed with representations of Said's body in the prison cell – passive and horizontal, suggesting vulnerability – the representations of Western-European middle class are plausible.

Coming back to Said's story, we are told that Said sells all his belongings and endures inhumane conditions to reach England. His belief in England was fuelled by his hope for freedom and human rights. However, during a train journey, he accepts a request to watch the luggage of an English couple only to be accused of theft by the couple. As a result, he is detained by the police. In prison, Said's health deteriorates rapidly after he hits his head on the concrete floor. He starts bleeding and vomiting, and his condition worsens. His friend Gabriel tries to assist him and pleads with the prison warders for medical help, but they remain indifferent. Despite Gabriel's efforts, medical assistance arrives too late, and Said is left to die in his cell. Does the story highlight the tragedy, despair and systemic cruelty often faced by refugees?

> For much of the past hour Gabriel has been kneeling beside this man and hoping that Said might talk to him. When not kneeling beside him, Gabriel has been holding on to the bars of the cell and begging the night warder to call for a doctor. (Phillips, 2005: 44)

The two refugees are in horizontal positions, which are depicted in great detail. Their deaths are not depicted differently from the way their struggle for survival and dignity is depicted. A glaring omission of their farewell to the world is noteworthy.

In the same vein, the filtered vulnerability of another White Western figure presented in the fiction is worth analysing Denise. Bright and Gabriel-Solomon meet with Denise after a very dangerous ship journey where they lose one of their friends. Eventually, they arrive at a rock, and Gabriel's leg is injured. They see a house and take shelter there, which is where they meet with Denise. A "confident" Denise helps Gabriel-Solomon and brings food, while a "hungry" Gabriel is described as follows:

> Gabriel takes out a loaf of bread and tears off a large piece. As much as he wishes to slowly and with some dignity, he cannot restrain himself from cramming the bread mouth, for his stomach burns with hunger. Denise sits down now and stares at him. 'Hungry, are you?' She starts to laugh, and Gabriel realises that she is laughing at him. He glares at her, but an unperturbed Denise continues to laugh. (Phillips, 2005: 95)

We only get a glimpse of Denise's story. Her boyfriend, whom we are told she is too young to be paired with, beats him, and it is not only her overaged boyfriend who is beating him: "Barry, he starts with his fists when I didn't do what he wanted. The pair of them are just the same" (Ibid.: 111). It is implied that she lost her tooth because of the violence at the hands of her father. Remarkably, while the text offers detailed and animalistic descriptions of the abuse refugees suffer, it is silent about abuse in English houses.

Even the diseases suffered by White people in this narrative come in the form of diagnosis, which make them look more scientific and rational, such as in the case of the diagnosis of his father's disease. From this, it could be concluded that even the diseases are treated differently when the disease is English by giving it a name. The reader is not given the symptoms of the diseases or what exactly happened to the father. Moreover, none of the bodily fluids are mentioned through the subjective first-person narration:

> The chest from all the years on the pipe. his hips, which had long been riddled with arthritis, went from bad to worse, a finally his eyes started to mist over with glaucoma. (Phillips, 2005: 15)

Sheila gets cancer and dies in her bed, while Dorothy's issues are monitored by a professional. However, when it comes to the refugees, Said is described as having "blood in his eyes, petals of blood, vomit in his mouth, pools of vomit, the smell is ripe, his hands shaking, bead of sweat on his forehead" (Phillips, 2005.: 44–48) The only diagnosis comes from Gabriel, who is a prisoner himself. This horrific depiction of Said's bodily fluids, along with discussion of corruption in the English legal system, should be given consideration.

"Peasants escaped representative heroic dignity and remained the precisely peasants" (Outram, 1989: 42), observes Outram while discussing the French Revolution. Unfortunately, the refugees in this text are never given dignity in the form of help and they remain refugees. Grew argues that literary genres attempt to distance themselves from the physical realities of inferior social classes. Art assimilated the lower class into the natural landscape but does not treat them on the same terms. (Cited in Outram, 1989: 42).

According to Outram, referencing Farge, urban workers in the 18th century were not depicted as unique individuals but were instead defined by their professions and the activities associated with production (Outram, 1989: 2, footnote 3). Farge elaborates on this idea in her article, "Les Artisans Malades de Leur Travail", published in Annales ESC, emphasising the alignment of workers' identities with their labour rather than their personal characteristics.

The muted and filtered treatment given to Western bodies is obvious when considering Denise and Carla as well. Carla is usually depicted in a sitting position with her probably egg-headed boyfriend. His "egg-headedness" is probable because the text implies but does not explicitly say it. The reader has to put the pieces together to come to this conclusion. It is most evident in the scene where Solomon walks by the water and a group of "egg-shaped men" with bright boots threatens him. It is a treat for the rational minds of the White English readers as it lets them use their intellectual capacity to solve a riddle, which reminds us of the trivialisation of war through some instruments.

The suffering of Denise and Carla has been given a more noble treatment than that of the sisters, whose graphic murders were depicted in gross detail. Applying Outram's observation here, it could be argued that the art here is distancing those Western European figures from the physical realities of the inferior refugee class. To do this, the degree of the violence is increased, and not because that sort of violence is real. As with the sisters, we have to face the blood coming from the legs, but as with Denise, it is only implied with how "he started when I didn't do what he wanted". (Phillips,2005:111)

While Phillips's narrative style might aim for hybridity, the stark divide in how violence is portrayed suggests the persistence of binary oppositions in the treatment of White and non-White characters. However, this brings us to an important element of our thesis: the desacralisation of the body, which Phillips's **A Distant Shore** gives perfect examples of by desacralising only the refugee bodies.

In his work **Postcolonial Melancholia**, Gilroy briefly states that when the modern world fictionalised its "European" identity, the desacralisation of the body was instrumental.

