The Waves of Heterotopia: Somewheres and Nowheres in *A Distant Shore*

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Abstract:- According to Julia Kristeva, the refugee has historically been seen as an archetype of marginalization and displacement as well as a liminal "abject" other. By utilizing Paul Gilroy's idea of "conviviality," this article contends that Caryl Phillips' novel A Distant Shore deconstructs these ideas and offers a different way of reimagining the refugee figure. The mutual trust and recognition amongst the various characters in this work serves as another example of Phillips' sensitive balancing of the isolation and oppression of the refugee with the potential for multicultural conviviality.

The stereotypes of refugees, alienation, exile, passivity, and marginalization are contested in this essay, which also gives the refugee character agency in the postmodern "discourse of resilience" (Ager 18). The essay claims that Phillips used counter-narratives in the novel to deftly strike a balance between Solomon's feeling of exclusion and the idea of him playing a vital role in creating "convivial" settings.

Raj Shah asserts that heterotopias are frequently (but not always) portrayed in books as areas of opposition to dominant ideologies, giving the characters a peek of another way of life. This essay, however, disproves the all-too-common fallacy about heterotopias.

Keywords:- Refugee, Otherness, Convivial, Alienation, Trauma, Britishness, Violence, Liminality, Race, Multiculturalism, Heterotopia, Somewhere, Nowhere.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dorothy, a retired teacher, recently relocated to a home development in a tiny town. Solomon is an African immigrant who works as a night watchman. Each yearns for love. However, they all conceal mysteries that might make obtaining them difficult.

Caryl Phillips retraces the paths that led Dorothy and Solomon to their meeting place with breathtaking assurance and compassion: her failed marriage and destructive obsession with a younger man, his horrors he saw as a soldier in his crumbling native land, and the cruelty he encounters as a stranger in his new one. A Distant Shore depicts the vast chasms that divide people from their homes, their hearts, and themselves in a way that is both intimate and expansive, measured and shattering.

The term "refugee" is understudied and neglected in literary studies, according to Caren Kaplan. The "refugee" is a critical motif that, in her opinion, denotes a "faceless political construct beyond the field of literature and aesthetics," but "exile" is "a romantic figure that can be easily identified and positioned in an aestheticized world of creativity and loss." (Kaplan, 120) There is a moral obligation to "accept the dignity which informs the limited participation of the migrant, the asylum seeker, or the refugee," according to writers like Caryl Phillips, who claim that "it is impossible to resist the claims of the migrant, the asylum seeker, or the refugee" (Phillips 2002, 5-6). By giving the refugee a voice and an agency in his seventh book, A Distant Shore, Phillips gives an alternate perspective on how to rethink the refugee figure.

The book's main character, Solomon, is an African "refugee" who flees civil conflict in his nameless nation and finally settles in the made-up English town of Weston. According to Petra Tournay-Theodotou (300), the refugee Solomon is frequently viewed as a threat in the book. This essay disputes that claim and contends that A Distant Shore defines a dialectical but nonetheless essential "convivial culture" that subverts the notion of the "refugee" figure as a sort of liminal "abject" other in the midst of a pervasive racism fed by the multicultural crisis and resistance to "otherness." According to Julia Kristeva (1982), the "intolerable" or "abject" is the person who is both excluded from and included in the nation-geographical state's boundaries and so continues to challenge the predetermined lines between "us" and "them." As a result, the definable subject is not opposed by the abject other when they are separated by a defined distance. Although it is only slightly to the other side of the border, the abject is distinct from the subject. (Young 144) As a result, the refugee and the asylum seeker are transformed into the "abject" other who challenges the idea of borders. The definition of the refugee as an archetype of passivity, exile, and marginalization is furthered by Kristeva's concept of the abject.

According to Nowicka and Vertovec (341), the word conviviality derives from the Latin prefix "con," which means "together," and the verb "vivere," which means "to live." In his book *After Empire*, Paul Gilroy conceptualizes the term "conviviality" as "the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary element of social life" based on this definition. On the one hand, this idea raises the possibility of a conscious encounter with rambunctious, unplanned, and regular cross-cultural contact in local settings.

