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The Postcolonial Mapping of Migrant Identities in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* (1994) and *Afterlives* (2020)

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Abstract

The major purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between the colonial history of Africa and the mapping of identities in the characters of Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels *Paradise* (1994) and *Afterlives* (2020). The analysis of these stories will give voice to the crucial role European colonialism played in the shaping of the East African natives' identities. Firstly, we will define identity. Specifically, we will consider someone's personal identity, subdivided, in turn, into important categories such as individuality, status, age, and sex and gender, and then someone's national identity. Secondly, we will approach the origins and consequences of colonial oppression following the postcolonial theories of Edward W. Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri C. Spivak and Gloria Anzaldúa. In this way, Gurnah's works are placed within the twentieth-century historical context, when European Imperialism was still a reality. Thirdly, the first-hand testimony of Gurnah will be detailed. His forced migration and his dislocation will be described to face the destiny that awaited to those black, disempowered individuals. Fourthly, his two brilliant literary pieces will be thoroughly examined and compared, using a quotation from such primary sources to introduce the above-mentioned order for the analysis of identity. Therefore, Gurnah's narration in *Paradise* and *Afterlives* will be taken as the bedrock of this investigation, in which Tanzania will be highlighted as the symbol of 'Otherness' for Europe. This Master dissertation concludes that, within the submissive context in which characters live, defence and self-fulfillment become impossible. I argue for the need to raise consciousness of the real physical and psychological damage the white race inflicted upon the black one on account of an imaginary superiority. I seek to reminisce about our colonial history, so often silenced.

Keywords: Identity, Migration, Map, Colonialism, Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Paradise*, *Afterlives*.

Resumen

El principal propósito de este estudio es el de explorar la relación que existe entre la historia colonial de África y la construcción de identidades en los personajes de las novelas *Paradise* (1994) y *Afterlives* (2020), escritas por Abdulrazak Gurnah. El análisis de estas novelas dará voz al papel crucial que el colonialismo europeo tomó en el proceso de formación de las identidades de los nativos de África oriental. En primer lugar, definiremos identidad. En concreto, consideraremos la identidad personal de una persona, subdividida, a su vez, en categorías importantes tales como individualidad, estatus, edad, sexo y género, y después la identidad nacional. En segundo lugar, abordaremos los orígenes y las consecuencias de la opresión colonial siguiendo las teorías poscoloniales de Edward W. Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri C. Spivak y Gloria Anzaldúa. De este modo, las obras de Gurnah se sitúan en el contexto histórico del siglo XX, cuando aún el imperialismo europeo era una realidad. En tercer lugar, se detallará el testimonio de primera mano de Gurnah. Describiremos su migración forzada y su dislocación para afrontar el destino que les esperaba a aquellos individuos negros y carentes de poder. En cuarto lugar, sus dos brillantes piezas literarias serán minuciosamente examinadas y comparadas, usando una cita de tales fuentes primarias para introducir el orden antedicho para el análisis de identidad. Por lo tanto, la narración de Abdulrazak Gurnah en *Paradise* y *Afterlives* será la base de esta investigación, en la cual Tanzania será resaltada como el símbolo de <<ser diferente>> para Europa. Esta tesis de Máster concluye que, dentro del contexto sumiso en el que los personajes viven, la defensa y la autorrealización resultan imposible. Doy razones a favor de la necesidad de concienciarnos del daño real tanto físico como psicológico que la raza blanca ocasionó en la negra debido a una superioridad imaginaria. Busco rememorar nuestra historia colonial, tan a menudo silenciada.

Palabras Clave: Identidad, Migración, Mapa, Colonialismo, Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Paradise*, *Afterlives*.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

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When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.

African proverb.

I feel myself linked to Africa. Since I was a child, I have experienced a kind of connection with our neighbour continent, perhaps for my first name's roots, which some people say they are Arabic yet it is not provable for certain. The point is that I feel myself indebted to those black people. It was four years ago when I was granted the opportunity to delve into their past and origins, in that case into one of the countries that constitute the Horn of Africa, that is, Somalia. By means of the 1998 Winner of the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, Nuruddin Farah, and his overwhelming prose in *Maps* (1986), I was allowed to confront some of the devastating effects of colonialism in the identities of those people.

That is the reason why, when I was pondering on a possible topic for my TFM some months ago, the only certainty I had in mind was that I needed to sail again across African littoral states, their inhabitants and their cultural identities through the great and enthralling literary production of the area. I wished for the possibility of experiencing again how those black societies had been ignored for centuries until white European powers sensed the need to find another Eden and, in their imperial quest in the name of a "civilizing mission" (Bhabha 156), they determined to exercise their control over that land. Sad and simultaneously, those white 'superior' minds also exercised their control over native people, stealing forever their identities.

In this Master Thesis, my wish has come true. Throughout the present dissertation, attention will be directed towards the narration of the latest Nobel Prize for Literature, the Zanzibari Abdulrazak Gurnah. Among his literary *oeuvre*, the recounting of events he offers to his reading audience in two out of his ten novels will be the basis of this study. Therefore, by virtue of his captivating prose and his own identity of migrant, we will aim to expose the brutal and solid effects of colonialism in the shaping of identities of the Swahili inhabitants of East Africa, particularly Tanzania. Since it should be our duty not to forget our white colonial history, likewise to face the black colonised past, Gurnah's narration will be the bedrock of my dissertation in order to see that, within the consequences European's urge to conquer African territories brought into African souls and selves, the most moving for me is the shifting of their identities.

1.1. Thesis Statement and Objectives

The main purpose of this Master Thesis is to examine some aspects of identity in *Paradise* (1994) and *Afterlives* (2020), two exceptional novels written by the recently awarded Nobel Prize for Literature, the Zanzibari Abdulrazak Gurnah. It is my aim to explore the relation between the colonial history of Africa and the mapping of identities in the characters of the above-mentioned novels.

As a literary author, Abdulrazak Gurnah has been widely acclaimed, he garnered praise as an African novelist who was forced to migrate to England during his youth. His work is noteworthy because "he is one of the few contemporary East African authors to comment on the short period of German colonialism" (Berman 61). He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2021, having been chosen by the Swedish Academy "for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents." ("The Nobel Prize In Literature 2021").

From his exile in that country, he has written over fifty years about his own past, his people and nation. His wistful prose reminds us of the causes of his departure while displaying for us the purest black culture. By perusing any of his literary works, we will delve into African culture, into black roots, black sceneries and black customs without forgetting the black colonial history. Particularly, the selection for this investigation of *Paradise,* which was shortlisted for both the Booker Prize and the Whitbread Prize for Fiction, and *Afterlives*, whose beginning can be regarded as the ending of *Paradise*, has been guided by the paramount role identity and migration play in their protagonists, which could be seen as the own author's early years of life before he bid farewell to his native homeland. Unlike the rest of his novels, these literary works portray a crucial historical phase undergone by his continent in its way to contemporary times. Within the exceptional fictional stories of *Paradise* and *Afterlives*, we encounter three little male boys who are captured, displaced, and ultimately questioned who they truly are.

In this regard, this research will be premised on the contention that European colonialism in Africa has a long history and it entails very deep and heartrending effects for the native people. This, inevitably, can be observed in the literary production of the continent. More concretely in the case that concerns us, it is my intention to show how the characters of *Paradise* and *Afterlives*, dwellers of East Africa, were denied a fixed sense of identity by German first and then by British colonialism. The focus will be located in one of

the countries that comprise the above-mentioned East African area, that is, Tanzania, which was historically Tanganyika and, after merging with Zanzibar in 1964, the state became officially known as the United Republic of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, later renamed the United Republic of Tanzania. ("Tanganyika | Historical State, Tanzania").

Hence, in order to study the major links between the colonial history of the country and the shaping of identities in the characters of both novels, this work will define and study, on the one hand, the term 'identity' together with its most outstanding categories such as individuality, age, sex, gender, among others, constituting someone's personal identity. In this same line, national identity and the motivations that persuade an individual to fight and die for a state will be also tackled. On the other hand, the contextual background of the African continent and especially of Tanzania will be also presented, given its need in order to acquire a complete understanding of the nation and of the world Gurnah is trying to unveil.

In this respect, it is my objective to highlight, in Gurnah's own words, "the way European colonialism inserted itself into the lives of the [native] people it colonised and the consequences of that intrusion" (Iqbal 39) for their identities. Among those acknowledged consequences, migration, displacement, slavery, unfixed identities, broken memories and hybrid selves will be the grounds of this study. In other words, through the analysis of Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels *Paradise* and *Afterlives*, the present investigation seeks to show why and how, at the call of a *paradis*iacal land, white Europeans attempted to steal and distort everything from natives in their tyrannical path, disavowing the natives' identities.

1.2. State of the Art

In order to develop my research, it will be essential to draw on and be familiar with previous and relevant studies on the matter as they will help map this project. In this regard, we may resolutely claim that the power of Abdulrazak Gurnah's own memory has already been discussed, as he himself did in his own article "Writing and Place" (2004). In that piece of writing, our author describes a first-hand testimony of what he left in his native Zanzibar – anxiety, terror and humiliations – and what he found in England – strangeness and difference –. He clearly asserts in this composition that his literary subject over the years has been the "condition of being from one place and living in another" (59), thus, his statement will be key to the identification of the novels' main characters.

Unlike *Afterlives*, *Paradise*'s pages have been widely studied throughout the years since its publication, ranging from the historical topic of slavery it presents to the child narrative, covering the migration of its characters, the dynamics of identity and displacement and the own social customs of Tanzania. Among the PhD dissertations, critical articles, books and essays that have dealt with his novel *Paradise*, and therefore with those mentioned topics which will be dealt with in my thesis as well, some may be provided special attention for their relevance to this investigation.

As stated, Gurnah's fictional work has been analysed in several PhD dissertations, such as *Itinerant Narratives: Travel, Identity and Literary form in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Fiction* by Marco Neil Ruberto (2009). This dissertation presented the first full-length analysis of our author's fictional work, offering how his experience of exile in England together with the recent and colonial history of his East Africa have moulded and influenced his fiction. The research examines, apart from Gurnah's trajectory as an academic and postcolonial literary critic, his first seven novels published at that time, yet only *Paradise*'s thorough analysis will be considered for this Master Thesis. Particularly, by virtue of exploring issues of slavery and liminality, this PhD dissertation will contribute to setting the parameters of my study as regards the main characters' identities.

After receiving his Nobel Prize, the Swedish Academy recommended several academic essays and books for a better understanding of his aims when writing. Among them, this study will revolve around David Callahan's "Exchange, Bullies and Abuse in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise*" (2008). Here, Abdulrazak Gurnah's own condition and identity of a diasporic writer is alluded to again. Callahan explains the overlapping of origins and cultural groups that moulded the East Coast of Africa, which is elementary for my previous understanding of the area's contextual and historical background. His work is premised, particularly, on the little boy's detachment from all the ethnic groups, noteworthy enough in a culture that lives through community (60). Hence, his reasoning will have a direct bearing on my topic in that I share the same view than he, that is, we aim to present how Gurnah maps through his literary writing the failure of his own territory for the interests of European colonialism. However, it will also be tackled in this dissertation, as stated, the reasons for that failure and the consequences it brought for the identities of the people.

Jacqueline Bardolph's "Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* and *Admiring Silence*: History, Stories and the Figure of the Uncle" (1997) will be a major contribution for the definition of the powerful figure of the 'Uncle' in our novel, setting the contrast with the

young protagonist and developing their mutual association. As she puts it, "by accepting the authority of the 'big man'" (87), Yusuf will acquire an identity of his own. Besides, Dianne Schwerdt's insightful essay "Looking In on Paradise: Race, Gender and Power in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise*" (1997) will help define the results of centuries of slave-trading and colonial presence in our area regarding the characters' identities –passivity, assimilation, liminality (92). It will be illuminating as well for delimiting Gurnah's portrayal of Arabs, Germans and Africans in the novel, likewise women's gender identity in that cultural setting of the novel. Moreover, the Academy suggested drawing on some interviews with the author, such as "Abdulrazak Gurnah with Susheila Nasta" (2004), which I will draw on to know from his own words what role memory has in his process of writing. It will be a direct, useful source to be aware of the author's interests when penning his stories, given his continuous interest "in the issue of people negotiating their 'identities'" (356).

We could also name Nina Berman's "Yusuf's Choice: East African Agency During the German Colonial Period in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Novel *Paradise*" (2013), which will be helpful to grasp the meaning of the boy's final decision and to define his identity. Likewise, it will be of help to know the different communities that form Gurnah's fictional world. Additionally, Gareth Griffiths' "Narrative, Identity and Social Practice in Tanzania. Abdulrazak Gurnah's Ironic *Paradise*" (2012) could be mentioned. This study will especially provide consistency to the primary cause of the non-fixed sense of identity for black natives around which this study centres –European colonialism. Scholar Griffiths' standpoint will reinforce my idea that what Europeans were really looking for was not just already-occupied lands, but the indigenous peoples' lives. In relation to my project, it will be relevant because the author has already highlighted Yusuf's identity as the product of shaping ideological forces (314). This viewpoint will contribute to my analysis of a denied/imposed identity and forced objectivity not only for *Paradise* as he considered, but it will hold true for *Afterlives* as well. Yet, I will specifically add the boys' identification as hybrids who get to internalise the colonial discourse.

It is also remarkable to name other works that have covered some of the categories I plan to study in this project, viz. sex and gender. For instance, Eleanor Anneh Dasi's "Gender Identities and the Search for New Spaces: Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise*" (2017) and Kate Houlden's "'It Worked in a Different Way': Male Same-Sex Desire in the Novels of Abdulrazak Gurnah" (2013) will have an imperative weight on my analysis. Dasi has already exposed how the novel examines the main categories of gender together with their affiliated

roles. She has already identified male and female characters in the novel in relation to their biological genders. On her own, Houlden has displayed several examples of male same-sex desire in *Paradise*. As a result, by virtue of their discussions, I will elaborate on which characters of the novel do or do not conform to the biological definitions of their genders, that is, how gender stereotypes and attached behaviours are valued in the novel and what Gurnah aims to achieve by alluding to such concerns.