> For political theory, the desacralization of the body rightly became another major issue in accounting for the transition toward modern authority as well as understanding the development of historical and institutional conditions in which it becomes possible to treat people as refuse. (Gilroy, 2005: 45)

As Gilroy highlights, there have been conditions in history where people were treated like refuse. While making this point, he references the book **The Body and the French Revolution**, which gives a stark account of the scale of bloodshed:

> 14,080 death sentences passed between March 1793 and August 1794, an enormous number compared with the Paris annual average of 54 pre-1789, could have been carried out without the new machine. (Outram, 1989: 110).

The guillotine not only enabled the execution of such a high number of capital punishments within a short period but also, as Outram argues, turned the deaths of middle-class individuals into acts of humiliation. The method of execution itself carried symbolic meaning, transforming the act into a weapon of humiliation against the victim and creating propaganda.

In her detailed analysis of the French Revolution, Outram concludes that France failed to create a truly modern state, suggesting that modernity was not fully achieved within this context. However, she acknowledges the transformations that did take place, aligning with what Enrique Dussel refers to as the "myth of modernity". Outram highlights that while the Revolution aspired to bring about legal equality, it simultaneously relied on mechanisms of humiliation and dehumanisation to impose the new order.

As Outram states, humiliation became instrumental in shaping this transformation into a so-called modern order. She writes:

> In an age where, in spite of the Revolution's theoretical aspirations towards legal equality, social distinctions remained highly important for a middle class, and where distinctions in dress between classes were all-important in fixing status and exacting deference, to be delivered to the guillotine head shaven, coatless, bound, and shirt open, was a deep humiliation. (Outram, 1989: 111).

This description underscores how the guillotine, far from being merely a tool of execution, was also a method of enforcing social and symbolic degradation, particularly for the middle class. Outram further elaborates on the response to this humiliation, analysing the phenomenon of "heroic suicide". She notes that such suicides were rare among the political classes of the 18th century but emerged during the Reign of Terror as a response to the drastic reversal of legal and social relationships. As she explains:

> "Heroic suicide itself... responded very precisely to the ambiance created by the Terror, and the reversal of legal and social relationships from one moment to the next which it implied. The functions of heroic suicide... operated very simply as a way to avoid the humiliation of public execution." (Outram, 1989: 103)

By taking control of their deaths, individuals resisted the degradation associated with the guillotine and reclaimed a sense of agency and dignity. In other words, "It was far better to die thus, in front of a chosen audience of one's equals, than in the derisorily brief theatre and before the unpredictable, heterogeneous spectators, at the guillotine" (Outram, 1989: 103).

This sentiment does not only reflect an individual assertion of autonomy but is also indicative of what severe death at the guillotine meant for the victim beyond his life here. So, it was not only a war against the living body but the dignity of people,

and the barbarity of the execution was not empowering the values of the victims who had fought for their rights.

Having made this observation, it is worth noting the colonial pen, through its narrative institutions, is drawing a bad image of death on purpose – in our case, with no funerals for all refugees. What happens after the funeral or the "refuse" body is open to discussion, but the meaning created by it is under close manipulation of dominant Western narrative.

Gilroy's planetary humanism is also notable. In **Postcolonial Melancholia**, he describes a picture of the planet from space where the planet does not have any boundaries or supposed superior spaces.

> Images of the Earth photographed from outside its orbit by the Apollo spacecraft in 1972 have emerged as the emblem or signature of this novel planetary consciousness. The icy New York demonstrations that contributed to the day of rolling worldwide protest against the war in Iraq on 15 February 2003 involved hundreds of dark blue flags bearing the iconic imprint of NASA photograph AS17-22727. This is a striking image of the Earth isolated, whole, delicate, and centerless. It was sometimes, though by no means always, captioned with the simple phrase 'not in our name.' (Gilroy, 2005: 73)

This decentred vision of the Earth, captured through the iconic NASA image and mobilised in global protests, reflects a shift in human consciousness – one that challenges fixed national boundaries and embraces a planetary ethic. It is precisely within this frame that Gilroy's notion of planetary humanism emerges, exemplified in the sacrifices of Tom Randall and Rachel Corrie, whose translocal acts of solidarity transcend the borders of nation-states and stand against Freud's pessimistic view of human connection.

> "He dismisses the biblical injunction to love thy neighbor as thyself. He sees that stricture as an impossible and damaging inflation, which can only bring unhappiness and devalue the idea of love" (Gilroy, 2005.: 64)

As cited by Gilroy, Freud's "primary mutual hostility" between individuals stands in direct contrast with the sacrifices Tom Randall's and Rachel Corrie's did for the sake of injustices in very far parts of the world. Tom was just a 22-year-old British man when he tried to save children from sniper shots in Palestine. A jury has ruled that a British activist shot while acting as a human shield in the Gaza Strip was "intentionally killed". Tom Hurndall, from north London, was wearing an orange

jacket to mark him out as a peace activist. The 22-year-old had apparently been trying to move young Palestinian children from the line of fire when he was hit in the head. He was left in a coma and died nine months later (**The Guardian**, 2006).

Rachel Corrie is cited here as she did not escape Gilroy's attention. In 2003, she was trying to stop the demolition of a house in Palestine when she was crushed to her death. Rachel Corrie was a 23-year-old American peace activist from Olympia, Washington, who was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer on 16 March 2003 while undertaking nonviolent direct action to protect the home of a Palestinian family from demolition.

Gilroy presents Randall and Corrie as embodiments of an antithesis to Freud's concept of civilisation as a repressive mechanism. According to Gilroy, Randall and Corrie's activism can transcend these mechanisms of control and establish their argument for a convivial society on the facts of those realities. He observes that the internet helped this "translocal, multicultural and anti-imperial" activism, empowering us to question the ultimate power of systems over individuals. On the other hand, we observe that Phillips is choosing to depict refugees as sites of governance.