Noble adds that these "convivial" interactions may develop into ongoing talks based on emotional investment rather than just chance encounters. Gilroy, on the other hand, argues that the negation of conviviality has always been close by. He is adamant that acknowledging conviviality "should not imply the absence of racism." (Gilroy 2006, 40). To put it another way, conviviality also includes concepts like imperial melancholy and "camp mentality," which are made up of concepts like absoluteness and purity based on "race, nation, and ethnic distinction" (Gilroy 2000, 83) and unchanging identities. These commonplace instances of racism are not just defined by simple oppositions between black and white, ex-colonizer and ex-colonized, but also by disputes between locals who have lived there for a long time and recent immigrants, which result in new kinds of social exclusion. This essay examines how A Distant Shore takes a "convivial turn" by emphasizing the emergence of an unusual friendship between many individuals. Additionally, it clarifies how the novel's "convivial shift" challenges the hierarchical relationships between host and guest, tolerator and tolerated, and the familiar and unfamiliar to portray the unpredictable dynamics of day-to-day encounters based on the inclusion of cultural differences.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Raj Shah, heterotopias are commonly (but not always) depicted in novels as countersites of resistance against conventional ideology, providing the protagonists with glimpses of another way of life. However, this essay challenges the all-too-common misconception of heterotopias as shown by the following definition: "Heterotopias represent a kind of a haven for the protagonists, and are very often to be found in their memories, in their dreams…" (Shah, 2014)

"Etymologically, heterotopia denotes the contraction of 'hetero' (another, different) and 'topos' (place)" (Dehaene & De Cautre, 2008). According to Dehaene & De Cautre, heterotopia is observed as "a crossroad of the conceptual flight lines that shape public space". (p. 4). Heterotopias are real places but "they are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about" (p. 24). Heterotopias, according to Foucault, are "other places" that are the polar opposite of utopias, which are "sites with no true place" (p. 24). "In a presentation for architects in 1967, Foucault originated the word, pointing to numerous institutions and places that disturb the apparent continuity and normality of ordinary everyday

space," according to Wikipedia (Dehaene & De Cautre, 2008). Heterotopias, according to Foucault, are mingled experiences of utopias and reality, which he further simplifies by using a mirror. Despite the fact that the term is overly complicated and philosophical, Foucault identifies some characteristics of such places and outlines guidelines that such places must follow in order to be classified as heterotopias. He refers to a combination of "simultaneous mythological and real contestation of space" as heterotopology (p. 24). Heterotopias, according to Westphal (2011), are a phenomena that "puts the two examples in opposition to one another" (p. 63). "Heterotopias are "countersites" in which "actual" sites are portrayed, challenged, and reversed," he continues (p. 63)

Foucault considers space to be the most pressing issue of our time. He categorizes different forms of space in order to analyze them. As he describes it in his text, space is an ecosystem of visible and invisible layers of relationships. As a result, there is an emotional space, an imaginative space, such as the space of our dreams, that is both tangible and ethereal. There is no such thing as an empty space or a void. Every person integrates into the existing spatial networks, which are defined by their program, such as cafes and theatres, or a bedroom and a house. He claims that conflicting areas, such as working and leisure environments, continue in their pure integral nature in our time, retaining a fine border between them. As a result, despite Galileo's theoretical proof of an indefinitely open space, a practical desanctification of space is still impossible. The space formed by the mirror is examined, as is the concept of a utopian space, which is essentially a flawless virtual space or, as he puts it, "a placeless place... I'm over there, where I'm not' (Foucault, 1986: p. 24), but describes it as a heterotopian realm because the mirror has a bodily existence. 'Once totally real, related to all of space around it, and once absolutely unreal, because in it to be perceived, it must pass through this virtual point over there.' (Foucault, 1986: p. 24)

Cultural developments, such as the custom of graves, change the definition of a heterotopia throughout time. Prisons and Moslem hammams, for example, are heterotopic environments that indicate a specific attitude and activity to the individual who enters them. Carpets, according to Foucault, are "onto which the whole universe comes to enact its symbolic perfection, and the rag is a short of garden that may move over space" (Foucault, 1986: p. 26). Boats, he continues, are the great reserve of imagination for every civilisation because they are timeless and spaceless, drifting freely in the endlessness of the sea, always moving onward.