Additionally, some secondary sources may be helpful for mapping this study, namely Godwin Siundu's research "Honour and Shame in the Construction of Difference in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Novels" (2013), which relates (dis)honourable identities with particular socio-cultural status, exemplified in the forthcoming pages. Also, Mohineet Kaur Boparai's recent study "The Opposition of Good and Evil in Gurnah's *Paradise* (1994)" (2021), may be useful to relate Yusuf's subalternity to Uncle Aziz's evil and oppressed acts.

Nevertheless, when we approach the second novel that will map this Master Thesis, *Afterlives*, it can be claimed that not so much has been discussed yet about its themes nor symbols, perhaps for its newly released. There are indeed several articles that try to explore the novel on broad terms. For instance, I will draw on Shalini Saxena's "Bursting the Bubble of Colonialism in Gurnah's *Afterlives*" (2021), which illustrates how the novel addresses the psychological effects of colonial rule on the characters' identities in the aftermath (18), particularly the leading objective for my research. Besides, some newspaper articles have reviewed the novel, such as David Pilling's "*Afterlives* by Abdulrazak Gurnah – Forgotten Africa" (2020) published in *Financial Times,* Jane Shilling's "*Afterlives* by Abdulrazak Gurnah: Entrancing Storytelling and Exquisite Emotional Precision" (2020), in *Evening Standard*, Maaza Mengiste's "*Afterlives* by Abdulrazak Gurnah Review – Living Through Colonialism" (2020), in *The Guardian*, and Anuja Chandramouli's "*Afterlives* Book Review: Hope Flowers in a Field of Carnage" (2021), posted in *The New Indian Express*. They primarily attach importance to identifying the setting and the main and secondary characters of the novel –postcolonial displaced, migrated 'Other', hybrid identities again grounded on German power. They laud Gurnah's literary writing in this novel, addressing the consequence of colonialism for innocent native people.

Therefore, these early, sole approaches to the second novel of this dissertation helped to shape the first steps I took when deciding to delve into the world Gurnah's *Afterlives* is home to. They also helped me establish the links between both novels here chosen and the relations between the main child protagonists and their identities of complicit colonial

subjects, occupying the same colonisers' commodifying roles that had conditioned their former existences. In other words, they were of help for confirming Gurnah's prose in *Afterlives* as the second object of study, establishing once again the magic and extraordinariness of the author's account of ordinary *lives*, during and *after* such historical and real oppression.

In a nutshell, bearing in mind the already-mentioned perusal and examination of Abdulrazak Gurnah's fictional work as regards *Paradise* and *Afterlives* and its relation to my topic, it may be argued that there is not a definite analytical work that combines the issues this dissertation presents, this is, an insightful exploration of the characters' identities as regards the categories of individuality, status, age, sex, gender and nationalism. As a result, this Master Thesis is presented as a modest contribution to the worldwide enrichment of Gurnah's *Paradise* and, simultaneously, as a modest attempt to fill the gap that *Afterlives* holds, trying to lay the foundation for its future literary research.

1.3. Corpus and Methodology

When it was approached the literary author and topic of this Master dissertation for the first time, it was needed to delimit the corpus to work with. As it has already been covered, this study will involve the selection of two novels written by the recently anointed Nobel Prize for Literature, Abdulrazak Gurnah. Among his ten published novels heretofore together with a number of short stories, this dissertation will be centred on *Paradise* and *Afterlives*, fictional stories published in 1994 and 2020 respectively. Within all of Gurnah's widely lauded work, the theme of the migrant's troubled mind and soul runs –individuals who are oppressed under colonial power. However, these two really stood out for their inner connection and their way of presenting identities constructed around and conditioned by the standards of colonialism in East Africa.

Thus, once the corpus was defined, I had to consider the methodology that would guide the elaboration of this project. This would entail reflecting on the approaches of my primary sources and the application of postcolonial theory to them. On account of that, both novels will be analysed separately, each approached from a socio-historical perspective. Given the fundamental aim of this work, that is, witnessing the construction of identities during and after colonialism, we will come close to some secondary characters of the novels

because their relation and influence on the young protagonists is crucial to have a general map of the individuals' identities. Both novels will be studied according to specific parameters of identity. Essentially, the analysis of most of those aspects of identity will be focused on the leading characters. Nonetheless, as it is also necessary to refer to their families and the surrounding characters, attention will be drawn to them in the investigation. By way of initial illustration, in *Paradise* the development of 'Age' will be centred only on the main character, but 'Sex and Gender' will cover him as well as his mother and other male and female characters.

Furthermore, considering the multicultural universe of the East African Coast, the first known inhabitants of the area were regarded as Swahili. That is the reason why this study will delve into the appearance in both novels of Swahili words and phrases, approaching their intermixing of English and other languages as a way of maintaining the purest sense of Gurnah's origins. Despite the literary books do not incorporate a glossary for readers to understand the meanings, those Swahili insertions will not disturb the sense of the quotations included here, as their translation into English will be specified when possible. By way of examining those Swahili incorporations, we seek to prove how Gurnah remembers his origins and how he is mixing languages on purpose so as to claim his own voice of migrant identity.

The stories of *Paradise* and *Afterlives* will be also compared. Firstly, they will be contrasted as regards the historical periods they cover. Secondly, a parallel will be drawn between them when approaching the foremost cause of the main subjects' troubled identities, as both present the colonial and imperial discourse as a primary source, illustrating colonial ways of capturing and enslaving selves. In this respect, the main protagonists of both novels, who are named Yusuf and Hamza, are sold by their own parents. Yet it will also be noted how in *Afterlives*, there is a second central character named Ilyas who is taken by force to serve in the German colonial army.

As a result, in order to complete these tasks, an order will be followed. After Chapter I, in which by way of an introduction I plan my main objectives and my thesis statement, together with an approach to the methodology and theoretical framework on which my analysis rests, Chapter II will be merely theoretical. I will define 'identity' and I will examine both the personal and the national one. Given the field of cultural studies, we will draw on Longhurst et al. and their examination of the relation between culture and identity. In this respect, someone's personal identity will be regarded as a combination of multiple aspects,

yet the most prominent ones for this dissertation will be tackled. Particularly, considering the black African communities, I will explore what status means. Next, I will define what age is and what behaviours are associated with it by society and culture. In the same line, sex and gender will be described, setting the limits of how African culture relates biological sex with stereotyped gendered actions. Then, in relation to nationalism, I will describe how the belief that one country is superior to other evokes a right to occupy and own lands, likewise a powerful feeling of identity.

All this will be put into practice in Chapter III, which is the true discussion of Abdulrazak Gurnah's literary works. Before delving into his two chosen novels, a section will be devoted to the colonial, historical and real context of his native country, Tanzania, so that a better perception would be acquired in the matter of the atrocities and brutalities made under the name of civilisation, such as the shifting of borders. The subsequent pages will delve into Gurnah's own identity as a migrant because the first-hand testimony of what the author experienced will be essential for understanding what he tried to express through his prose. As a result, bearing in mind the historical framework previously established, his two literary works will be then analysed and deeply examined. Finally, the last section of this Master Thesis will provide some conclusions about the work in its entirety.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

This study will be mainly conducted in view of postcolonial theoretical foundations. According to *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism,* 'Postcolonialism' historically refers to a "phase undergone by many of the world's countries after the decline of the European empires by the mid-twentieth century". Following the dismantling of the empires, and our primary concern in this paper, the people of many African states "were left to restore their precolonial culture, assess the cultural, linguistic, legal, and economic effects of colonial rule, and create new governments and national identities" (Childers and Hentzi, ed. | "Postcolonialism"), forever conditioned by such abomination however.

Considering this *literary* project, we define postcolonial literature according to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* as a label covering writings from countries that were once European colonies such as writings from Africa, given the continent's bloody

colonial domination (Baldick, ed. | "Postcolonial literature"). In other words, drawing on Quayson (2016), postcolonial literature "is taken to designate the representation of experiences of various kinds that subtend yet transcend the colonial encounter, including those of slavery, oppression and resistance, migration, race, gender, and colonial space-making" (3). In this respect, it is thought of postcolonial literature not only as a reflection of the oppressed conditions subjects suffered under European imperialism and colonialism, but also as "the conditions coming after the historical end of empires" (3).

Consequently, the literary works to be examined in this Master dissertation are categorised as postcolonial fiction for some reasons. On the one hand, the historical periods they cover are related to two out of the four period clusters Quayson highlighted (1) for the postcolonial novel in the English-speaking world. In this regard, we refer to the formal colonialism until 1945 in the cases of *Paradise* and *Afterlives,* and the postcolonial nation-state formation in Africa until 1965, in *Afterlives*. On the other hand, they are defined as postcolonial literature because, as cultural texts, they were produced by a writer who had migrated from a country that bears a long history of colonialism (McLeod 40). That is, our novels will be categorised as postcolonial literature given their concern for the inner conflicts and contradictions that are inherent to the postcolonial 'free' individuals due to such historical oppression and dominance over them.

Therefore, in this academic context, we approach postcolonialism as a set of theoretical dispositions that developed in the 1980s and 1990s under the major influence of Edward W. Said's landmark study *Orientalism* (1978) –his first chapter "The Scope of Orientalism" will particularly map the present dissertation. In his study, Said examined how the knowledge that Western empires held about their colonies justified their oppression. Although Said developed his work particularly at representations of the Middle East for the colonial Western mind – Britain and France –, his observations will be useful to guide the African representations for the Western, white mind as well. As a result, it can be asserted that the 'Orient' is understood as a collective noun used to homogenise the Western colonial representations about the 'Other', about "strange" subjects who are "them" and who do not live in "our" world (Said 43). In this regard, the commonly held assumptions and stereotypes about the blacks position them as uncivilised –hence the justification of colonial domination. As we will contend in this paper, being the black natives – the 'Orient' for Said – *inferior* (Said 7) and different in white people's imaginations, their colonisation could be justified "as a way of spreading the benefits of Western civilisation and saving native peoples from

their own perceived barbarism." (McLeod 24). More simply put, our novels will be analysed following Said's demonstrations of how the European's quest for lands was legitimate for the oppressor, having internalised a 'civilisation' mission in conquering territories, bodies and souls and therefore overseeing the colonised identity.

After Said, "the principal luminaries of postcolonial theory" have been Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri C. Spivak (Baldick, ed. | "Postcolonial literature"). Unlike Said, Bhabha and Spivak mainly focused on the resistance of the colonial subject to be mapped in relation to the colonial discourse. On his own, Bhabha's work "Signs Taken for Wonders" (1985) analysed the possibility of shaping the colonised discourse of 'Otherness' as unstable and ambivalent, given "the contradictory positioning of the colonised as simultaneously inside and outside of Western knowledge and comprehension." (McLeod 63). According to him, "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (Bhabha 150), that is, colonial discourses are both ambivalent and repetitive in the sense that colonisers construct colonised as both *similar* to and *different* to them. Despite this sameness that lies behind postcolonial discourses, the colonised will be always considered the 'Other' –hence the ambivalence. It follows, then, the word 'hybridity' Bhabha coined as

> the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities … [as] the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. (154)

This postcolonial hybridity inherent to colonial power will map the projection of our analysis for we will consider the fictional characters of Gurnah's novels as colonised selves who act as colonisers did, who behave repeating the same "discriminatory identity effects" colonisers depicted, yet forever regarded as the 'Other' for white Europeans. For her part, Spivak explored the possibility of recovering the voices and expressions of those who had been made oppressed subjects under colonial's yoke in her influential essay "Scattered Speculations on the Subaltern and the Popular" (2005). Spivak follows Antonio Gramsci's coined term 'subaltern' to refer to those who are

> removed from all lines of social mobility … Subalternity is a position without identity. It is somewhat like the strict understanding of class. Class is not a cultural origin, it is a sense of economic collectivity, of social relations of formation as the basis of action. Gender is not lived sexual difference. It is a sense of the collective social negotiation of sexual differences as the basis of action. 'Race' is not originary;

it assumes racism. Subalternity is where all lines of social mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognisable basis of action. (475-6)

Previous studies related to class, gender or race were the basis to her in order to delimit how oppressed those areas were by the hegemonic power. Particularly, she used the term to refer to colonised women and blacks who were oppressed, dominated and subordinated to European, white hegemony. That is, the word 'subaltern' designates populations subjugated and marginalised by elites in society as she contended that class, gender, and race were distinctions imposed on the oppressed in order to remove them from agency, being the system merely based on difference. Via her enquiries "Could the subaltern speak, then? Could it have its insurgency recognised by the official historians?" (476), the 'subaltern', in our case black slaves, would seek *agency* and *insurgency*, would demand identification from a system that does not recognise them as such. Therefore, this concept of 'subaltern' gains importance in postcolonial studies because individuals will attempt to liberate themselves from such societal constraints. Consequently, it will make sense when applied in the present postcolonial *mapping* of identities –identities which are, as discussed so far, product of the migration between imaginary *borders*.

We are therefore in need of defining 'border' for our thesis statement and objectives at this precise moment. Borders are in our postcolonial context the product of merely imperial and colonial interests, imposed without regard to existing cultures, hence a way to reinforce differences and reassure the coloniser's alleged superiority. Also, borders are the historical experience Gloria Anzaldúa defines in her intellectually rich work *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987). As she writes, 'border' is

> [an open wound] where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country –a border culture. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*[1]. (3)

Although Anzaldúa deals mostly with the Texas-U.S. and Mexican real border in which cultures and identities clash and mix, her study can be extrapolated to other territories because she is concerned with the psychology of borderlands, hence the psychology of collective resistance to subjugation and division. Following her border theory, an *in-between* consciousness is born from this interaction between resistance and oppression. This "mixture of races, rather than resulting in an inferior being, provides hybrid progeny, a mutable, more malleable species … a consciousness of the Borderlands" (76). According to her, there is an

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[1] Emphasis in original.

ambivalent, in-between space in the definition of 'border', a marginalising in-betweenness on which our analysis will also rest. We will witness this tragic experience of "living 'in-between' nations, 'of, and not of' each place, feeling neither here nor there, unable to indulge in sentiments of belonging to either location" (McLeod 247).

