

Abstract

Through the lenses of, and discourses, on victimhood, this paper offers a reading of Abdulrazak Gurnah's second novel, *Pilgrims Way* (1988), in order to explore how, the main character, Daud resorts to writing himself out of oppressive racial circumstances in Britain through imaginary letters that are predominantly not sent to the addressees. By engaging Gurnah's deployment of the epistolary form, and Daud's use of the letter, I want to explore how the novel uses the letter to attend to the trauma of dislocation, and to show how the use of the letter form significantly addresses the metanarrative of colonialism, in which displacement is implicated. Daud, is a migrant from Zanzibar, who has his black skin as a constant reminder of his "migrant" position both to himself and his "tormentors". Because Daud is ill-treated at work, and denied entry into or violently evicted from pubs and other social spaces on account of his colour, he develops a mode of speaking back to his victimisers which does not require physical confrontation. He thus resorts to watching the game of cricket and to creating heroes out of teams of black people, while at the same time he writes imaginary letters about the heroism of these teams as he recasts himself as an important figure in the society that demeans him.

Keywords: Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Pilgrims Way*, Epistolarity, the letter, Daud, Victimhood, Black Britain