While Gilroy invokes the examples of White Western activists like Tom Hurndall and Rachel Corrie to articulate a planetary sense of humanism, his omission of local resistance – particularly that of Palestinians themselves – raises questions regarding the limits of his anti-imperial framework. Despite advocating for a translocal and multicultural solidarity, Gilroy's narrative seems to privilege Western moral agency while underrepresenting the everyday heroism and resistance of non-Western peoples. This imbalance reflects a broader tension within postcolonial theory: how to decentre Western subjectivity even when claiming to oppose it?

CHAPTER THREE
CODES OF SELF-CONTROL

It is instrumental to show a lack of self-control in the inferior, which is embodied by the refugee in this work of art. Self-control, a feature of human beings, refers to self-control of the body, living or dead. Therefore, the scale of that self-control that the refugee body lacked enormously in every sense plays a critical role in creating the drama here. It sells to the novel's audience who both want to understand the victim and are also scared to death to look like the victim. This "inversion" in Enrique Dussel's term lets us face a myth that was created. Gilroy calls this "postcolonial melancholia".

Why is self-control closely related to postcolonial melancholy" or "the myth of modernity"? Here, we should open a parenthesis to discuss why "codes of self-control", which Outram refers to as "originally the distinguishing marks of aristocracy", are so important. This exploration will also provide an opportunity to draw parallels between some characters in the novel. Codes of self-control were associated with aristocracy, and their influence extended beyond the French Revolution. Outram states the following:

> The French Revolution was important because it led to the political and cultural victory of the middle class over the monarchy and aristocracy, and this became the main pattern of development of other Western European states. (Outram, 1989: 2)

Outram's observation makes it clear that this shift was not exclusive to France; rather, it reflects a broader pattern in Western Europe. The codes of self-control, "the distinguishing marks of aristocracy" (Outram, 1989:11), were appropriated by the middle class in countries such as England, where similar transformations unfolded. These behavioural norms became a means of asserting social legitimacy and authority across emerging middle classes. Norbert Elias (1897–1990), a German sociologist, is renowned for his exploration of the relationship between individual behaviour and social structures.

His seminal work, **The Civilizing Process**, examines how self-control and social norms evolved alongside the formation of modern states. Elias argues that the formation of the modern state went hand in hand with the development of the concept

of **homo clausus** (the enclosed individual). According to Outram, this is one of his most significant achievements. She observes and notes the following:

> Elias's second major contention is that the formation of homo clausus and the formation of the modern state go hand in hand... [Self-control] was courtly behaviour. In the Renaissance and early modern periods, the court and the bourgeoisie began to mix; the bourgeoisie sought to win acceptance by practicing the courtesies and delicacies of court life. Again, shame was the central emotion at stake.... If the bourgeois could not control himself, he would be exposed as the vulgar person he secretly feared himself to be; ashamed of his origins, he paid for social ascent with the repression of his body. As medieval life waned, codes of self-control, originally the distinguishing marks of the aristocracy, spread out to become the mores of society as a whole; each new social group which aspired to upward mobility, or acceptance by the 'court society', joined the desire with anxiety about being able to control itself. (Outram, 1989: 2)

This historical context about the codes of self-control and their association with aristocracy – the previously superior class – provides a lens through which to analyse Dorothy's internal reactions in **A Distant Shore**. Gabriel-Solomon driving with gloves on and Dorothy finding this detail impressive could reflect the desire for status by adopting aristocratic behaviours. For instance, Gabriel-Solomon driving with gloves on and Dorothy being attracted to this "courtly behaviour" reflects "an aspiration to move upward".

Similarly, Dorothy's criticism of the attire of the man she met after her husband left her could be seen as an attempt to hold onto these codes to maintain a status that would make her feel more secure. Her parents maintaining the image of a functional family, despite being far from it, also reflects a similar aspiration to achieve status. However, here, we see the discussion arriving at the core issue of our thesis. We previously noted that self-control was a hallmark of aristocracy, yet the middle class that replaced the aristocracy needed a lower class beneath them to carry out their menial tasks. Later in the thesis, European egocentrism will be explored through Enrique Dussel's lens. When European egocentrism replaced the aristocracy, refugees were relegated to this lower class, as there was always a need for someone to perform some insignificant tasks. Phillips captures this dynamic powerfully in Dorothy's bus scene. While returning from a seaside town, Dorothy's inner voice criticises a woman shaking sand off her feet, saying, "Someone less important than her will clean that up."

> "Across the aisle, a blowsy woman proceeded to annoy me, for she slapped sand 23 from he unshod feet onto the floor of the bus, where she no doubt imagined that somebody less important than her would clean it up." (Phillips, 2007: 42)

When European egocentrism replaced the aristocracy, refugees were relegated to this lower class, as there was always a need for someone to perform some insignificant tasks. However, this "other" who would perform these tasks had to differ from the European "who secretly feared himself to be", to borrow Outram's phrasing. For this reason, proving a lack of codes for self-control was crucial for sharply delineating distinctions, something European egocentrism heavily relied on. This is why the homeless woman drove Dorothy mad. The distinction was broken, and the sight of someone like herself – a non-Black, English woman – collapsed the internal and external separation discussed by Elias. Consequently, the ego, defined through the other, was shattered. Dorothy, who had constructed her identity around being housed and respectable, staying in a 20-year marriage to sustain that image, faced her breaking point through this homeless woman. Despite her rights being taken away by her school, Dorothy chose to accept an early retirement offer to buy a house instead of fighting for justice. Having a house was so significant that Dorothy chose security over justice, avoiding a battle with the headmaster and the man who manipulated their brief affair into his next job. Thus, we could argue that the homeless woman, embodying everything Dorothy defined herself against, shattered her ego. Returning to Elias, the artificial distinction between internal and external collapses when the ego, defined through the other, faces the destruction of that other. As Outram notes, influenced by a Christian tradition that justified the elimination of the other for "a good purpose", the other had to be vilified, dehumanised and depicted as something subhuman or monstrous. The barbarity of the guillotine during the French Revolution could be seen as an intentional strategy to strip the executed of their humanity and dignity. Similarly, in Phillips's narrative, the detailed depiction of Said's violent death and the massacre of Gabriel's sisters and family could be seen not as emphasising their victimhood but as deliberately alienating them, diminishing the sanctity of their bodies. Here, a great inversion is exposed: are we empathising with the victims through the striking imagery of their bodies' being desacralised by framing them in their fluids like the prison

depiction of Said or are we only feeling more of the pain due to the depiction of violent assault and sexual content attached to it on the girls?