This said, the analysis of identity in this Master dissertation will be grounded on the postcolonial theories of Said, Bhabha, Spivak and Anzaldúa, i.e., on their theories of degenerate images of the 'black' for those in the Occident, of objectification, commodification and hybridity, of subaltern subjects and of in-betweenness, respectively. Their theoretical foundations will be paramount for proving why the characters of our novels are considered the 'Other'. In the same line, their postcolonial theories will serve as a basis for proving how our protagonists assume and repeat the same "discriminatory identity effects" (Bhabha 154) they perceived on colonisers, likewise how they are in "a position without identity" (Spivak 476) because of living 'in-between' spaces. However, for the moment, we will analyse and define the keyword of this dissertation –identity.

CHAPTER II. IDENTITY
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Before embarking on the brilliance of the latest Nobel Prize for Literature, as said, it is imperative to briefly examine in this chapter the history of the term 'identity' in order to see how long we have been using it. Besides, it is fundamental to review some of its definitions to see whether we have internalised the concept properly. In an attempt to clarify it, we will recur to contemporary critics who have shed light on it as well as on its variants.

The word *identity* was first used in English by sixteenth-century churchman John Bale. According to scholar Farnsworth, he took a highly active role in seeking to guide and influence England's national and political identity. Back then, about 1560, he spelled it *ydemptyte*, but the word quickly evolved to *idemptitie* and to Late/Medieval Latin *idemptitas,-atis,* deriving in turn from the Latin neuter determiner *idem*, meaning 'the same'. By the 1650s, the term was widely written *identity* as we know it today, meaning oneness. Identity is, as currently defined by the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, the condition of being oneself, the knowledge of who one is. As regards its significance for this Master

Thesis, we will deal with identity as related to contemporary theory and to the field of cultural studies.

2.1. Personal Identity

As per Longhurst et al. and their analysis of cultural studies, identity is about how we define who we are (142). Perception and definition are consequently keywords to this general conception of identity. In this view, the combination of multiple and variable factors such as personality, status, age, sexuality and gender, predominantly, will contribute to set the limits of one's identity, likewise our main characters' identities.

Drawing on *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism,* it is required to mention how "the sense of identity offered by one's membership in groups that have suffered oppression on the basis of gender, race, class, or sexual preference [constitutes] a major area of investigation in contemporary criticism and cultural studies." (Childers and Hentzi, ed. | "Identity"). With regard to this statement, it can be claimed that the subjects of colonial abuse strive for defining their identities. Accordingly, the protagonists we will meet in Gurnah's *Paradise* and *Afterlives* will act in accordance with their black historical oppression. They will wonder who they are. Hence, with the express intention of determining what physical and psychological processes the main characters are suffering, in the following parts of this dissertation, it will be covered the relations between identity and those above-mentioned categories.

2.1.1. Individuality

Drawing on Longhurst et al., identity is used in cultural theory "to describe the consciousness of self [that is] found in the modern individual" (142). The modern self is understood to be autonomous and self-critical. Following their study, "the autobiographical thinking that characterises modern identity creates a coherent sense of a past identity, but that identity has to be sustained in the present and remade in the future" (142). The sense of self, then, requires a constant remaking of identity, given the necessary interaction with "the not-self or non-identity: the external world" (142). In their work, it is further maintained how certain identities – recognised as those of white, European, heterosexual men – have been privileged over others in modern Western societies (142). 'Identity politics' is the term used

to describe the emergence into the political arena of those purportedly superior white, Western, heterosexual identities.

In this sense, I contend that it is the identity of the black African the one which has been most discriminated, in particular, the black African slave child and woman as the most prejudiced, the most disempowered. Considering the historically colonial environment that surrounds the novels, that is, European's partition of the black land and the subsequent objectification, ownership and disavowal of the natives' identities, the main characters in *Paradise* and *Afterlives* are subjects of slavery.

In the case of *Paradise*, the main character is named Yusuf. He will not be a slave to white individuals throughout the whole book, but rather to his own black people as a consequence of the hybridity Bhabha assured (154). The historical and real interaction between coloniser and colonised is such that the little child will be denied his black identity by his own fellow-individuals. According to Bhabha, "hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power" (154). Therefore, that term will be essential for Yusuf's analysis in that it alludes to "the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of [the same] discriminatory identity effects" (154). Additionally, Yusuf will be regarded as a commodified and marginalised being, as an individual without identity, hence as subaltern, a term which implies insurgency (Spivak 476). As a result, we will meet, along the following lines, a child who never managed to obtain a map to discover who he was and what he was like, a little boy who never asked enough questions. Nonetheless, in his failed attempt to claim his voice, his own subjectivity, he will be allowed to speak and make a decisive choice towards the end of the novel. Yet his final deed will be seen at that moment as a coloniser's, reinforcing his hybrid self again.

In the case of *Afterlives*, we will meet two boys who will capture our hearts. First, we will get acquainted with Ilyas, a black subject who was taken by force to serve in a remote war driven by the same white minds which had denied the sense of identities in his past black ancestors. We claim Ilyas will be also perceived as hybrid because he sees himself as a coloniser. He will internalise the colonial discourse so deeply that he will appropriate the white colonial identity, behaving like colonisers, assuming and repeating the same "discriminatory identity effects" Bhabha established (154). However, Ilyas' presence will be so fleeting in the story that he will be like a ghost. We will lose sight of him, only appearing at the end of the narrative to show us his true hybrid self. Despite this sameness, via Ilyas'

final depiction, we will witness, once again, the ambivalence that was inherent to colonial discourses. His tragic death will entail he has always been considered the 'Other'.

Due to Ilyas' absence throughout the novel, we will get acquainted with Hamza, the leading character of our present story. Another black subject, Hamza will be thought of as Yusuf's future because both characters fail to prove their agencies and subjectivities in the same way. By volunteering to serve in the colonial army, Hamza will assume the colonial identity. However, he will realise that he has become a slave for the white colonisers. He will notice that his life has been a mere commodity for white Europeans, only a product used for their own purposes. Hamza will always be an individual without a fixed sense of identity, always regarded as 'Other' by the Germans. As a ray of hope, the narrative will teach us how he attempts to reconstruct his existence, both physically and psychologically, after the battlefield. In other words, through Hamza's troubled life, this novel will give evidence of how lives were forever marked by colonialism, never healed.

Taking into account this first contact with our main protagonists' individualities as children born into a white-owning society, in the following sections of this research paper we will deeply expound how that outer world – in the form of colonial and warlike atmosphere – has a profound bearing on the identification of the self on the non-white African, on the construction of the black African identity, i.e., we will attempt to know who the main characters of our novels really are.

2.1.2. Status

In this section, the notion of status will be connected with personhood, that is, the state and condition of being a person. Prevailing within African nations, that state of the individual is limited to specific communities. More simply put, for the colonial subject to perceive a powerful sense of identity, he or she needs to be integrated into specific communities that are constrained by tribes, races, class, and culture in general. Those African communities stand for "a formation of cultural practices, a process of associational life, and as a moral landscape" (Tiyambe 18). As a result, it may be claimed that the black nation, the black community, and the black individual are intrinsically related. Noteworthy enough for our purposes in this dissertation, we remark that "a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one" (qtd. in Anderson 6).

Bearing in mind the African state, which languished and bled from late nineteenth-century due to European colonialism, it is indisputable how white practices of appropriating slices of the black land had its impact on native selves –they saw the emergence of "an imagined political community" (Anderson 6). As a matter of fact, in his *Imagined Communities,* first published in 1983, Anderson goes on to clarify why his proposal of nation carries the previously cited adjective. According to him, "it is *imagined*[2] because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). Only in their minds there existed a sense of union, of community. Only in their minds, they considered themselves as a nation. As he argued, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (7). Notwithstanding the non-existence of real and geographical boundaries, in African's people there was an imagined society, an imagined landscape which provided them with a sense of community, of belonging to the same wounded nature.

Supporting these inherent bonds that nation, community and personhood hold, scholar Menkiti has contended that

> the African view of man denies that persons can be defined by focusing on this or that physical or psychological characteristic of the lone individual. Rather, man is defined by reference to the environing community … It is in rootedness in an ongoing human community that the individual comes to see himself as man (171-2).

As he states, it is the community the one that defines the person as such. He also adds that this definition should be preceded by a process of incorporation. "Without incorporation into this or that community, individuals are considered to be mere danglers to whom the description 'person' does not fully apply. For personhood is something which has to be achieved" (172).

Consequently, as concerns this factor, the following pages will deal with the main characters so as to know whether they achieve their condition of persons considering the different communities that are home to the novels. In the case of *Paradise* and its multicultural society, "[t]he boundaries between Swahili, Arab, Indian, and African communities are fluid, and much of the novel describes intimate interaction between members of various … communities" (Berman 55). We will therefore delve into those dissimilar communities, which are constrained in this case by culture, to see what role they

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[2] Emphasis in original.

take in the definition of the characters' own selves. In the case of *Afterlives*, the Muslim community is properly defined and respected by the group. Regardless of the conquest, characters manage to perceive a sense of identity through communal events. Hence, it will be our purpose to examine Hamza's integration into this community, which is also constrained by culture.

2.1.3. Age

We continue in this section with age as another important aspect of identity. On the one hand, following Longhurst et al., "age and the ageing process are, like gender and the body … apparently natural processes" (84), yet highly cultural and culturally specific. They argue that

> the apparently natural process of the person's passage from birth to death in chronological time is ordered, sometimes controlled, but always shaped by cultural ideas of what is appropriate and conventional behaviour at certain ages … [T]heorising about the significance of age must give regard to, and account for, the ways in which age is mediated by class, gender, race, ethnicity and all other culturally significant variables at particular moments and contexts. (85)

On account of that, in *Paradise* we will conceive the idea of a child that attends school and plays with fellow mates, as an *appropriate* and conventional behaviour for his age. We will be observers, at the same time, of how this usual pattern sudden and unexpectedly changes during Yusuf's twelfth year. Similarly, in *Afterlives* we will examine Hamza's rejection of his teenage identity, behaving in an *inappropriate* way for his age. We will accompany him through his adolescence and his adulthood, when his conduct is finally accepted according to convention.

Additionally, given the scholars' previous conception of how age goes hand in hand with culture, it may be gathered that culture naturalises age. In this particular context in which black women are discriminated and merely a nobody, they are destined to marriage since a very early age. Their culture considers *appropriate* their mutual link, the earlier the better, especially for females. Hence, it would be natural to internalise that accurate behaviour when perusing the female gender in the subsequent pages that compound the novels here selected.

On the other hand, we will examine *Paradise* as a *Bildungsroman*. This German literary genre depicts and explores the manner in which the protagonist evolves moral and psychologically from childhood to adulthood "through a troubled quest for identity".

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("Baldick, ed. | "Bildungsroman"). As a 'novel of formation', it is concerned with the main protagonist's formative years and his development from 'child' to a 'little boy', and then into a 'young man'. There are no few scholars who have labelled this story as such coming-of-age of Yusuf. As per Berman pointed out, the novel offers Yusuf's "tale of maturation" (53), thus, we will follow him along the different journeys he is taken to while learning how he changes his perception of the world and the people around him. Traditionally, the novels categorised in this literary genre end on a positive note. By accompanying Yusuf in his personal and outer journey, in the subsequent pages, we will witness what he forcibly learns being a child, similarly whether there is a positive resolution towards the novel's ending.

In brief, the relation between age and culture in both novels is of great importance. As a hint, I include the following quotation from another brilliant twentieth-century writer, the Somali Nuruddin Farah, to illustrate the relation between the sense of manhood and the war: "*Can one describe oneself as a man when one cannot make a viable contribution to the struggle of one's people?*"[3] (*Maps* 20). Therefore, in the following sections of this paper we will attempt to understand our boys' yearning for being older, i.e., we intend to know the sense of belonging war gives them, a feeling which goes hand in hand with leaving childhood and adolescence behind.

2.1.4. Sex and gender

Apart from the above-mentioned association between age and culture, in this section we attempt to approach the one resultant from culture and sex and gender. Although these terms are used in an interchangeable way, they can be attached some different meanings in order to better distinguish them. Drawing back again on Longhurst et al.,

> [g]ender is often regarded as a cultural overlay to the anatomically founded differences between the sexes. Sex refers to biological differences between males and females while gender refers to the culturally specific ways of thinking, acting and feeling. Femininity and masculinity are thus gender terms, referring to the ways of thinking, acting and feeling considered appropriate in a society for females or males. (218)

From this understanding, it may be implied that culture also naturalises gender, identifying certain *appropriate* behaviours that are specific to males and females. Precisely

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[3] Emphasis in original.

in the Muslim societies both novels will exhibit, gender roles and ways of acting are absolutely marked, assumed, and therefore respected.

In relation to those traditional values that the African society attaches either to the male or the female gender, men are supposed to show their bravery and women their submission. As per academic Buchbinder asserts,

> [g]ender may also be understood as ideological in that anatomical, sexual difference is transformed into a system of values that are then presented to us as inevitable and natural. Our complicity with that system is engineered in different ways: for instance, for men, through the offer of sexual and social power; for women, in the promise of support, security, and protection via love and marriage (or its equivalent). (39)

With regard to this notion of gender, and as stated, men are somehow destined for a heterosexual demonstration of their sexual and social power, whereas women, who have been sadly considered as inferior through the most part of history – their attitudes being limited by patriarchal laws –, are assigned merely housework and devotion to husbands. Considering the African society, there is still a long way to liberate each female individual from the constraints of a male-demanded system of subjugation, a patriarchal system.

It can be suggested, in consequence, that gender is the result of society's development, of culture. As acclaimed scholar Butler contends, identities are the products of the discourses that define sexuality (21). We tend to perform masculinity or femininity according to the conventions our society holds. In this view, identities are predetermined cultural constructions. More simply put, considering our African scenario, characters will firmly follow their cultural inheritance as regards sex and gender.