"Of Other Spaces" offers a unique perspective on both internal and external space. The link between geography and history was intriguing, and it made me think about them both separately and linked. Our epoch's example and explanation were instructive. Foucault makes a comparison between space and time. Time, according to him, is different and separate; we are aware of the past and future. Space, in contrast to time, is

more difficult to distinguish and separate. Because utopia is not a real space, but heterotopia is, the explanation for Utopias and Heterotopias has provided some description of what they are. However, both utopia and heterotopia were difficult to debate and comprehend due to their complexity and intellectual nature. To assist the reader understand these terms, he employs a mirror.

III. THE WAVES OF HETEROTOPIA IN *A DISTANT SHORE*

A Distant Shore's narrative rhapsody includes numerous 'deviant' individuals, such as Solomon or Dorothy, and 'heterotopian' milieus, such as England or a village named "Stoneleigh," which serves as an archetypal 'narrative contact zone,' where fictitious players conflict, engage, or intercommunicate." (Oner & Bal, 2015)

The first premise asserts that heterotopias exist in all locales, civilizations, and societies. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and Foucault classifies them into two categories: crisis heterotopias and deviation heterotopias. (p. 24) Phillips begins the tale with a description of a real location, England. The English North, where this settlement is located, is described by McLeod (2011) as a "imagined heterotopia" (p. 27). This location, however, has already been altered and is now "disturbing" (p. 6). The new hamlet is referred to as "new development," but the villagers dislike the name and call it "new dwellings on the hill" (p. 6). The second function of the sixth Foucaldian principle can be seen in this new village. The new location was created to restore the order that had been lost in the previous location. Furthermore, the location is on the fringes of Weston, and some residents continue to identify as Weston residents. Stoneleigh residents behave differently than Weston residents, making Stoneleigh a type of heterotopia. The settlement has an entrance and a road that leads to it, further separating it from the other town. Given that his protagonists, Dorothy and Solomon, originate from different countries and even continents, Phillips employs different locales as heterotopias, reinforcing the first principle that they exist in all places and cultures.

Grammar schools and "grammar-school guys in their white shirts and ties" are one of the crisis heterotopias identified at the outset (p. 8). This is comparable to boarding schools, which Foucault offered as an example of crises heterotopias in primitive civilizations when young males mature into adults. (p.24) Dorothy is also a professor at a university, which is one of the heterotopias where various events take occur.

Hospitals, prisons, and graves are the most important heterotopias in the novel when it comes to heterotopias of deviance. Dorothy frequent hospitals owing to her insomnia and eventually ends up in a mental institution (p. 66). Sheila, her sister, has also been admitted to the hospital owing to cancer. Dorothy should also pay her respects to her parents' and sister's graves. (page 24) Phillips calls their tombs their "last resting place" (p. 24) Dorothy acts as though this is a normal place where her parents live, and she speaks as if she had visited them while they were still living (p. 31, p. 49). Some heterotopias are just stated briefly, with no more explanation of the description or circumstances surrounding them. Homes for the aged, according to Foucault, are "borderline between the heterotopia of crisis and the heterotopia of deviation" (p. 25).

The second principle suggests that existing heterotopias can evolve through time and take on new functions. (p. 25) The architecture of the new settlement was regarded as "the only history around these areas" by architecture (p. 7) The area was originally established for miners and had a variety of housing types, including "typical miners' homes, built of drab red brick" (p.7). Stoneleigh is defined as a unique town with a variety of housing types and residents, "newcomers, or affluent so-and-sos," as Phillips describes them (p. 7).

"The boxes that used to contain fridges or enormous color television sets" (p. 13) have been converted to serve as homes for homeless persons and beggars who "sit around the precincts during the day playing the guitar." Because this does not contain typical, common dwelling, this sort of heterotopia can be considered as something that has changed its role or as a heterotopia of deviation. Solomon relates his experiences with shelters in the same way: "...tin-roofed slums, where beggars roamed the streets... "There were locations where giant rats bred freely and wandered by day and night, places for the crippled and maimed." (p. 135)

The third principle of Foucault deals with heterotopias, which juxtapose "in a single physical place several spaces, several places that are incompatible in themselves" (p. 25). Phillips addressed farms and gardens in passing throughout the book. Despite the fact that Dorothy had traversed the public path, the farmer's land was home to cows and lambs. (Phillips et al., 2003) Gardens are never explicitly detailed, but are only mentioned quickly, usually in a negative perspective, such as "badly overgrown with weeds" (p. 144) The following passage best describes the garden as a representation of heterotopias: "After this morning's tests, they walked around her sister's garden, and Sheila pointed out all the plants that she and Maria had planted, as she occasionally stopped to pluck off a brown leaf or break back a weed or a stray branch" (p. 231) Gardenes are classified as heterotopias by Foucault because they are contradictory in that they contain plants that would not be found together in normal conditions.