When juxtaposed to Dorothy's untouchable body, the text is only creating a "gigantic inversion", which Enrique Dussel elaborates on in his book **The Invention of Americas**.

> The myth of modernity perpetrates a gigantic inversion: the innocent victim becomes culpable, and the culpable victimizer becomes innocent. (Dussel,1995: 67)

Said, Gabriel-Solomon and Mahmood are indeed given voice but only to their victimisation, and the narrative is provided by a European who has framed those people within that violence and who knows that violence and sex are great tools to have the attention.

> Conceptually modern rationality affords an emancipative potential to civilizations with less developed instruments, technologies, practical politico-economic structures, and capacities for subjective expression. But, at the same time, this concept hides the domination or violence that modernity exercises over other cultures. Modernity justifies the Other's suffering because it saves many innocent victims from the barbarity of these cultures. (Dussel, 1995: 65)

On the other side, Outram offers another striking observation, providing a unique perspective on Phillips's depiction of contemporary England. As Turner, quoted in Outram, states:

> States do not only, as fashionable sociology would have us believe, manipulate individuals in late capitalist society through the creation and manipulation of desires; they also do so in the challenges they produce to individual physical dignity. (Turner, as cited in Outram, 1989: 23)

Indeed, the deliberate neglect of Said and Solomon in prison, leading to Said's death and the dismissal of Solomon's death without even a cautionary line, are questions Phillips raises in his narrative. Viewed through Turner's lens, these actions represent the state's deliberate assault on individual physical dignity.

CHAPTER FOUR
TRANS-MODERNITY

> Beyond this prison there is England. Three days ago, when they first locked him in this cell with Said, Gabriel began to doubt that he would ever again see England. (Phillips, 2005: 45)

In the scene where Said desperately asks the English policemen whether freedom can be smelled in the English air, the novel stages the false promise of modernity as described by Enrique Dussel. Said, having sold all he had in Iraq and surviving a traumatic journey, arrives in England with the hope of dignity, safety and freedom. Yet, he is placed in prison, silenced and ultimately dehumanised. Dussel argues that modernity, while presenting itself as a universal emancipatory project, in fact operates through the exclusion and domination of the Other. Said's naive belief in the ideals of British modernity – freedom, fairness and dignity – is crushed by the very system that claims to uphold them. His question to the police – "Is it true that in England you can smell freedom in the air?" – represents a tragic irony, showing how deeply colonial myths of the West have been internalised by those it continues to oppress. In this sense, Said's faith in England is not a sign of gullibility but the result of what Dussel names as the myth of modernity: the ideological veil that hides the imperial violence beneath the language of progress and civilisation.

The way these refugee characters are depicted, along with what is said and unsaid about them, the stereotypical portrayal of both Said and Mahmood, with Said's comical naivety and Mahmood's eastern smell suggests that Phillips is also influenced by the historical and institutional conditions that treat these migrant bodies as "refuse" (Gilroy, 2005: 45). This treatment is evident in the details of the story: all open language about brutal violence against non-Whites and the implied abuse of Dorothy's younger sister, as well as the lingering questions about the incestuous assault Sheila might have suffered, all of which evoke the idea that Phillips' narrative reflects the historical and institutional forces that reduce the human body to something disposable.

These institutional and historical conditions also require us to understand a concept that Gilroy points to as a project, and what Enrique Dussel refers to as trans-modernity. Said's story and personality are not fully revealed, although only his

naivety about his positive belief in Britain is. Alongside other cliches, such as the one that he was brainwashed about a better life, trans modernity, in Dussel's terms, is the most fatal one about him. Through his story, we can trace the power of this grand project – the idea that Europe is the centre of the world, that the West is the most advanced civilisation and the constructed perception of modernity or better life – is the reason why Said took this journey. It could be argued that he was fooled into believing that a better life was there.

Having discussed why and how Europe created a self-centred idea of the world, Dussel makes the following comments:

> When the Turks took over Constantinople in 1453, Europe found itself surrounded and reduced to a minimal role. Thus Hegel slips into myopic Eurocentrism when he speaks of Europe as the beginning, center, and end of world history. Western Europe, which never was the center of history, had to wait until 1492 to establish itself empirically as the center with other civilizations as its periphery. In my opinion, western Europe's bursting the bounds within which Islam had confined it, gave birth to modernity. In 1492 the European ego first transformed other subjects and peoples into its objects and instruments for its own Europeanizing, civilizing, and modernizing purposes. (Dussel, 1995:90)

This manufactured ego comes to the surface with the presence of the refugee who can challenge this narrative being told.

> I want to propose that it is the infrahuman political body of the immigrant rather than the body of the sovereign that comes to represent all the discomforting ambiguities of the empire's painful and shameful but apparently nonetheless exhilarating history. The immigrant is now here because Britain, Europe, was once out there; that basic fact of global history is not usually deniable. And yet its grudging recognition provides a stimulus for forms of hostility rooted in the associated realization that today's unwanted settlers carry all the ambivalence of empire with them. They project it into the unhappy consciousness of their fearful and anxious hosts and neighbors. (Gilroy, 2005: 100)

This big project of trans-modernity fools Said into imagining a better life in prison. Although it might be argued that his naivety is a way of the artist bringing some questions into mind, the scale of detailed violence to his body undermines that tiny glitter of good intention. The art is misleading us to accepting his naivety rather than creating a platform for us to question. Gilroy identifies this as Dussel's concept of trans-modernity and points out that this concept has deeper and broader effects than we might initially think.