Consequently, we will approach *Paradise* and *Afterlives* taking into consideration what sex is, what gender is, how both intermingle and how they also disjoin. At first and as it has been mentioned above, the Muslim societies that will be home to our two stories have deeply internalised these male-gendered values and these female-gendered values. Nonetheless, since we are covering a process of deconstruction and re-mapping of identities, in both novels we will approach several male and female characters who do not fit in with the surrounding group and culture. In spite of the fact that their anatomical sexes label them as men and women, their behaviours and descriptions will prove that they do not follow their gendered system of values.

In sum, in the next pages we intend to approach the relationships between the characters' sexes and genders, that is, we will undertake the decoding of who acts in

accordance with his or her biological sex and how those who do not are able to lay the foundation to the deconstructed environment the main characters encounter. This would mark the characterisation of Yusuf's and Hamza's sexual and gender identity, as we intend to illustrate whether they are granted a firm *male* identity.

2.2. National Identity

After dealing with personal identity and some of its main categories, in the present section, we will approach the connection that exists between identity and geography, which is also a key concern for the rise of culture. We have already analysed how individuality, as well as the notion of status, age, sex and gender, have an important role in the construction of one's identity. Since nationality is a social construction too, it will also play a very decisive role in the development of Yusuf's, Hamza's and Ilyas' identities.

According to Longhurst et al., 'nationalism' can be considered a matter of cultural politics because the nation we belong to, which is primary the national political identity, is defined in cultural terms (118). In other words, 'nationalism' is defined in *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism* as

> the belief or feeling that identity is closely tied to one's nation or nationality … Often, nationalism means the belief that one's country is superior to other countries … As a collective phenomenon, nationalism often arises at times of conflict between nations, or between colonizers and colonized, and perhaps most commonly, in postcolonial periods. (Childers and Hentzi, ed. | "Nationalism")

In the present Master Thesis, we will approach the strong feeling Germans shared as regards their nation. As McLeod puts it, "[n]ations stimulate the people's sense that they are the rightful occupants and owners of a specific landscape" (89). Therefore, bearing this powerful statement in mind, we will note in *Paradise* and *Afterlives* certain "traditions and symbols" (89) which associate their superiority with the survival of their nation. We will attempt to view their progressive occupation of Tanzania, the country that concerns us, along with the natives' minds. In short, we will seek to probe the reasons that moved Yusuf, Hamza and Ilyas to identify themselves with that German, coloniser nation. It is our intention to understand Yusuf's and Hamza's motivations for joining the German Army, likewise Ilyas' deep internalisation of that European, coloniser national identity after being captured.

In a nutshell, the earlier relations that have been covered between identity and its main categories, namely individuality, status, age, sex and gender, together with the views

of what a national identity is, are the basis to the following sections of this research paper. We will enter a *paradis*iacal world and we will see how European colonialism denied the purest sense of black identity. To put it simply, we will immerse ourselves in the *lives* of innocent people to see whether they are capable of restoring their existences *after* such a warlike ambience. Yet firstly, some contextual and historical facts about the region will be specified so that we get to know the oppression, abuse and domination its inhabitants endured. Then, we will become acquainted with Abdulrazak Gurnah, his early life and his early steps as a writer, what he writes about and why. We will behold his literary career until he was granted an international award such as the Nobel Prize for Literature.

CHAPTER III. ABDULRAZAK GURNAH
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3.1. Contextual Background

The African nation has been dominated for centuries. It is an irrefutable fact that white, European colonialism has played a decisive role in mapping that land. It should be noted, how, ever since Roman times, our continent has been taking small bites at that enigmatic neighbour territory to the south, mainly for establishing trading posts along its coasts. It is curious indeed how, by the mid-1870s, "no explorer had penetrated far along the dangerous latitude of zero towards the interior [and how] no one knew which was Africa's greatest river or where it led" (Pakenham xxiii). Hitherto our presence had been confined to small enclaves on the littoral used chiefly for trading purposes, "only in Algeria and in southern Africa had more substantial European settlements taken root" (Meredith 1). In our vision of that continent, most of its ground was "'vacant': legally *res nullius*[4], a no-man's-land" (Pakenham xxiii). There were no consistent reasons for us to intervene.

Sudden and unaccountably, in half a generation, Africa was partitioned, sliced up like a cake without regard to its people nor former boundaries, "taking little or no account of the myriad of traditional monarchies, chiefdoms and other African societies that existed on the ground" (Meredith 1). After the Berlin Conference of 1884, the decisive point that

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[4] Emphasis in original.

would mark *the fate of Africa* – a direct allusion to Martin Meredith's book about the history of the continent since independence –, Europe was in command of most of the continent, as if it was a white and divine right. Scott Keltie wrote *The Partition of Africa* in 1893, before that partition reached its climax.

This moment of partition in history is usually referred to as the *Scramble for Africa*[5] –the very same name that the historian Thomas Pakenham gave in 1991 to his one-volume narrative of the Scramble covering the whole continent since Keltie. This was, in other words, the Western European invasion, annexation, division and colonisation of the continent. Europe controlled "thirty new colonies and protectorates, 10 million square miles of new territory and 110 million dazed new subjects, acquired by one method or another" (Pakenham xxiii). This overwhelming allusion to the different methods of acquiring lives, as if products, will be paid the necessary attention to in the following sections of this paper.

During the aforementioned Scramble for Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, the different European statesmen "bargained over the separate spheres of interest they intended to establish there" (Meredith 1). Rival countries, viz. Germany, Italy, Portugal, France, Britain and Spain, took their self-appropriate pieces of the colonial cake. In the case of Britain, as she "had pioneered the exploration and evangelisation of Central Africa, … she felt a proprietary right to most of the continent" (Pakenham xxv). There were German colonists who entered Tanganyika, the true essence of this dissertation, in 1880 and who declared it a protectorate in 1891 as part of German East Africa[6]. That year, Carl Peters was appointed Imperial Commissioner in German East Africa, and was considered the founding father of German East Africa, also known as Deutsch-Ostafrika.

In fact, the above-mentioned partition of the African continent provoked conflicts between those allegedly superior white countries in their appetite for building empires in Africa, as they were not satisfied enough. "There were dreams of El Dorado, of diamond mines and goldfields criss-crossing the Sahara, … [of] new markets out there in this African garden of Eden" (Pakenham xxiv). European countries tried to gain prestige, to establish their position as powerful economic states in the eyes of the whole world. It could be added,

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[5] This term was apparently coined in 1884, however, modern historians have not agreed exactly what period it should cover (Pakenham xxvii).

[6] Archaeological evidence attests to a long history of European settlement in the area; the Portuguese gained control of the coastline in the late fifteenth century and they remained until the late eighteenth century.

as well, that the purpose of these European racist states was the survival of the white ethnicity since they felt insecure due to this black 'alien' Other.

However, for Africans, the perception was quite the opposite. They soon felt European imperialism, which was a patriotism purely based on race. They witnessed the conquest, the occupation. In broader terms, despite there were episodes of resistance in nearly every African colony, most of the countries could not firmly, solidly resist[7]. Most of the battles were cruelly one-sided, as in Tanganyika, where German administrators inflicted fearful repression to stamp out rebellions. One example is the Maji Maji Uprising – also known as the Maji Maji Rebellion or the Maji Maji War –, which extended from 1905 to 1907 but which was brutally suppressed by the Germans.

The new boundaries we forcibly positioned "cut through some 190 culture groups" (Meredith 1). In some other cases, our new colonial territories enclosed hundreds of diverse groups that did not share a common history, culture, language or religion. We were moving peoples and lands violently, as pieces on a chessboard. As McLeod contends, those new borders "between nations d[id] not happen by accident. They were constructed" (81) by us. Europe's will had been imposed on the whole African continent without consideration, at the point of a gun (Pakenham xxv). Certainly, those artificial state boundaries and those guns would mark the seed from which African future identities would grow. Indubitably, we were re-mapping Africa.

In relation to this re-mapping and, consequently, this fictitious notion of the borders of the nation, Benedict Anderson's idea of *imagined communities* has provided consistency to the origins of nationalism. His reflections about the traditions of Western thought and the instability that imperialist powers tried to instil in African societies are needed to grasp the motives of dying for nations. He traced the emergence of community as a sense of belonging – a crucial feeling for the Muslim societies that will be discussed later – showing how nationalism shaped the modern world. Despite the absence of true boundaries, in people's *imagination* resided a sense of *community*. He further noted, in the history of Imperialism, the relationship between map and reality, a relation that was rooted in the un-recognised

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[7] Those African rulers best equipped to resist were those who depended on violence themselves, such as African imperialists like King Cetshwayo of the Zulu, in South Africa (Pakenham xxv). Eventually, he was banished from his homeland.

assumption that the map preceded the territory. That is, it was the map which created the territory for the invaders' minds. Hence their justification.

By the time the Scramble was over, in 1914, the First World War[8] broke out. The Berlin Conference had been convened so as to please European interests. It can be declared that the rush for colonies was legitimised and *democratically*[9] regulated. Each European country had its portion of the big black continent. However, Bismarck, the chancellor of Germany who organised the Conference, had already warned about the future European clash of interests the African colonies would give rise to. As if foreshadowing the warfare, almost twenty years later, a war properly European was staged on the African territory.

Therefore, a reshuffle of the African territory occurred. Once again. East Africa became literally a battlefield. In our case, Tanganyika was handed over to Britain, which held it in 1920 as a League of Nations mandate under the name Tanganyika Territory, being managed by the new country until the Second World War[10]. After WWII, the region was a United Nations trust territory, yet Britain regained its control. As a result, due to the close British and German presence in East Africa during the first decades of the twentieth century, the native population was directly forced to take part in an alien war far away from their homes as *Afterlives* will remind us via Ilyas. Nevertheless, there were also native volunteers who had internalised the colonial discourse as both *Paradise* and *Afterlives* will show through Yusuf and Hamza, respectively. Regardless of the way, thousands of African troops were compelled to fight for the same external, imperialist, warlike and racist thoughts that had conditioned their lives some years before.

Independence from British rule was finally gained in 1961, under the leadership of the radical activist Julius Nyerere, who became the first minister of Tanganyika. Although it could be assumed that the autonomy was received with optimism, the country was isolated, devastated, without means to solidly build a new nation. Certainly, the natives' identities, their *lives after* that tragic battlefront their land had turned into, had radically metamorphosed forever, as our literary author's. Bearing this real and contextual background in mind, in the following lines, we aim to present some biographical notes on Abdulrazak Gurnah, who was

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[8] Henceforth, 'WWI' for the sake of brevity.
[9] In the broadest sense of irony that the word possesses in this context.
[10] Henceforth, 'WWII' for the sake of brevity.

a real witness of the chaos his country endured, likewise the power and influence of his migrant identity when shaping his fictional universes.

3.2. Migrant Identity of a Nobel Prize for Literature

Born on the island of Zanzibar, now Tanzania, in 1948, Abdulrazak Gurnah is a highly esteemed writer of contemporary fiction – novels and short stories –, acclaimed academic, literary critic and reviewer of African literature. Since he was a boy, he has conceived the exercises of writing and reading as pleasurable. The school education he received was a British colonial one, but, as he exposes in his own article "Writing and Place", "that was not the only learning [he] was doing. [He] was learning from the mosque, from Koran[11] school, from the streets, from home and from [his] own anarchic reading" (60). All these sources would definitely map his writing. Despite this British presence, Gurnah's first language is Swahili, and,

> unlike many African languages, it was a written language before European colonialism … [However] the only contemporary writing in Kiswahili[12] that [he] was aware of were short poems published in newspaper, or popular story-programmes on the radio, or the very occasional book of stories. (58)

Perhaps as an attempt to imbue his novels with his origins, likewise to challenge his texts' purportedly dependence on European canonical texts, Gurnah clearly inserts in his novels Swahili phrases and words, which attract readers. By doing so, he is using pure African source material while trying to grant his characters interiority, ultimately recognition, this way helping readers to understand how his fictional characters are.

During his youth, Gurnah's homeland was in a very difficult situation. As he puts it in an interview with Razia Iqbal, "[t]here was great violence. A revolution occurred in 1964 … [I]t was terrible." (34). After gaining independence from British rule and before joining Tanganyika, this Revolution was aimed at overthrowing the Zanzibari Arab government. Then, it led to the persecution of citizens of Arab origins, as Gurnah. As a direct witness of this upheaval, he saw the consequence this tyrannical activity brought about for the civilians.

> There were frequent arrests for no reason. I was a schoolboy. Our school was shut. Most of our teachers were foreigners, were Europeans. As this was just one month after independence, they hadn't been asked to leave yet. Eventually, they were all sent away. Schools were shut for several months. There were guns everywhere. (34)

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[11] Also in this dissertation spelled as 'Qur'an', as they are interchangeable.
[12] The native name of the Swahili language.

As he acknowledged, he was denied advanced-level classes at school because these were at the time closed. Education, the only effective means to endow people with agency, was therefore neglected, and inaccessible. Within this tumultuous ambience, it is viable to understand the reasons for his decision: "I had to leave. I had to go somewhere" (35).

That said, like hundreds of thousands of Commonwealth citizens, Gurnah was indirectly forced to flee his country by the late 1960s and exercised his legal right to settle in Britain as a refugee in search of safety. In fact, Gurnah's arrival in 1968 to the European country "was only months before Enoch Powell was to deliver his now notoriously xenophobic 'Rivers of Blood' speech" (Nasta 352). Given the continuous and mass influx of immigrants at that time, the British Member of Parliament Enoch Powell ("Enoch Powell | British Politician") evoked the British race question in a speech that severely criticised the coming of migrants on the premise that they were making the native feel like strangers in their own land. Powell strongly criticised mass immigration to the United Kingdom and the Race Relations Acts 1968, by which it was illegal to refuse public services on the grounds of race or colour. His greatest concern was that immigration would undermine the British national identity.

Gurnah further refers to this first and shocking welcome in his interview with Razia Iqbal. "The rudeness – people felt they could say really quite unpleasant things to your face, their refusal even to try and pronounce your name and, of course more obviously negative encounters in public places, shops, etc." (35). As for the development of his identity, this somehow made him shrink, silence and lose his voice.