When explaining heterotopias, the fourth principle concerns time and states that they are linked to "slices of time," which he refers to as heterochrony (p. 26). Museums, libraries, fairs, fairgrounds, and vacation villages are all examples given by Foucault. These heterotopias are time-related, either accumulative or transient. Phillips employs a wide range of such heterotopias. Despite the fact that he mentions various

types of such locations, he does not describe them in depth; instead, he recounts the events that occurred there. He listed a variety of communication methods, including telephones and letters. These occurrences had to do with Dorothy's sister and a "family crisis" (p. 202) The letter was discussed multiple times, and it was almost as if it were a world unto itself, a space within a space, holding lives and events that had nothing to do with the outside world. Phillips also employs television, photos, cinema, books, periodicals, and radio in his work. All of these artifacts refer to various places and events, and the life they describe is unaffected by the item's physical location. The group's finest representative would be a movie theater that Dorothy had visited with her sister. The movie's events were completely separate from the lives and events that took place in the cinema's physical location, resulting in a heterotopia. (p. 233) A museum is another example of a heterotopia; however, Dorothy only voiced her desire to visit it without it coming true. (p. 189)

The fifth principle explains the openness of heterotopias by stating that they are open but closed at the same time, and that they involve some form of entering rite or cleansing. These heterotopias provide the impression that we are a part of something we are not. Phillips begins by describing the town's main road, which leads to doors that "weren't indicative of warmth" (p. 8). Because of its openness and proximity to outsiders, the town itself could be considered a form of heterotopia. Dorothy was roaming the streets and looking at the houses, although she wasn't a local. She eventually finds herself in another dystopia, a cramped hotel room that "smelled of rodents and filthy clothes" (p. 67). Despite the fact that she was staying in the room for a short time, she was merely "the visitor, the guest in transit" (Foucault, 1986). Similarly, heterotopias may be found in Dorothy's home in the form of various rooms, such as a bathroom or a bedroom. Before entering the bedroom, her lovers, especially Mahmood, would cleanse himself and eat.

Finally, "they have a function in connection to all the space that remains" is a hallmark of heterotopias (p.27). These heterotopias serve two purposes, according to Foucault: "to establish a place of illusion that exposes every genuine space" and "to create a space that is other, another real space, as immaculate, methodical, and well-organized as ours is untidy, ill-constructed, and disordered" (p.27). The pub or bar is one of these venues that Phillips highlighted multiple times. It is an example of a heterotopia that creates a space within a space that reveals the true world. Dorothy frequents a variety of establishments, including bars, pubs, cafes, and restaurants. Furthermore, Phillip refers to them as clubs and mentions a golf club, implying that they require a certain level of inclusion and belonging. Even Dorothy's father thinks of bars as a "safe haven" and a "shelter," indicating their heterotopia status. (P. 14)

Phillips frequently refers to automobiles, buses, trucks, boats, ships, planes, and trains when describing persons and events. On such heterotopias, a slew of noteworthy events transpired. Dorothy spends a significant amount of time at the bus station, either waiting for or riding the bus. Solomon also drives her to and from the hospital in his car (Phillips, 2003). A train is an excellent example of a heterotopia, and Dorothy has traveled by train on various occasions, including when she visited her sister. Furthermore, Solomon's voyage covered every mode of conveyance available while fleeing the country. His voyage began with a truck and continued with an aircraft, bus, rail, and ferry. A boat, according to Foucault, is "a floating piece of space, a place without a place that lives by itself, that is closed in on itself while giving itself over to the infinity of the sea" (p. 27). Phillips uses this heterotopia as one of the modes of mobility, as defined by Foucault as "the heterotopia par excellence" (p. 131). As such, all modes of transportation are spaces that are independent from other spaces and have their own space.