> As what Enrique Dussel calls 'trans-modernity,' a geopolitical project with a longer reach and more profound consequences than is customarily appreciated." (Gilroy, 2005:44)

It could be argued that it was that big project that trapped Said, which Gilroy also observes as "manufactured expensively surrogate memory of World War II". (Gilroy, 2005:88). Gilroy argues that with the help of Hollywood, the audiences – including refugees – were exposed to a selective memory of the past (Gilroy, 2005: 88). We can see that phenomenon being projected in individuals' lives as in Said's story. Dorothy has a selective memory of her childhood trauma and chooses not to face the past and rejects her parents for not being the manufactured perfect image of a family.

It is important to note that Said is associated with Iraq. The international community was told of nuclear weapons being at the hand of a rogue leader and the nuclear weapons. The invasion was done for a noble reason to save the world from the dangers of a possible nuclear attack. No nuclear weapons have been discovered in Iraq. This is not the first time that an identity has been created for communities. Using the French Revolution, which was bloody, as an example, Outram notes the following:

> We have much evidence that the men of the Revolution enjoyed manufacturing their classical identities for themselves; in doing so they passed easily from their previous practice of identifying with the heroes and heroines of novels, to identifying with the heroes of classical times. heroines of novels, to identifying with the heroes of classical times. It was also a practice widespread over the whole range of political spectrum. (Outram, 1989: 78)

The close identification with World War II is visible from the very first introduction to the fictional Weston, which is told to be twinned with villages in Germany and France.

> Then after that there's the big sign that reads 'Weston' and announces the fact that we are twinned with some town in Germany and a village in the south of France. In the estate agent's bumf about 'Stoneleigh' it says that during the Second World War the German town was bombed flat by the RAF and the French village used to be full of Jews who were all rounded up and sent to the camps. (Phillips, 2005:4)

The estate agent that will use a refugee to cover up the pitfalls of their buildings uses the selective memory of its customers about the heroic past of the country. A German town bombed flat can be justified to save a village or people, but we can never

pause on that. In the same vein, the centrality of extreme violence against refugee agents, which is reflected in the fiction, can only be denied at "a considerable moral and psychological cost" (Gilroy, 2005:94). However, violence draws the reader into the text. Moreover, violence might have been an integral part of the Eurocentric perspective. This is because, as Enrique Dussel argues in **The Invention of the Americas**, Eurocentrism is a project, and the idea that the Americas were "discovered" by Europeans in 1492 was constructed as part of this project, even though the continent was not actually "discovered" by Europeans.

Dussel suggests that Europe needed an "other" to construct its own image, and through the perception of this "other", Europe could define itself as "modern". Moreover, it could be suggested that, in this context, the West keeps migrant and refugee movements under its control to serve this Eurocentric perception. These movements allow countries to create opportunities for cheaper labour within their borders. To think otherwise – that a global economic power like Britain does not entirely control its borders or that the "illegals" might be a phenomenon deliberately ignored by these countries – would challenge the critical thinking skills that the Western educational system so loudly champions.

However, within the narrative, we become so lost that, for example, while the state fails to protect a young girl, Denise and the potential abuse she could have suffered remain suspended in uncertainty, and we cannot question why the state is unable to act. Simultaneously, we read about how the state roars with force against a poor migrant and Said imprisoning him just because he was accused of robbing a purse. This narrative gives details of a legal system that provides a refugee with lawyer, a solicitor and a smoothly opened court case in a country that is depicted as unable to provide health care for their prisons. We see a system that weaponises the legal system against refugees while helpless at protecting a minor of the country: Denise. Even though the fiction does not problematise this, it is our moral obligation to point to the contrasting ease at trial against a migrant and Black person, as well as the purposeful denial of human rights at the prisons depicted through the prison cell stories of Said and Gabriel/Solomon and denial of care of a minor (as in the stories of Denise and Sheila).

In his Book **The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century**, Linebaugh argues that public executions were not just means of punishing criminals but also a tool for social control used to enforce the emerging capitalist order in 18th-century London. Linebaugh, in his detailed study of those hanged at the gallows in The London Hanged, references the collaborative work **Albion's Fatal Tree** and compels us to confront a history where violence was instrumentalised to strengthen authority.

> In contrast, Albion's Fatal Tree argued that law was central to ruling-class authority, replacing in some respects the role formerly played by religion. (Linebaugh, 1991: xxiii)

For Linebaugh, that close inspection of a special time in British history is important as it provides us with a class struggle that included an expropriation of the poor from the means of production, challenging us to rethink all the ideals linked to the trans-modernity. Moreover, it also sheds light on how British bodies were also desacralised:

> "Urban proletarians lived in dirt; they lived by an economy of wastes; they were part of a 'marginal' or 'disposable' population; they lived 'without the discipline of either the patriarchal family or schools and hospitals." (Linebaugh, 1991:149)

Here, Jack Shepperd is referred to, and it is through his dissidence that we get a glimpse of 18th-century relationships.

Phillips's fiction opens a space to see unlawful practices in modern-day Britain, which, two centuries ago, used public executions as a way of taming people. The urban proletariat morphed into refugees. British nationals, the new urban proletariat, was held in US Camp Deltas without any charges or trial (Gilroy, 2005:130).

This brings into question if there was a "moral common ground", like Rodriquez cited at the beginning of our thesis, in the establishment of modern Britain:

> Likewise, questions are raised about the relationship between ruling-class plunder and the depredations of the poor, because he lived at a time when imperialist conquest and domestic expropriations had few checks." (Linebaugh, 1991: 8)

> They are confined among a total of approximately 600 prisoners who at the time of writing held citizenship from more than forty countries. The regime at the camp has been harshly judged by the International Red Cross, which had access to the detainees and noted a worrying deterioration in their mental health, and the International Bar

> Association's task force on international terrorism, which found problems in the way that inmates were neither accorded rights under the Geneva Convention as prisoners of war nor recognized as civilians under the domestic laws of the United States." (Gilroy, 2005: 130)

Linebaugh examines how justice and violence are used to hold authority, stating that the sailors held a disproportionate number among the hanged at the gallows. He notes, "Their labor brought the international products that gave to London its cosmopolitan sophistication" (Linebaugh, 1991:116).