Despite feeling how British people belittled him, Gurnah managed to carry on with his studies, receiving in 1982 his PhD from the University of Kent in Canterbury, where he later became a Professor of English and Postcolonial Literature. Two years later, he could return to his motherland, feeling like an intruder however. Meanwhile, his home had been a recurrent thought as he was feeling dislocated in Britain. He even admitted that "the greatest burden of those years was coming to the understanding that [he] had abandoned [his] home" (Iqbal 36). This forced separation and the strong, recurring sense of unbelonging would later influence his fictional stories.

In his "Writing and Place" article, Gurnah avers he "began to write casually, in some anguish, without any sense of plan but pressed by the desire to say more" (58). It was not until his arrival in England that he began to reflect on the task of writing from a different

perspective than when he started in his home as a boy. He wished to delve into the atrocities, indignities and oppressions history itself had inflicted on each other and had usually silenced.

From the publication in 1987 of his debut novel *Memory of Departure*, whose title is rather evocative of his own voyage and from where he was writing, he "has explored the theme of the migrant's displacement, asking what happens 'to people who are in every respect part of a place, but who neither feel part of a place, nor are regarded as being part of a place'" (Nasta 352). In the novels that followed, always writing in English as a literary tool, but incorporating Swahili phrases, words and embedded references to Swahili prose, he has dealt with troubled experiences of individuals who live in postcolonial Zanzibar and who eventually leave home. On the whole, his novels cover "questions of history, migrancy and survival … [and draw] on the stories and voices of the past, reconstructing memories within the realities of the present" (353).

It is indeed his memory one of the major sources and themes of his literary fiction. As his own experience of a dislocated migrant in Britain, he has shown special interest in "the issue of people negotiating their 'identities'" (356). During his process of writing, he recreates the sense of being loose or feeling adrift, as he himself experienced. He reproduces things he remembers, yet "in reality what [he] is doing is reconstructing [himself] in the light of things that [he] remember[s]." (353). Therefore, by virtue of his prose, he explores "the unpredictable tricks memory can play on the migrant" (Gurnah, "Writing and Place" 58), either real like him or on a fictional character like his. In essence, by way of writing his novels he is representing, remaking and reshaping himself simultaneously because his own *identity* was distorted by the colonial tussle, by *migration* and discrimination.

As a recognised literary author, for him, postcolonial modern literature "should be about what cannot be easily said" (Nasta 362), therefore best transmitted through written words. Via his lingering words and fictional characters, readers get acquainted with a different world from that of Europe, a wider world in which African forgotten minorities prevail and which Gurnah feels part of. He narrates his nation, he embeds Swahili narratives. He unveils the lives of ordinary people in order to provide them with agency and the recognition that our European historiography had ignored on purpose. In other words, his intention when writing is to challenge the verity of European history towards his people.

Last year, members of the Swedish Academy bestowed the Nobel Prize in Literature on our author Abdulrazak Gurnah, turning him into the second black African to win this

prize, only after Nigerian Wole Soyinka in 1986. As he own asserts, "prizes do make a difference" (Nasta 363). This acknowledgement serves to address and listen to people's grievance, to approach their silences, to feel their sense of uprooting, to regain the histories of the Swahili Coast, and ultimately, to understand who they are. As Gurnah himself declared in his Nobel lecture,

> [i]t became necessary to make an effort to preserve that memory, to write about what was there, to retrieve the moments and the stories people lived by and through which they understood themselves. It was necessary to write of the persecutions and cruelties which the self-congratulations of our rulers sought to wipe from our memory. ("The Nobel Prize in Literature 2021")

Taking into account Gurnah's own migrant identity and his reasons for as well as his main source of writing his novels, in the following section we truly embark upon the analysis of the first of our chosen novels in this Master Thesis, *Paradise,* aiming at shedding light on the main characters' identities.

3.3. *Paradise* (1994)

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise,* published in 1994 and shortlisted for the Booker Prize and Whitbread Award, was his fourth novel. After his recognition as Nobel laureate, the Swedish Academy designated this literary work as "his breakthrough as a writer" ("The Nobel Prize in Literature 2021"). The story emerged after a trip to his home in the 1990s. Whereas his earlier books explored England as the foreground, he acknowledged that from that trip the condition of the migrant attracted him in a different way. This means that he altered the setting for this novel, placing the selves in colonial East Africa, particularly at the turn of the twentieth century, in the decade before the outbreak of WWI where dominance, ownership and onslaught – ultimately, colonisation – are described in detail.

The society he portrayed was a heterogenous Swahili one, fragmented and composed of mixed racial and ethnic stereotypical groups. As Katherine Steinberg states, apart from a contingent of German colonisers who ruled by means of violence, that Swahili society "was divided into a number of distinct subgroups: slaves and their descendants versus their patrician counterparts, interior versus coastal peoples, and indigenous African versus immigrants [a]rriving from Arabia" (1). Later, we will describe who acts as a mediator between these diverse cultures.

Paradise, as well as the novels that followed, will predominantly foreground an *interior* landscape built from stories and memories and in which characters carry their *worlds* within them, in Gurnah's own words (Nasta 357). Hence, in order to uncover what worlds Gurnah's fictional people carry deep inside, that is, to understand not only Yusuf but also the rest of the characters, the narrative is granted with a third-person omniscient narrator that uses direct speech, interior monologues, questions, exclamations and commands. In this same line, there are continuous flashbacks, breaking the linear telling of events. Furthermore, Swahili words are subtly blended with English ones, as well as Arabic, factual accuracy of the cosmopolitan, multicultural coastal East Africa where the characters live.

Considering this frame of references, we will analyse the above-mentioned aspects of identity in the most important characters of the novel. Although the narrative is divided into six parts, namely "The Walled Garden", "The Mountain Town", "The Journey to the Interior", "The Gates of Flame", "The Grove of Desire" and "A Clot of Blood", and structured around different journeys, our analysis will take the novel as a whole. For the sake of uniformity, each aspect will be preceded by a quotation taken from *Paradise*'s pages so that a cohesive order could be established.

We will start by knowing the main protagonist's *individuality*. We will witness how Yusuf's slave condition affects the perception of his own migrant, commodified identity, leading to the failed recognition of his subjectivity as a result of the historical colonisation. Then, we will approach the main communities that are present in Gurnah's fictional world so that we could understand the *status* and the position Uncle Aziz owns, in contrast with Yusuf's marginalisation within them. Next, we will analyse Yusuf's coming-of-*age*, that is, we will accompany our protagonist in his unattainable wish of becoming a man. We will meet his manly manners afterwards, yet we will observe how he fails in mapping his *gender* identity. Finally, we will view the *national identity* Germans embraced so as to understand Yusuf's final choice. As a whole, by carrying out the analysis of such aspects of identity in the fictional world of *Paradise*, we seek to prove how Gurnah portrays the effects European colonial rule truly had on innocent people.

3.3.1. "The boy first." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 1)

These are the opening words that we can read in the novel –the prominence of a twelve-year-old innocent boy who is named Yusuf following Gurnah's Koranic tradition.

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We will study in this first section his 'Individuality' because, sudden and involuntarily, one day he had to leave his home, hence his life changed abruptly.

The reasons for the boy's departure are not presented in the opening of the novel. It is in chapter five where we learn he was unknowingly sold by his own father to a merchant, mistaken and affectionately called Uncle Aziz. This social and regional practice, namely pawning, was "a common form of debt payment in which a relative was 'pawned' as a servant until the debt was re-paid" (Griffiths 310). Thus, as if a commodity, Yusuf's life was shaped by external forces. In this respect, we can firmly state that Yusuf has been imposed an objectivity. It was particularly his father the one who took this atrocious decision as the male head of the family, his mother relegated to a second level as she was not in favour of separating from his son –this gender binary properly defined in section '3.3.4.' devoted to 'Sex and gender'. In order to understand this brutality by which he gave their only child in exchange of the settlement of their debt, we should take into account the hybridity Bhabha assured. In line with this, his father is the epitome of acting as a coloniser, behaving and repeating the same "discriminatory identity effects" (154) his black people had previously experienced, appropriating in other words Yusuf's subjectivity. Having already been denied his own subjectivity, Yusuf was unable to ask when he would be returning home. He never asked why he was to accompany Uncle Aziz on his journey. Yusuf's destiny was the result of his father's debts, that is, his fate was moulded by the moment his father got him involved in this heartrending act. This forced separation from them, which tore Yusuf apart, would be the basis to mapping Yusuf's identity, certainly questioned throughout his coming years.

As a result of this decisive scene in the novel, of this commodification, Yusuf was firstly taken to the coast to Aziz's household –this migration pattern would be repeated in the novel, for Yusuf travels from one place to another, as we will continue mapping in this paper. There, where he became Aziz's servant, our little protagonist meets Khalil, another servant under Aziz's rules who works in his shop, who is older than Yusuf and who does accept his individuality as rehani[13]. It is indeed Khalil the one who instructed Yusuf about his new environment and his new condition, and who questioned him about his past, trying to map the identity of the new boy he was in charge of. Besides, it is Khalil the one who forcibly opens Yusuf's eyes to his current situation. He teaches Yusuf who Aziz really is,

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[13] Arab word for 'pawned individual'.

likewise who Yusuf really is: "'[Aziz] likes you to kiss his hand and call him seyyid[14]. And in case you don't know what that means, it means master.'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 25).

Therefore, Yusuf's slave condition is abruptly revealed by Khalil. Via his blunt statement, Yusuf is therefore provided consciousness of his social position. However, for our protagonist, it is hard to think of having been abandoned by his parents. His troubled mind could not imagine his father was indebted to his beloved Uncle and that he was the bargaining chip. He did not notice either that it was unfair, indeed wrong to work for Uncle Aziz in order to pay off his father's debt. For him, it was even harder to call his Uncle seyyid, as instructed by Khalil. It seems he cannot accept Aziz is not his true Uncle, that there are no blood ties between them. In his innocent and confused mind about his kinship with Aziz, he will continue calling Aziz 'him' and not 'seyyid', proving his child nature and, most importantly, proving Yusuf's refusal to accept his identity as a servant, their mutual relation of master/slave. Removed from his home, alone, treated as a commodity, Yusuf is again abandoned by the seyyid as Aziz only appears in the shop once every day in order to collect the business' takings. Besides, he is *denied* entry into Aziz's walled garden where his wives live. This would arguably lead to a powerful dislocation felt by the protagonist whose identity is not properly developed, being so young as he is. The enforced migration and its subsequent pattern of feeling like an intruder will position Yusuf in a liminal space between the interior area of women and the exterior world commanded by men, particularly his Uncle. He will consequently inhabit an *in-between* position, having his incorporation denied to Aziz's *paradi*siacal garden and to the external wilderness he is now directed to.

Yusuf's stay with Aziz does not last long. After some time, Yusuf is, again involuntarily and unexpectedly, taken to his master's journey to the 'wild' interior. As we are brilliantly reported, for him this journey was an unwelcome interruption to the calm his captivity had acquired over the years. As he has already assumed and internalised his condition of captivity, Yusuf does not wish to break from his routine. However, his innermost desires are not even heard. During this second journey, he is again left behind in a small mountain town. As an unimportant commodity, he was passed from his parents' hand to Aziz's hand, and now to Hamid Suleiman's hand, a shopkeeper who is Aziz's minor trader partner. Considering Aziz's businesses, it may be implied that some kind of economic favour was lying behind that acceptance by Hamid. Regardless of the reason, Yusuf's mere

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[14] Arab word.

existence seems insignificant, he is not even considered as a subject. His quest for identity is therefore conceivable. Poor Yusuf will spend two years under Hamid's supervision, wondering who he is, what he is aimed to do in life.

Our little protagonist cannot escape from his slave condition in his new residence, as he was requited to be at the service of Hamid and of his wife Maimuna. Thus, it can be stated that his slave identity was even reinforced at Hamid's house. On her own, Maimuna contributes to the mapping of the boy's identity with her particular requests about information regarding his past, as Khalil did. She asked him about his place of birth, about his parents, and his previous steps until he reached their house. Although readers wish for his answers, we do know Yusuf cannot respond to Maimuna's questions, he can only shrug with defeat and shame. We do know he owns a troubled mind, an unfixed sense of identity that hinders the perception of his subjectivity. In consequence, her attempt at mapping him fails. She offers to him the possibility of defining who he is, yet he is not able to do so, having already been denied his identity. We feel the boy's yearning for an identification of his own when reading that "[s]ometimes husband and wife exchanged looks over what Yusuf said, which made him think they knew more about him that he did himself." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 65). This powerful statement is pivotal in the mapping of Yusuf's identity for readers, once again, are aware of the boy's lack of ability to define the map of his self. In addition, we can sense how Maimuna bewilders our protagonist by reprimanding him for not addressing her husband 'Uncle'. Nonetheless, he had already been rebuked by Khalil for quite the opposite, so for Yusuf this new scolding is shocking. He is absolutely confused. Someone he was familiar with and he thought of as a true uncle was not related biologically to him, while in contrast, someone who is a stranger for him is now required to be called uncle. Poor Yusuf wonders what 'uncle' means, consequently who he is.

Furthermore, both Hamid and Maimuna shamed Yusuf for not having been taught their God's word: "'Kimwana[15], the boy doesn't know how to read the Koran!' … 'He has no father and no mother, and does not even know the word of God!'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 98). Such cruel words get our boy smaller. He knows he *has* parents, simply he was pawned to his beloved Uncle who was responsible for teaching him the prayers. Yet, his Uncle took no responsibility for he was just a *migrant rehani,* a commodity used for trading. Bearing in mind their so-rooted religious society, reading and interpreting the Koran was a common

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[15] Meaning 'darling' in Swahili.

practice that even children had to share since they thought that was an honourable act, the moral code they were to follow in life. In this regard, and echoing scholar Siundu, "religious … experiences of honour/reputation and shame are used to demarcate forms of identities within and between groups." (115). These traditional indicators delimit Yusuf's supposed dishonour, yet, as we have been discussing so far, colonialism destroyed everything in its way. As for our protagonist, he actually attended school since he was seven and he would have graduated honourably if he had not been sent away. Therefore, Yusuf could not attend madrasa[16] due to his imposed migrancy –as we reported in section '3.2.' about Gurnah himself. And now, his new master Hamid, who calls himself "[m]uungwana … a man of honour" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 186)[17], humiliates Yusuf, comparing him to a beast. Poor Yusuf, who feels alone, abandoned, who is gradually becoming smaller in an incomprehensible way for him, who wonders why his 'honour' was stolen. Poor Yusuf, who feels completely adrift since his departure –a human being unceasingly looking for answers.