Heterotopias are also frequently employed in areas of the house such as basements, attics, cabinets, and bedrooms. They are common areas of the house, but Phillips distinguished them as heterotopias by separating them from the rest of the house or demanding specific permission to enter. Gabriel's uncle's "warehouse has been turned into an eerie chamber" (p. 82), for example, and only those handpicked by his uncle were allowed to access the storage room. Furthermore, Gabriel's boss Felix had a basement that no intruder was supposed to enter. Gabriel, on the other hand, committed murder and trespassed in the area. (p. 87)

Gabriel spends time in a tent at a camp, which is one of the places where he resides. Because it, like the previously stated locations, required permission to enter and was segregated from the outside world, it may be regarded a sort of heterotopia. Dorothy's bedroom is a good illustration of such a space. Both partners were part of her household in their own ways, but neither genuinely belonged to space nor did space belong to them. In A Distant Shore, Phillips developed the ultimate heterotopia to fit his heroes, who required such environments due to their social alienation and estrangement.

IV. HOSTILE AND ALIEN SETTINGS

The novel's many spatial arrangements on the one hand serve as metaphors for the desire for an opportunity-rich life and on the other, for an ironically isolated self.

Solomon's story takes place in the small town of Weston, which Di Maio refers to as "a metaphor for England." Additionally, Di Maio claims that the community is "symbolic of the nation" (Di Maio, 257). Similarly, Weston, according to Petra Tournay-Theodotou, offers "miniature spatial allegories of the nation at large." (Theodotou Tournay, 296) As a result, we might see Dorothy as a disaffected British woman who

relocates to Weston in search of comfort and a chance to start over, and Solomon as a representation of the immigrant population.

The idea that past violence is still present and hanging over the present emphasizes how Weston is not a place of acceptance and refuge but rather one of mistrust and estrangement. In this account, realism and Dorothy's feelings are in opposition.

Commenting on these lines, Bonnici asserts that Dorothy's story is one of unfitness because, while she tries to fit into the strange Weston environment, she "embodies the dislocation of a person who is in her own home without feeling at home" (Bonnici, 287). Additionally, Dorothy's portrayal of Weston as evil and suffering from a mental illness is questioned and flawed because the author purposely paints Dorothy as an outsider. Weston is depicted in this engrossing but inaccurate narration as an ambiguous location subject to several interpretations. This approach also draws attention away from the main topic to other issues, such as the development of intercultural contact between Dorothy and Solomon once they both move beyond their respective roles as "resident" and "outsider." Both of these individuals make advantage of their ability to be sociable to challenge the restrictions placed by closed groups and build a bridge beyond the rigid boundaries of race and ethnicity, bringing happiness and mutual enrichment.

Contrary to more formal modes of togetherness that rely on institutionalized groups and institutions, conviviality suggests spontaneous and fleeting kinds of closeness amongst strangers. Paul Gilroy emphasizes the willingness of the strangers to interact in novel ways and form emotional connections that promote conviviality. The friendly interactions that are present throughout the novel are significantly influenced by non-verbal cues as well as silence.

Solomon makes an effort to build cross-cultural relationships with Denise, Dorothy, and Mike outside of the dominant ideologies and structures of race, class, ethnicity, location, and other forms of social stratification and cultural identification, despite being condemned to a position of "alterity." Solomon and Dorothy are both foreigners in Weston. This fosters in them the openness to partake in novel social communication patterns necessary for the development of a convivial culture.

V. CONCLUSION

According to Raj Shah, heterotopias are commonly (though not always) depicted in books as locations of opposition to dominant ideas, providing the protagonists a glimpse of another way of life. However, this essay refutes the all-too-common misconception concerning heterotopias.

The narrative rhapsody of A Distant Shore features a number of "deviant" characters, like Solomon or Dorothy, and "heterotopian" settings, like England or the village of "Stoneleigh," which acts as the prototypical "narrative contact zone," where imaginary characters clash, engage, or interact. The existence of heterotopias in all places, cultures, and societies is asserted in one of the premises. Foucault divides them into two groups based on their size and shape: crisis heterotopias and deviation heterotopias. When it comes to deviant heterotopias, hospitals, prisons, and graves are the most significant heterotopias in the novel.

This article challenges common misconceptions about refugees, alienation, exile, passivity, and marginalization while simultaneously giving the refugee character agency in the postmodern "discourse of resilience." According to the article, Phillips skillfully balanced Solomon's sense of isolation from the idea that he was instrumental in building "convivial" situations by utilizing counter-narratives in the book.

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