Our times are witnessing a different agent bringing cosmopolitan sophistication to Britain: immigrants and refugees. Like the sailors of the 18th century, they contribute to the economic and cultural vibrancy of contemporary Britain, yet they remain marginalised and disproportionately affected by systemic injustices. Rather than being dehumanised or instrumentalised, immigrants and refugees should be recognised not only for their contributions but also for their humanity. Their stories and agency must move beyond the framework of victimhood to reflect their integral role in shaping modern, cosmopolitan societies.

CONCLUSION

> "…but that modern life begins with slavery…Slavery broke the world in half, it broke it in every way. It broke Europe. It made them into something else, it made them slave masters, it made them crazy. You can't do that for hundreds of years and it not take a toll. They had to dehumanize, not just the slaves but themselves. They have had to reconstruct everything in order to make that system appear true. It made everything in world war two possible. It made world war one necessary. Racism is the word that we use to encompass all this." (Morrison qtd. in Gilroy, 1993: 178)

In **Beginning Postcolonialism**, John McLeod discusses Paul Gilroy's groundbreaking book, **The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness**. Gilroy introduces the concept of the Black Atlantic, which he sees as a complex space shaped by interactions, tensions and diverse identities that transcend national borders. He suggests that the continuous movement of Black populations to and from Africa, the Caribbean, America and Britain has left a profound impact on Western civilisation. Importantly, Gilroy criticises any attempt to view Black communities as static, instead highlighting their dynamic, cross-cultural interactions. For Gilroy, the Atlantic is not merely a geographic region; rather, it represents a powerful site of cultural exchange, identity formation and solidarity that actively challenges traditional, narrow views about cultural purity or fixed identities.

A Distant Shore represents life in Britain and exposes its everyday interactions. The novel starts with an anonymous voice from an unknown person. It begins in the first-person singular, and the reader learns that the name of the person is the 5337th word. It also starts with that anonymous person moving to a new location. Then, we realise that she is a teacher. She visits the local pub and gets the impression that a female doctor who arrived earlier could not stay. There is a group of young people in that pub who occupy the background stage in the narrative. Several of those teenage groups will appear several times throughout the narrative as an unpleasant, loud crowd sipping beer. We learn her sister's name after her inner voice shows us an image of a normal family. Her childish usage of "dad" is one of elements that we could argue shows her being in that stage. Later, before her name is disclosed, we learn that everyone has just moved in and purchased new homes in a cul-de-sac, although it is not like those seen in Istanbul's poor neighbourhoods or old historical districts. These

12 houses are neatly organised in a circle, most likely in an area where motorists drive in one direction and park in front of the residences. It might be argued here that the developers know that the new settlers will have no problems having cars or fuelling their cars, which would expand the argument about the strong connections to the colonial dependence on oil.

At this stage in the story, everyone is still a stranger to one another, and each individual keeps to themselves. We meet Solomon, who works as a caretaker or watchman for this neighbourhood. We learn about his name and that he is of a thin build. As he slowly cleans his car, we see that he has the narrator's attention. They will travel together, but the story does not unfold in a single time and place. No information is offered during the transitions, and the reader must keep up with the narrator's pace, deciphering cues and echoing the narrator's mental turbulence.

She examines a letter that we initially believe came from her sister, only to discover later that it is either forged or symbolic. They go to the doctor, and Solomon brings her to the doctor. During the talk, we find that her sister has died, yet she had just stated that she had gotten a letter from her sister.

To make the tempo slower and, in Bhabha's terms, to give us a Black person who looks like a Westerner, Dorothy and Solomon (Gabriel) head to a Mediterranean restaurant for dinner. While discussing the doctor, Solomon enquires about the letter, while Dorothy claims that she did not read it. When he finds it strange and asks some questions about it, Dorothy gets angry, and we hear the inner racist thoughts. In Dorothy's eyes, Solomon suddenly becomes the "watchman in his free bungalow", and the kebab they eat brings the reader to the ones who would die for that kebab.

Selective, essentialist views are conveyed by Dorothy's inner voice when she starts thinking about "who belongs and who doesn't". However, her brief yet intimate connection with Solomon – with their mutual curiosity, shared vulnerability and an almost unspoken recognition – echoes Gilroy's concept of conviviality, which he defines as "the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of social life" (**Postcolonial Melancholia**: xi). In their fleeting time together, Dorothy and Solomon demonstrate hopes of defying the categories of self and other, White and Black and host and guest.

However, the villagers' reaction to their proximity – a mixture of suspicion, gossip and quiet disapproval – activates what Bhabha, via Freud, calls "the uncanny", i.e., "when something familiar returns in an unfamiliar form", producing anxiety and disruption (Bhabha, 1994: 143). Given the complexity of Bhabha's theoretical framework, we find it useful to once again draw on John McLeod's explanatory approach to clarify certain conceptual nuances.

> Second, in using the term 'incommensurable cultural temporalities', Bhabha anticipates the next stage in his argument where he traces how an aesthetics of the border impacts upon received binary knowledges. These ideas, exciting and challenging, need contextualising first in terms of Bhabha's influence by the psychoanalytical work of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. In his Introduction, Bhabha turns to Freud's writings on the unheimlich (often translated as the 'unhomely' or 'uncanny'). As Freud uses the term, an uncanny experience can be prompted when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when something that has been previously concealed or forgotten disturbingly returns. In Bhabha's thinking, the disruption of received totalising narratives of individual and group identity made possible at the 'border' can be described as an 'uncanny' moment, where all those forgotten in the construction of, say, national groups return to disturb and haunt such holistic ways of thinking. This uncanny disruption brings with it trauma and anxiety. It serves as a reminder that exclusive, exclusionary systems of meaning are forever haunted by those who are written out and erased. At the limits of conventional knowledge, these figures return as disruptive 'unhomely' presences that cannot be articulated through existing patterns of representation. It is this uncanny presence which Bhabha seizes upon as having the power to disrupt the exclusive binary logic upon which a range of discourses – nationalist, colonialist, patriarchal – depend. (McLeod, 2000: 219–220)

In "The Uncanny", Freud explores uncanny emotional experience, arguing that they arise not simply from fear or strangeness but from something once familiar (**heimlich**) that has been repressed and then returned in an altered, disturbing form. He famously describes the uncanny as "the return of the repressed". Freud supports his argument through linguistic analysis, noting that the German word "**heimlich**" means both familiar and unfamiliar. He argues that "the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (Freud, 1919). Significantly, Freud wrote this essay during World War I, which Toni Morrison refers to as a war necessitated by slavery (Gilroy, 1993: 178), citing "the circumstances of the time "for not being able to " conduct the necessary literature review".