Simultaneously, the novel attempts to present Yusuf's undeveloped identity and also a discovery of the world around him. On account of that, in the company of Hamid and Hamid's friends, Yusuf will learn more about Aziz, hence more about him, since he still is his Uncle's slave. He will learn Aziz's pursuit in life is trading, therefore he is a merchant. In consequence, he acquires the absolute understanding of his presence in Aziz's universe. His master's trade with merchandise implies his own treatment as commodity. Yusuf is given the information that if Aziz's partners cannot pay up, he decides to take their offspring as rehani, as slaves. Actually, Aziz's "penchant for taking the sons and daughters of his debtors … is simply another form of slave-trading" (Schwerdt 95-6). Notwithstanding that the characters reaffirm that trading in slaves is not honourable, here the irony lies in Aziz, who does not act in accordance with this common belief because he has also internalised the colonial discourse. He is therefore like the Germans. He acts as a coloniser, despite belonging to the same race and ethnicity as our protagonist. As Yusuf's father did, Aziz is also repeating the same "discriminatory identity effects" (Bhabha 154) because their minds have been colonised, they are perpetuating the colonial representation of the world. They both are behaving as colonisers historically did before, trading with Yusuf, holding him in bondage. Scholar Ruberto claims that "[t]rade acts as a signifier of identity whereby people

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[16] Arabic word meaning 'educational institution for higher levels'.
[17] Originally, Hamid calls his people "'waungwana'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 99), in plural, but it has been adapted to singular in order to give more cohesion to this paragraph. In scholar Siundu's words, Hamid's description means 'the refined' (111).

come to define themselves according to their exposure to mercantile activity." (149). In this regard, Yusuf is the subject who receives this disgraceful act. Sadly, as for his identity, it would be quite difficult to map it.

Yusuf's stay with Hamid is suddenly interrupted due to the boy's innocent approaches to his daughter Asha –we will delve into this gender behaviour in the succeeding section '3.3.4.'. Therefore, this time Aziz decides to take our protagonist to the interior, lying to him though, as he told him that he was in need of someone sharp to watch his affairs. Even though Yusuf was surprised by that praise, he knew that Hamid was indeed expelling him from his home. As per Ruberto, "[a] new world opens up for Yusuf when he joins his master's trading expedition." (146). In light of this new world and consciousness, this migration movement, which is the third one the boy has experimented in this short life, would be fundamental to grasp his own meaning in life. By accompanying his Uncle's caravan to the interior, he will be instructed to be a *man*, with connotations related to his age and his gender, properly defined in the following sections of this paper. Nonetheless, as for Yusuf's *confused* individuality, which is our concern in this section, he will learn the true nature of his slave condition, that is, he will completely accept his destiny in life –serfdom.

As Aziz previously did at Hamid's household, he decided to trade with our boy. After several days crossing countries, the caravan reached Marungu, a mountain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There, they met the sultan Chatu, the ruler of the area. Yusuf is asked by Chatu himself to be the bringer of the gifts the merchant had as a way of greeting the sultan. In Chatu's presence, our protagonist would recognise his identity. By way of Nyundo, the chief courtier of the caravan who acts as a translator from Swahili to Arabic, Yusuf is questioned whether he is a servant to the merchant or, rather, his son. The boy's firm answer as confirming he *is* a servant is paramount in the course of the events, particularly in the identification of his own self. Five years have passed since his departure from his home, since his parents had abandoned him. Now seventeen, our boy has come to understand his oppression, his position in society, indeed "a position without identity" (Spivak 476) –his subalternity. By identifying himself as a servant before Chatu, he identifies his Uncle as master, thus he has faced his reality –he belongs to his Uncle, who has denied his existence. This is, in other words, the evidence of Yusuf's complete internalisation of the colonial discourse Aziz epitomises. As Bardolph states, "by accepting the authority of the 'big man', [he is] finally recognised and acquire[s] an identity" (87) of his own, yet a *slave* identity, a position without identity in fact.

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By accepting Aziz's rule, Yusuf accepts his submission and dependency, which are even intensified because he will remain for some time under Chatu's custody. The sultan established some conditions if the merchant and his caravan wanted to trade in his region, being Yusuf's permanence with him as a hostage the most heartrending. Again, our boy's life is meaningless, his personhood denied. He is again the bargaining chip used for trade. Poor Yusuf spends his life marginalised and commodified, he is not a free individual. Unlike his previous experience at Aziz's home, now, at the sultan's household, Yusuf was enclosed in the walled courtyard, forbidden to approach the terrace that connected to the exterior. He was now required to stay within the walls, feeling again like an intruder in this new space, confined as a slave for no reason. In consequence, we may claim that his individuality appears sacrificed in the name of colonialisation, for Chatu too is assuming Bhabha's hybridity, he is behaving as a coloniser, assuming the coloniser's commodifying role and imposing an objectivity on Yusuf, who is a black subject as he himself is. After trade differences are settled between Aziz and Chatu, Yusuf is told they are all leaving. At that moment, he is given the opportunity to express himself as regards his knowledge of the world and of himself. Aziz offers to him the possibility of giving voice to his innermost feelings and perceptions for the first time in his life. However, Yusuf rose and left, avoiding again any contact with his Uncle, having lived for years in everybody's shadow, having been alienated from his own black society, having been the suffering subject of such a long history of white colonialism. In his absence of words, the narrative grants us the heartbreaking thoughts a *migrant* person like him holds:

> [H]e sat silently with himself, numbed by *guilt*[18] that he had been *unable* to keep the *memory* of his parents fresh in his life … There was nothing he could think of to do which would unshackle him from the bondage to the life he lived … He thought of Khalil … That was how he would become … hemmed in from all sides and dependent. Stranded in the middle of *nowhere* … [disguising] hidden wounds … a thousand miles from home … stuck in one smelly place or another, infested by *longing* and *comfort*ed by visions of lost wholeness. (Gurnah, *Paradise* 174-5)

The previous passage is exceptional for our task of mapping a migrant identity from a postcolonial perspective. As Gurnah experienced himself, Yusuf's memory is playing unpredictable tricks on his migrant condition, filling our boy with *guilt*, as if he were responsible for his own destiny. He confuses his *inability* to remember his origins, believing he was responsible for that separation from his parents, without realising it was actually caused by external, colonial forces. Yet, we do know he has been dispossessed of his inner

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[18] My emphasis on all the words of this extract.

self, his *memories* and affections. He has forcibly been shaped according to external, dehumanised forces. As a migrant individual like Gurnah himself, poor Yusuf experiences the colonial effects on his identity, on his perception of the world, always *longing* for recognition, living *in-between*, "feeling neither here nor there, unable to indulge in sentiments of belonging to either location, defined by others" (McLeod 247). The appearance of Khalil on his mind delineates his future for he does realise that, if he does not claim his voice, he is to follow and share Khalil's fate –a completely submissive and dependent rehani, professing a kind of devotion for his master, forever looking for *comfort* in his seyyid. This wonderful extract becomes a milestone in Yusuf's life, for he *is* deciding what he does not want to be the rest of his life, he is acquiring a subjectivity, therefore some agency. In other words, awareness about his human subject and presence, about his subalternity, is being increased.

In that regard, and echoing Spivak, the emblematic term 'subaltern' implies insurgency (476), that is, insurrection and resistance. To put it differently, it requires for the subject to be liberated from such constraints. As scholar Kaur also highlights, "[a]t the core of the theory of subalternity lies a desire for subjecthood and its expression." (2). In relation to this, we now come to the fourth and final migration Yusuf underwent in order to see how his personhood, his subjecthood, developed. Having already finished the expedition, Aziz directed his men and Yusuf towards his household again, a return journey which took them five months. In this final part of our novel, we witness our protagonist's attempt at self-actualisation and development of his subjectivity. Yusuf's return to Aziz's household gets him acquainted with Amina, his Uncle's second wife. Her presence is fundamental for the development of our protagonist's subjectivity. Although their liaison will be thoroughly described in section '3.3.4.', we will here state how their like condition as slaves is crucial for Yusuf's final and tragic claiming of his voice. Raised as the sister of Khalil after his father rescued her from slavery, as she was to be sold off somewhere, Aziz eventually took Amina as repayment of their father's debt, thereby re-enslaving her. Under Aziz's yoke, she was taken as a servant of his first wife. Therefore, all her life has been a commodification, just like Yusuf's and Khalil's existences. As a consequence, Amina knows she does not own an identity of her own. She knows she has life because of its emptiness –because of what she has been denied. Poor Amina, who has been doubly dispossessed.

Through their sense of communion, both working for Aziz as repayment of their fathers' debts, both slaves, Yusuf and Amina find in each other the reality they are leaving

in. As Ruberto claims, "[i]n the young slave she finally finds the person to whom she can unburden the weight of her precarious life. At the same time, though, she also provides Yusuf with some touching insights into her situation" (155), which is also shared by him, for they both live in Hell. Unlike Yusuf, who has been travelling through countries and sensing the world – a world of captivity however –, Amina has not been allowed to leave Aziz's walled household, which symbolises a prison. As section '3.3.4.' will deal with, her female gender conditions her in a more cruel way, hence her envy of Yusuf's 'freedom'.

In this sense, Amina's life in captivity provides Yusuf with powerful and decisive insights into insurgency and agency. Now, he owns a clearer vision of what he wants to achieve in life. He has finally grasped how devastating the effects of his Uncle's power might be. He has already witnessed how living under his Uncle's yoke is like, hence he begins to consider a different life for him and his beloved Amina. He thinks his love for her empowers him to speak, to claim his voice and to develop his subjectivity, to resist the perception of him as 'Other'. In his mind, he *plans* what words he should choose so that the seyyid could witness his *insurgent* acts, so as to definitely break from his Uncle's ties and provide Amina and himself with the liberty they deserve and long for. However, he fails in such an attempt, proving his *in-betweenness*. Via Aziz, he learns his father has passed away and his mother no longer lives in his old town. This revelation saddened him for his mother too was now abandoned somewhere. Poor Yusuf, now seventeen, feels paralysed by the memory of his mother, of her being abandoned just like he was. His sense of identity, which is not completely fixed at that moment, seems even blurred for his own abandonment five years ago, for his continuous migration and dislocation, his self-imposed guilt and his inability to remember in detail. Thus, he

> could not make himself say the words that were burning in him. *I want to take [Amina]away. It was wrong of you to marry her. To abuse her as if she has nothing which belongs to her. To own people the way you own us.*[19] In the end Uncle Aziz rose to his feet and offered Yusuf his hand to kiss. (Gurnah, *Paradise* 241)

This episode is key in the development of the boy's consciousness. With regard to Yusuf's identity, as we have been mapping in this study, the passivity and the inability to speak he holds throughout most part of the narrative is justified by looking back on the colonial past. Certainly, he is one of the "silenced subaltern subjects" (100) scholar Barker pointed out, representing some of the most pervasive metaphors of postcolonial fiction. Everything was denied to our protagonist, he becomes empty and smaller without memories,

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[19] Emphasis in original.

without companionship. He fails to cross his imaginative borders because he has become a coward, as Khalil claimed to be. Like Khalil, Yusuf loses his voice due to the constant control he receives. Our little protagonist "is a stark example of what the [immoral, colonial] evil that causes enslavement of individuals does to the psyche." (Kaur 102). The differences between his masters' colonial authority and his own dependence "may not limit [his] functions but subject them to stigma and discrimination from others." (Barker 101). That is, his disability is not physical but psychological, and it hinders the perception of his identity, subjecting him to shame and dishonour. As Ruberto argued, "the narrative is [mainly] concerned with highlighting the major psychological traumas undergone by the native population as a consequence of the exploitation of … foreign systems" (164), as illustrated in Yusuf thus far, but also in Khalil and Amina.

In order to better appreciate Yusuf' unfixed sense of identity, his psychological trauma, attention should be drawn again to Gurnah's own *migrant identity*. Our author reflects in his character his personal itinerary, the dislocation he felt in his own country and then in Britain due to colonial and imperial forces, as already discussed in section '3.2.'. As he himself answered in his interview with Razia Iqbal, "'this shrinking … does it also result in a silencing? A loss of voice?' 'Yes.'" (35). Gurnah is therefore combining autobiographical experiences with fictional elements, providing a historical context in his story that accounts for the people's affliction and passivity, caused by such a long exposure to dominance and control. In other words, our protagonist Yusuf is a passive subject in his black society. More particularly, he is a subject without a defined identity because the powerful figures that surround him deny him an individuality. Primarily his father in the company of his Uncle, then Hamid and Maimuna, next Chatu, and finally again Aziz. They are all authoritative characters who have behaved as colonisers did, therefore exerting their influence on Yusuf, sadly mapping his quest for identity, sadly silencing his voice. They were figures whose hybridity was gradually shaping Yusuf to the extent that, towards the end of the novel, he embodies the same colonial discourse that had stolen his life. Thus, in a last and vain attempt at claiming his voice, he rebels in the face of oppression because he has come to understand his subalternity.

Through his insurgent act which entails going away and escaping such oppression, he will be perceived as a resistant colonised, hence the postcolonial ambivalence Bhabha asserts. Nonetheless, by performing such a rebelling act, Yusuf would reinforce he has internalised the colonial discourse that has mapped his short life. Poor Yusuf will try again

to speak, to seek real release, to utter what lies inside him, to struggle for his lost dignity and to have meaningful control over his own steps, to become, ultimately, a subject and to become himself. Yet he will fail, once again, to develop his individuality. Our protagonist will not be able to fully grasp that his existence has changed forever due to colonial forces and nothing can be done to heal his psychological wounds. Faced for the first time with the possibility of real freedom, Yusuf is unable to embrace it because "a hard lump of loneliness had long ago formed in his displaced heart, [and] wherever he went it would be with him, to diminish and disperse any plot he could hatch for small fulfilment" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 236).

Considering the historical context in which our novel takes place, that is, the moments prior to WWI, when Tanganyika was still part of German East Africa, Yusuf saw a column of soldiers who were regarded as askari[20]. As we will see again in section '3.3.5.', those men were acting in accordance with the German officer's commands while Yusuf gazed at them with awe from his Uncle's house. The German officer was, in fact, commanding captives to fight in that alien, European war that was poised to happen –again exerting colonial power on innocent black subjects. As for our boy, he was fascinated by their strict formation into two silent lines, amazed by their fatalism, their obedience. Yusuf may have seen himself reflected on those black natives that had just been captured in the name of colonialism. He may have perceived that he was truly one of them, that his own fatalism was also determined by colonialism. He could have realised that, like them, he was an easily influenced person. He could have thought of them as his destiny, as the expected claiming of his own voice, accordingly, "[h]e glanced round quickly and then ran after the column with smarting eyes." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 247). These are the last words we can read in the novel –Yusuf's running towards his fate after hearing his Uncle was bolting the garden door behind him.

He ran, in short, because he thought it was his own desire for independence and agency, because nobody was ordering him to do so. He ran because he thought it was his own decision, having been *denied* his presence in Aziz's world once again. Nonetheless, he could not realise that his choice was not a deliberate one. Rather, it was a tragic 'free' choice in the sense that he was joining the same colonial source that had hampered the development of his identity. Drawing on scholar Ruberto, "Yusuf's desperate run towards the column of

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[20] In a number of languages, like Swahili, meaning local 'soldier' or 'police'. These African soldiers, who served in the armies of the German colonial powers in Eastern Africa, were also known as the 'schutztruppe', in German.

German soldiers who were recruiting natives for their war against the British signals the end not only of Yusuf's relationship with the Arab social system but also the supersession of one exploitative system for another." (161). That is, he could not see the outcome of this choice, "which resonates with those of countless subalterns who act in ways that are detrimental to the interests of their communities" (Berman 60). Yusuf was so conditioned by his life in captivity, by his unfixed identity, that he could not notice he was indeed reinforcing his serfdom, for his alleged 'free' control of his own life merely meant a change of masters.

Consequently, his decision proves his deep internalisation of the colonial discourse that had conditioned all his life. It proves he is "the product of shaping … ideological forces." (Griffiths 314). To put it simply, his final choice exemplifies the colonial effects on African innocent people, their hybridity at assuming the colonial identity. Yusuf certainly becomes "the epitome of the disempowered colonial subject" (Schwerdt 93) because his mere soul has been stolen from him. All the control, dominance and disavowal he has experienced in his short life came from white tyrants, and, at this final moment, he is accepting and assuming that same white colonial identity. That is the true colonial exhibition of power, the colonial authority exerted on innocent, black boys like poor Yusuf, who remains forever an itinerant person without answers to this troubled mind. Sadly, he never managed to obtain the map of his identity.

To conclude this first section that has dealt with Yusuf's *individuality* as the main character, we can declare Aziz dominates the boy's life. His imposed migration on our protagonist determines Yusuf's in-betweenness and dislocation, hence the analysis of the seyyid's *status* in the following section. As we have proved, Yusuf's life was shaped by abandonment, by objectification and by disavowal of his identity –influenced, in turn, by white colonialism. A slave of his own black people, he represents the result of colonial power and identity, of colonial hybridity. Without subjectivity, our protagonist attempts to claim his own voice towards the end of the novel and therefore map his self. Nonetheless, by joining the German Army in their war against the British, he is truly reinforcing his hybrid self, confirming the role colonialism and war played on the migrant identities of ordinary African people.

3.3.2. "'His name suits him perfectly.'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 70)

As previously stated, the analysis of 'Status' will be focused on the figure of Uncle Aziz. In Ruberto's words, "[t]he merchant Aziz is one of the most complicated and fascinating characters that Gurnah has produced in his fictions" (140), hence our intention to get acquainted with him, given his importance in the novel. Aziz is a powerful Arab patrician and a successful businessman who is very respected by the other men in his community. Such is his status that the narrative describes him as the centre and meaning of that life. Everything turns around him and nobody questions his orders. He is, in fact, the model and norm to be followed.

Aziz's name has been deliberately chosen by Gurnah. Our author draws on his Muslim tradition to map Aziz's status as a very powerful man, as a kind of venerated God or King. As scholar Malak describes,

> [t]he word *Aziz*[21] appears in the Qur'an with two meanings: "al-'Aziz" is one of Allah's ninety-nine names meaning "the Exalted" or "the Almighty". It also appears in "Surat Yusuf" as the name of Pharaoh's prominent courtier … who buys the young prophet Yusuf as a slave and brings him to his wife –whose name, according to Muslim tradition, is Zulekha … In either sense of the word, al-'Aziz is associated in the Qur'an with power (59).

The first descriptions we read about Aziz in the novel align him with the previous historical account of the Qur'anic *Aziz*. As a renowned merchant, Aziz used to visit Yusuf's parents on the long journeys he made from the coast to the interior. He was indeed familiar to Yusuf, yet not a blood relative. Although the reasons for these visits were not revealed at that time, we do know Yusuf's father owed Aziz a lot of money, thus we can claim he stopped to settle his debts. Aziz's extravagant expeditions were always accompanied by drums, travellers, porters and musicians, exemplifying his importance. Besides, he always dressed in white, symbolising God's purity. Despite any mishaps he could find during the journeys, he always managed to look at ease and with refined airs, giving the impression of an *exalted* and honourable leader. Actually, Yusuf's father thought that Aziz's visits brought honour on them, hence the family strove to make the merchant satisfied. As for our boy, Aziz always rose his curiosity, such was his innocence. He marvelled at his Uncle because he gave him, without fail, a ten anna[22] piece. Aziz's act of giving the boy a coin every time he stopped with them represents his powerful and economic status. This action may stand

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[21] Emphasis in original.
[22] Indian coin.

for Aziz's twofold nature. On the one hand, it can be perceived as if the merchant was throwing his money away, as proof of his capital and his *might*. On the other hand, it may be regarded as if Aziz was *buying* the boy, attracting his attention. With regard to this first characterisation of Uncle Aziz, we can firmly state that he is an authoritative and central figure in the narrative, undeniably associated with power, as his Qur'anic namesake al-'*Aziz*.

According to Bardolph, Aziz "exerts his ascendancy over family and community alike" (85). Regarding his family, he follows his Muslim tradition and his internalised colonial discourse by *possessing* and controlling two women/wives who live in his walled garden, an abusive behaviour we will give shape to in section '3.3.4.'. Concerning community in our novel, which is our concern now and as we previously argued in section '2.1.2.', the identity of the colonial subject within the African territory is related to the integration into specific communities. It is worth noting that the majority of East African society at that time belonged to the Swahili community. However, taking into consideration the community that arose in people's imagination as a result of the white European colonialism (Anderson 6), the communities that are present in our novel do not align with the real, geographical boundaries existing on the country. In fact, and according to Berman, "[t]he boundaries between Swahili, Arab, Indian, and African communities are fluid" (55) in our story. That is so because we are in a multicultural society, a space that is formed by a combination of some other spaces. That means there exists in *Paradise* an *imagined* landscape that provides people with a sense of *community*. In that regard, we will focus on Aziz, because, as a merchant, his role was of mediator between the above-mentioned communities (Steinberg 2), hence his importance. More particularly, we will pay attention only to the Arab community he is part of, as it is our aim to witness Yusuf's incorporation to or marginalisation from it.

It can firmly be declared that Aziz owns a defined identity because he has a special position within his *Arab* community. After arriving at his first forced destination and witnessing how passers-by greeted and let Aziz pass in the streets, our protagonist noticed that his uncle was an eminent man. Later, Yusuf, who was a *Swahili* boy, would observe the common and devoted pattern that awaited for him if he wished to be integrated into the community. In the company of Khalil, he would learn he is required to kiss Uncle Aziz's hand, entailing he would bow to the seyyid. Moreover, Khalil advised him on matters of the expected behaviour he should adopt before Aziz, primarily showing him respect and obedience, a kind of submissiveness to the master he is. Therefore, as if a kind of exalted,

powerful and beloved God, Aziz represents the model Yusuf may follow as he aims for recognition and integration, for the identification of his identity. The projection of Aziz's Arab status is essential for Yusuf, who is a boy that has been recently separated from his home, his family bonds and his universe on account of economic value.

Aziz's venerated status is even reinforced during his caravan journey into the interior. As per Berman, the caravan trade "was one of the most important institutions structuring the multilayered East African social, political, cultural, and economic space at the time" (51), and Yusuf is a direct witness of that kind of worship and idolatry, of that eminence his Uncle epitomises. His presence within the men's caravan is essential for our understanding of the boy's condition of person. As a case in point, it is narrated how Hamid, the shopkeeper to whom Yusuf is taken one year, emphasised his speech with Arabic words in order to please Aziz. It is also reported that it was Aziz, as the leader of the caravan, the one who gave the signal so that they start their journey. Again, like the extravagant announcement of his visits to Yusuf's house, now his departure followed the same pattern so as to symbolise the power this journey would bring to him. However, this time the expedition was even marked by greater distinction, for they were accompanied by two horn players, like a small orchestra. Besides, Aziz teaches Yusuf that they should give a small gift to every settlement they pass, this way he would assure that he obtains the needed information and favours, which was the seyyid's true intention at trading. Actually, that is what he did to Yusuf, enticing him with coins so as to gain his trust.

Moreover, we read how Aziz's commands are accepted by his group. For instance, after a brief turmoil that the death of two men produces between Simba Mwene, an Arab overseer who was hired to assist during the journey and who wanted to bury them, and Mohamed Abdalla, the expedition's mnyapara[23] who disagreed, it is Aziz the one who brings order and declares to bury the dead. Thus, the mnyapara finally gives in following his seyyid's wish, which is not debatable. In this line, it is declared that everybody respects Aziz's will and acts under his command, everybody is controlled by him. Additionally, as the great leader he knows he is, Aziz depicts the social behaviour that should guide his subjects. By way of illustration, in their route towards Chatu's region, Aziz declines an invitation to have some beer on account of his role model. He knows everybody follows his steps, thus he rejects such behaviour considered inappropriate for a trader like himself.

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[23] Swahili word for 'head of the caravan'.

However, the journey is not profitable at all. Indeed, it is catastrophic given some problems the seyyid has to face and does actually overcome. For instance, the wilderness that welcomes them in the interior frightens the porters of the caravan. Yet, as to gather them courage, the mnyapara sets Aziz as the example to follow: "'Look at the seyyid … He has the gift for business which God has granted him.'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 112). Thus, he is seen as a gifted man who can be compared to a God –as his own fictional name perfectly epitomises in relation to his Muslim tradition. And, as another frightened subject, Yusuf hears these words Abdalla utters. By this time, readers know he wanted to be like his Uncle. We know Yusuf wants to be a well-positioned person within his community, a kind of hero who everybody venerates, but he is not offered assistance. Besides, during the journey, there was an unexpected excess of tributes to pay. Some of Aziz's men also died, but the seyyid always imbued the expedition with his aura of calm. After their journey back, again the mnyapara sets Aziz as the role model. Abdalla instructs the company men that the seyyid still is a champion and brave merchant, despite this disastrous trip. In brief, Aziz is a venerated hero because "[e]ven in their worst time … a *grace*ful[24] and invincible assurance had issued from him and embraced all of them." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 191).

Following again the tradition of his Qur'anic designation, Aziz's status is arguably that of a Pharaoh, just as the omniscient third-person narrator names him towards the end of the narrative. Aziz's role is, undoubtedly, the model set for Yusuf, albeit unattainable. Echoing scholar Menkiti and his statement regarding the definition of person through a process of incorporation into the community (172), we can declare that Yusuf fails at his definition because Aziz does not accept the boy due to his *Swahili* ancestry. Considering that the caravan men act in compliance with Aziz's wishes, commands and ideas, they neither accepted Yusuf into their *Arab* community. Separated from his Swahili culture, home and language, our protagonist is certainly advised to learn Arabic the first day he meets Khalil. However, nobody teaches him. As a result, in his imagination and in his troubled mind, poor Yusuf thought he could understand some of the Arabic he was constantly hearing. Yet, in reality, he never managed to follow the exchange of words that happened around him, as the following lines illustrate: Yusuf "had overheard [Aziz and Hamid] talking about him. Some of it he had missed because of [their] habit of breaking into Arabic" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 111),

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[24] My emphasised 'grace' truly resembling God's mercy and divinity, as his own name relates to.

that is, because of his own ignorance as well as their masters' *conscious* disdain and denial of the boy's incorporation into their Arab community.

This refusal of Yusuf's integration into the community is reinforced by the caravan men, such as Mohamed Abdalla. It exasperated him that the boy could not understand Arabic, yet he did not help him in his process of integration into their Arab community, nobody taught our boy that strange, Qur'anic language. Yusuf knows he longs for recognition and an identity of his own, like his Uncle, but it feels an impossible task to be fulfilled without help. His imposed Arab community does not accept him and his pure Swahili one abandoned him. As Callahan pinpoints, "Yusuf's separation from [the Swahili and Arab] groups reflects the complex ethnic mix as well as individual alienation. In a culture that … lives through community, this is a damning indictment." (60). Poor Yusuf, whose like black community does not accept him because it is divided into imagined ethnic groups which do not correspond to the real boundaries. As Menkiti stated, "[w]ithout incorporation into [a] community, individuals are considered to be mere danglers to whom the description 'person' does not fully apply." (172). It follows, then, Yusuf's complete alienation and his failing at achieving personhood. Poor Yusuf, whose status is thus one of an outsider, who lives marginalised, always confused and disempowered. Our little protagonist clearly lives *in-between*, separated from his Swahili bonds and never integrated into the forced Arab community he is directed to. This failing at mapping the condition of his personhood emphasises his troubled mind, his unfixed identity.