Solomon's presence, as a racialised migrant body in a White English space, functions as what Bhabha calls an "unhomely" figure who unsettles the community's

self-image. Although the narrative does not explicitly narrate any public reaction to Dorothy's relationship with Gabriel Solomon, the accumulation of narrative details allows us to infer an atmosphere of social judgment and discomfort. Early in the novel, even before Dorothy's name is revealed, we are told that in this small town, she has seen the same people every day for three months – a setting where nothing goes unnoticed.

> But I see everybody all the time. The young courting couple, the yobs who were playing outside, the landlord. You can't help it. You go for a walk, or you go to get a paper, or you wat by the bus stop, and there they all are, the cast of the village acting out their assigned roles. (Phillips, 2005: 9)

Later, when Mrs. Lawson, Carla's mother, confronts Dorothy about slapping her daughter, she remarks:

> "I think you should remember, it's a small village, and like you I've been used to the town. But these people, they talk, you know." "About who?" "About you, Miss Jones. There are good people in the village that you can spend time with. You don't have to be by yourself." (Phillips, 2005:14)

Then, there comes Carla's apparent gaslighting of Dorothy's mental health when she says, "I'm sorry too, Miss. […] Is it true you'll be going into a home?" (Ibid: 14). These fragmented instances and that she wants to be home "without being seen" (Ibid.: 27) construct a backdrop of whispering judgment and social surveillance. Given that Dorothy and Solomon have already visited the hospital together multiple times, and the setting is described as tightly-knit and observant, it becomes reasonable to assume that their association has not gone unnoticed and Mrs Lawson, who had implied she is on her own, knew this and has likely contributed to the sense of unease that surrounds Dorothy. Thus, the tension between her and the community, though never directly expressed, is carefully embedded in the silences, hints and evasions of the narrative. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that she takes it very lightly that Carla is gaslighting her mental health and the narrative gives a positive image of Carla. It is the same Carla who reacts very "of her age" when she is slapped and who is old enough to put on make-up and go to the town. However, that we are made to feel that she is making a childish remark about something she heard from her mom is another ambivalent moment we need to question. She is told be old enough to react like an

adult to a physical assault, yet she is not old enough to tell her teacher to her face that she is going to a madhouse. Here comes a discursive identity of a White English girl, which gives us space to see that her identity is constructed ideologically.

While the narrative frames Carla as a naïve young girl – particularly in the way she brings up the possibility of Dorothy's institutionalisation – her agency is clearly visible in other sections of the text. She is portrayed entering a white van with a "hairless" boy and driving off towards the town, an action that implies autonomy and maturity. Given that the village is small, it is implausible that her mother would be unaware of these actions. Thus, Carla embodies a discursive ambivalence: she is both naïve enough to ask if Dorothy is going a "home" and mature enough to visit town with her boyfriend. This selective surveillance reflects a deeper ideological mechanism, one that allows Carla to appear harmless, even as she becomes indirectly implicated in Solomon's tragic end.

The narrative offers a form of interpretive generosity to White characters like Carla or Denise, allowing their thoughts, naivety and even silences to be read with empathy. In contrast, Solomon's inner life remains fragmented, and significant events – such as what occurred between him and Denise – are left unspoken. Said remains altogether naïve, unlike the autonomy Denise and Carla displayed. This asymmetry in narrative treatment does not only reduce the Black and refugee male characters' subjectivities but also those of characters such as Amma and Solomon's sisters. We can argue that it also targets all refugees in the novel, because their silence does not invite empathy but rather generates distance.

This thesis arrives at a crucial point in its argument: the ambivalence observed in the construction of subjectivity, as theorised by Bhabha, also permeates the figure of authority. We have claimed so far that, in the novel, the asymmetrical storytelling is hard to ignore. However, the host – i.e., the English – is not immune to this. In the kebap scene, we can observe how questions of power, identity and memory are quietly brought to the surface through their interaction.

> "Both gentleman and slave, with different cultural means and to very different historical ends, demonstrate that forces of social authority and subversion or subalternity may emerge in displaced, even decentred strategies of signification ... positions of authority may themselves be part of a process of ambivalent identification." (Bhabha, 1994: 145)

While dining with Dorothy, Solomon enquires about her medical test results, and Dorothy replies evasively, saying that they were "inconclusive" and stuffing a piece of pita bread into her mouth to avoid further explanation. It is quite meaningful for him to ask her this because this is why they are out in the town. He then asks if she replied to her sister's letter. She says she has not yet read the letter. This visibly upsets Solomon, who puts down his fork and reminds her that her sister lives just an hour away. He had previously offered to take her there.

> This strange man. The caretaker at Stoneleigh. The estate handyman in his free bungalow. Solomon and his second-hand car. Not even a dog. Just him alone, hiding behind those blinds, waiting for a piece of guttering that needs fixing or a door handle that has to be replaced. At nights I see hm out on patrol with his torch. The Irish nurse told me that if I didn't want to take the bus into town there were two volunteer drivers. And then one afternoon, of all people, he came and knocked on my door. My knight in shining armour with his polished chariot. And now Solomon wants to drive me to the coast so that I can spend some time with Shela, and all I'm thinking is why doesn't he finish his lamb kebab? There's people in the world who are starving to death and who would do anything for a bit of lamb kebab. (Phillips, 2005: 12)

Her moment of judgment, such as being irritated by Solomon's questions, is not just personal but reflective of larger social structures. In the Western context, value judgments are frequently made through references to physical space and food. Social worth is often measured not by intrinsic qualities but by external symbols – where one lives, what one eats and how visibly one consumes. As explored in the chapter on trans-modernity, Dorothy herself is subjected to this dominant discourse. To maintain satisfaction among Western citizens, media narratives deliberately construct images of a violent and chaotic East – where people are tortured or killed – thus reinforcing a sense of moral superiority and distracting from domestic hardship. In Western societies, images of war and suffering in the East serve to justify the economic difficulties of ordinary people. By seeing others in worse conditions, Western audiences are less likely to question their own struggles, such as working two jobs just to afford a home.

As Gilroy asserts in **Postcolonial Melancholia**, Western modernity often embraces multicultural symbols only superficially while maintaining a deeper structure of exclusion. In this regard, the presence of "kebab" in the restaurant scene is symbolic of asking if it is a cross-cultural conviviality. How Eastern cultures are

reduced to consumable items, stripped of their histories and presented in a sanitised format acceptable to the Western gaze.

As Gilroy points out, “exciting, unfamiliar cultures can be consumed in the absence of any face-to-face recognition or real-time negotiation with their actual creators” (Gilroy, 2005: 125). Just because Dorothy consumes kebap does not mean that she is engaging with that culture.

Cul-De-Sac

The essentialism that Gilroy critiques is vividly reflected in the landlord’s assertion: “there’s nobody in Weston who would do anything like that; we're all good.” This same exclusionary attitude is evident in the community’s discomfort with Dorothy being seen alongside a Black man, as well as in the racist graffiti targeting Mike's house. Such an essentialist mindset cannot even tolerate two-way movement; cul-de-sacs, with their one-way, closed traffic systems, metaphorically embody a sense of safety that ultimately proves ineffective and paralyzing in times of crisis.

At the far end of the cul-de-sac, where Dorothy chooses to live, the illusion of safety and detachment becomes spatially materialised. This positioning is not merely architectural; it signifies her desire to withdraw from the unpredictability of social encounters. From this vantage point, she claims, “You can see everything when you live near the far end of a cul-de-sac”, revealing her longing for control and surveillance in a world she finds increasingly chaotic. However, this quiet, closed circle also suggests isolation and the dead-end-like nature of the modern subject’s pursuit of security. In **A Distant Shore**, the cul-de-sac, typically associated with suburban stability, becomes a metaphor for the narrowing of social connection. Dorothy’s gaze from the far end reflects a deeper commentary on how space, especially in postmodern suburban England, can simultaneously offer refuge and reinforce alienation.

In Dorothy’s obsessive attachment to her bungalow at the far end of the cul-de-sac, we encounter not merely a need for safety but a symbolic return to what Norbert Elias describes as the civilisational boundary between the “inside” and the “outside”. Within this frame, the house becomes a fortress of order, morality and stability, juxtaposed against the unpredictable, foreign “outside”. This is especially

resonant in Dorothy's praise of her parents' fifty-five-year-long marriage, despite being fully aware of the sexual abuse within their household. Her admiration is not rooted in emotional health but in the endurance of domestic structure. In this logic, success is measured by being "under a roof", regardless of the psychological cost. The internal decay is masked by the external shell – the house itself. This mirrors Elias's view that the civilising process often results in an increased investment in appearances and social performance, even when inner dysfunction persists. Thus, the bungalow, rather than offering intimacy, serves as an ideological armour: a structure that maintains the illusion of "belonging" and "normalcy" within a deeply fractured social reality.

This thesis has examined Gilroy's concept of conviviality as articulated in **Postcolonial Melancholia** through its reflections in Caryl Phillips's **A Distant Shore**. By exploring the intersections of race, migration and systemic inequity, the study has shed light on whether Phillips's narrative both reinforces and critiques Eurocentric perceptions of refugees and their place within contemporary British society. In Phillips's work, a lack of nuanced portrayal of refugee characters such as Solomon, Mahmood and Said reveals how the dehumanisation and desacralisation of their bodies perpetuate a narrative of marginalisation. The depiction of violence, a centred image of self as analysed through Enrique Dussel's lens of trans-modernity and Dorinda Outram's exploration of humiliation during the French Revolution, underscores how systemic oppression is instrumentalised to assert authority and sustain hierarchical structures.

By juxtaposing the detailed and visceral suffering of refugees with the filtered vulnerabilities of Western European characters like Dorothy, Phillips's narrative exposes the asymmetry in how humanity is afforded or denied across cultural lines.

At the same time, **A Distant Shore** reflects the potential for fleeting moments of interaction and coexistence, which Gilroy identifies as the essence of conviviality. However, these moments remain constrained by deeply ingrained biases and systemic barriers of the narrator, who chooses to trap the refugee. We argue that the text opens a window to face where we can think about whether Gilroy's idea of conviviality is possible. While Phillips provides a space to discuss the complexities of conviviality,

his narrative also reflects the limitations of Eurocentric perspectives that reduce refugees to instruments of tension or symbols of suffering. By engaging with the works of Gilroy, Bhabha, Dussel, Spivak, Outram and others, this study underscores the need to challenge the dominant narratives that silence refugee agency and perpetuate cycles of marginalisation. Ultimately, **A Distant Shore** serves as a critical site for interrogating the myth of modernity and the historical and institutional forces that shape the lived realities of refugees. Through its detailed exploration of violence, the novel falls short of compelling readers to confront uncomfortable truths. However, a national pathology that Gilroy is pointing to is becoming more visible. This analysis contributes to ongoing conversations about representation, humanity and the transformative and destructive possibilities of literature in addressing these pressing global issues.

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