In short, to conclude this second section that has dealt with 'Status' as an important aspect of identity, we have perceived, through Yusuf's innocent eyes, Aziz's powerful role within his Arab community, a community which despises the rest of communities, imagined as they are all, though. They belong to the same wounded nature because they are all African people, yet in their minds, there was this fixed sense of communion. We have also proved how the diverse East African society the novel portrays stays unified by the caravan trade. More particularly, we have examined how this diverse culture is mediated by Aziz and his high status within the men. To put it differently, we have seen how and why "'[h]is name suits him perfectly.'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 70).

However, as for our protagonist, we have illustrated how he has been denied incorporation into his black community, a fact which reinforces his inability to consider himself a person, to define his own self. European colonialism and its will hindered the perception of Yusuf's *individuality*, as we analysed earlier, and also his achievement of

person within his community, as illustrated in this section. The separation from his Swahili community and the subsequent denial of incorporation into the Arab one reinforces his in-betweenness and his perception as 'Other', as subordinated to his Uncle's yoke, as a subject whose *status* is marginalised within his own black community. Poor Yusuf, who cannot map his own identity heretofore. Bearing this inability in mind, we now aim to discuss whether he is able to map his identity as regards his *age*.

3.3.3. "[A]s if he was a child." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 12)

Regarding the analysis of 'Age' in *Paradise*, and as stated, we will study Yusuf's coming-of-age paying special attention to the cultural ideas that conceive appropriate and inappropriate determined behaviours at certain ages. At the beginning of the narrative, Yusuf appears with a certain refusal of his childish identity. A child who attends school and is fond of playing, throughout the narrative, we observe the portrayal of a character who struggles against a dichotomy that is blocking the development of his identity. Surrounded since the very earlier moments by older boys, our protagonist seems to act as if he is no longer a baby nor a child, but a boy.

Despite Yusuf's father's insistence on playing with the children who lived in their neighbourhood, Yusuf disobeyed him and sat with the groups of African older boys. In the company of them, he was at ease, he felt comfortable. He enjoyed being with the older boys because their manners really made a difference. Yusuf did not notice this age difference however, not even when playing together. Such disobedience had his father infuriated. Perhaps as an attempt to protect Yusuf from the African neighbours – who are not considered Arabs nor Muslims by him, rather 'savages', hence the 'Other'– , or rather to maintain his child's purity, he disapproves his son's insubordinate *inappropriate* behaviour, slapping him and sending him home. As regards his mother, she also acts in accordance with the same parental protective role as her husband. Yet, her natural bond seems stronger, for she shows a kind of devotion for her child: "It was because he was small for his age that she was always doing it – picking him up, pinching his cheeks, giving him hugs and slobbery kisses – and then laughing at him as if he was a child. He was already twelve." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 12-3).

Through the previous extract, we can grasp Yusuf is a child who yearns to be a young boy, who is eager to be older, free from his parents' childish treatment and their emotional ties. Mediated by gender as a cultural variable of age (Longhurst et al. 85), we may suggest

the fact that being considered as a boy and then a man would set him as a worthy successor after his father. His situation would have been quite the opposite if born a female baby, for she would have been destined to be by her parents' side, taking care of them until marriage. However, as a male child, he feels the need to be liberated from his family's ties and be recognised as a boy.

It is during his twelfth year when he starts to mature and grow up like a man. Following Berman's analysis and as it was mentioned earlier, Yusuf's "tale of maturation" (53) can be labelled as a *Bildungsroman,* yet not a conventional one. The moment his father enquired whether he would like to go on a trip with Uncle Aziz, he "resisted the pressure to bury his face in his father's torso. He was too old for that kind of thing." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 16). In this scene, we can observe the child he still keeps inside in addition to his pretence of being a young man.

After Uncle Aziz took him as a rehani, Yusuf is driven to be instructed by Khalil, and, in his company, he is attributed the rank he has longed for –'little *boy*'. This entailed the forced separation from his parents forever. Khalil, who is older than him and whom Yusuf spends all his time with, is summoned by the shoppers 'young *man*'. Similar patterns as these could seem, they do play a part in determining Yusuf's identity, comparing himself to Khalil without regard to his age gap. Together, they played in the streets while hearing the remarks passers-by shouted at Khalil, given his age. As a 'young man', Khalil should not be playing with Yusuf because he is a child. Thus, feeling the disapproval of his society at such conduct for his behaviour is not *appropriate* for his age and his culture, Khalil immediately handles the situation and shows a behaviour considered suitable for his age. After being offered a smoke by some fishermen, Khalil accepted it as evidence of his adulthood, but forbade it to Yusuf, emphasising once again our protagonist's childhood. This inevitably confuses Yusuf, wondering what age really involves.

During Yusuf's second journey before arriving at Hamid's, again our protagonist is seen as a child by the expedition men, particularly Mohammed Abdalla, who offers to sing him a lullaby. It seems Abdalla mocks Yusuf's short life, trying to soothe the frightened child. For Yusuf's identity, these different designations bewilder his inner self, wondering what acts should be performed so that he would be considered as a man. Later, from and after his stay with Hamid, Yusuf is addressed as 'young *man'*, skipping the 'boy' categorisation. He is sixteen now, and that naming really suis him for, in his ears, 'young man' sounds as good as being described as a philosopher. Now, he is also a man in the eyes

of his worshipped God, so it may be claimed that he feels his life complete, having achieved the designation he has yearned for.

The following year, Aziz returns and decides to take him to his journey into the interior, giving rise to Yusuf's story of maturation. This other journey would show Yusuf very bloody hands. Conditioned by his male gender and the difficulties he caused at Hamid's house for his sexual encounters with his daughter – properly analysed in the following section of this dissertation –, Yusuf heard Hamid say to Uncle Aziz that he was no longer welcome in his home. Hamid offered two possibilities to Aziz, entailing taking the boy on the journey or marrying him, which, given his seventeen years and his manhood, was the most correct decision. However, Aziz chooses as he pleases, taking the boy with him and postponing marriage until he thought it was the right moment. As for our protagonist, who is now regarded as a man by the community, this appointment would entail acting accordingly. The company men, commanded by his Uncle, would expect no childing reasoning and deeds, no infantile fright because boys and men are supposed to show their prowess –mediated again by their male gender.

Nonetheless, it can be stated that some manners our protagonist witnessed around him prompted him to act and think as a child. For instance, he saw the expedition men playing in a river and splashing water at each other, as if they were children. Yusuf looked puzzled at them, not fully grasping what men should do, how men should behave. Consequently, few passages in the narrative do reflect the child Yusuf carries deep inside, his abiding childish thoughts. By way of illustration, his nightmares never abandon him, labelling him as a 'sick child'. Men are not imagined as having bad dreams like he has. In the same line, men are not thought of as playing, but Yusuf does not align himself with such traditional behaviour. His journey to the interior would mark his consolidation as man, however, when he returns after years, his childish nature is confirmed. As a case in point, together with Khalil, again both played in the streets like children, regardless of their age. Besides, Yusuf's innocent and child-like mind is discerned again towards the end of the narrative. By telling Amina, his third love, his inner beliefs regarding an amulet he once found in the garden, he was confirming his childish nature. In particular, he told her that if he rubbed the amulet, he knew a jinn would appear to act under his command. Thus, all these activities such as playing, having nightmares and daydreams, which are shared by children, position him as such. However, in his mind, Yusuf firmly thinks he is *not* a child, a thought

he never uttered though. As a result, the journey that would mark his initiation into manhood bolsters in the end his long-lasting childish essence.

To sum up this third section, the recognition Yusuf gained as a 'young *man*' before embarking on and during Aziz's trading journey into the interior seems blurred, for he is a seventeen-year-old teenager, developing his adult consciousness and behaving sometimes as if he were a child. Therefore, we can declare he lives *in-between*, without being a child nor a man. According to Schwerdt, "[his] lack of self-determination … handicaps his ability to move beyond liminality into manhood" (94). Certainly, he is unable to map his identity as regards his age. As a result, it can plausibly be stated that Gurnah, in his portrayal of such a fragmented African society at the turn of the twentieth century, and his depiction of a child/boy/man protagonist, did succeed in presenting the devastating effects of colonialism in the subjects' offspring. Conflict and the quest for trade made Yusuf mature for he developed his critical consciousness. However, avid for years as he was, he never managed to define his view of himself in accordance with his actions nor beliefs. He fails in mapping his *age* identity. In this line, we now aim to examine whether he manages to give shape to his sexual and gender identity.

3.3.4. "*Take pity on me, my husband*, she cried." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 31)

As regards the analysis of 'Sex and gender' in *Paradise*, we aim to study distinct but complementary subsections. Firstly, we attempt to briefly illustrate who acts in accordance with his or her biological sex, that is, who follows male/female-gendered stereotypes. Secondly, we focus on a particular male character and on two female characters whose manners and depiction do not align with the traditional gendered behaviours society expects from them. Thirdly, we examine Yusuf's sexual and gender identity to see whether he is able to solidly map his self or, rather, he fails in proving his manhood.

In the first place, and as stated, we aim to present the portrayal of some characters that conforms to the traditional Muslim system which determines male-gendered values and female-gendered behaviours. In other words, it is our purpose to view how postcolonialism served to reinforce gender stereotypes. As Buchbinder asserted, our complicity with the conventional system of gender values rests on natural ways of thinking and acting, considered *appropriate* by society (39). Since he was seven and was sent to the school town to be educated in religion, Yusuf has been exposed to these expected male/female deeds.

From his teacher, he heard that especially girls should behave decorously: "*Respect yourself and others will come to respect you. That is true about all of us, but especially true for women. That is the meaning of honour,*[25] their teacher told them." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 97). The word 'honour' is frequently used in the novel, as we have been reading throughout this paper. Considering their so patriarchal and religious society and the correspondence between sex and gender, an honourable identity would imply restrained habits for women and much more liberty for men with regard to demonstrations of their power. According to Bardolph's study, "[t]his term in their mouths evokes their good name in society, the face they must keep at all cost." (80). Hence, it is in schools where Yusuf's awareness starts to be raised, where he is instructed to act the way it is expected for a boy.

As Houlden holds, "sexual stereotypes are endemic in the corrupt society Gurnah evokes" (91). *Paradise* does exhibit male-offering of sexual and social power along with female-promise of submission and bonds to marriage. Yusuf's parents certainly epitomise this gender binary. His father ran a hotel, whereas his mother was in charge of the housework, preparing the dishes for her husband and Uncle Aziz's visits. The day of Yusuf's departure, he saw her with tears in her eyes and he imagined his father had spoken harshly to her, as if displaying his male superior social power over his wife. It is indeed his father the one who makes the decision of sending Yusuf off on the trip without his wife's consideration, as evidence of his social male role. As for Yusuf, this would mark his view of his gender identity, wondering if he should comply with those societal and cultural rules.

Moreover, throughout the pages that map our novel, we read women's treatment as mere products destined to be sold and bought. The first mention of this atrocious but shared practice in the Swahili society and culture the novel depicts is given by Yusuf's father's earlier family. Trying to fathom his mother's reason for crying, Yusuf wonders whether it is caused by his father's harshness to her, as illustrated above, or, on the contrary, by his father's reminiscence of his first wife. By means of a flashback to the father's past, readers learn that his first wife was sold by her own father in exchange for five goats and two sacks of beans. Yusuf's father mistreated her, he did not considered her a person. He even uttered in front of her his miserable thoughts: "'If anything happens to you, they'll send me another one like you from their pens,' he said." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 13). He felt superior to the opposite gender, satisfied with his domineering – but accepted – attitude towards her.

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[25] Emphasis in original.

As Arabs and as traders, they are "characterised as obsessively materialistic, callously indifferent to humanity … [since t]rade corrupts: it commodifies everything and everyone." (Schwerdt 95). Conditioned by their female sex, women in this society are commodified, marginalised, excluded from that world dominated by men, merely 'Other'. They are the result of such a long history of colonial power and of the hybridity Bhabha stressed. Their same black counterparts became complicit colonial subjects, therefore exerting on themselves the same commodification the black nation experienced. Besides, during Yusuf's first journey to the interior, his consciousness starts to be raised when hearing that the number of abducted women from their homes delimited the greatness of leaders. These abominable conducts, deeply internalised within their society as a result of the assumption of a colonial discourse of ownership and commodification, not only separates genders and sexes, but degrades women to the extent of inhumanity. As for their identity, they would submit to men and to their unequal environment without questioning whether there are other alternative positions for them –they are disempowered, excluded and "removed from all lines of social mobility" (Spivak 475), they are designated subaltern. Following these natural and *appropriate* ways of thinking and acting by the characters in the novel, we further note how men are usually presented with characteristic masculine sweat whereas women are given a more pleasant smell to perfume, again corresponding to this natural binary and division of both sexes.

Arriving at Hamid's house, Yusuf hears him describe Maimuna as a poet. Hamid uses irony to allude to his wife's rhetoric, as if that were her only destiny in life. Intellectual enough, his wife also mocks him when he decides to build a garden. Following their culture, it was the man who should conduct such action as it involved physical force. Hence, Hamid resolved to fulfil her wish, however, the purported strength he owns as man weakened soon after he started to clear the bushes. He finally gave up, but not before uttering that she could have at least brought him water, like a submissive woman. Hamid's innermost thoughts place him as a man who has strongly internalised man's superiority in relation to women, regardless of his own perceivable weakness. As proud of his sex's contribution to history, he even verbalises where he thinks the world would be if the female sex ruled it, *still living in caves*, as no progress might possibly be attached to women. And this morally repulsive opinion about sexes/genders reaches our protagonist Yusuf, who is a hearer, a child whose perception of the external nature is not properly defined yet. Thus, he will construct his gender identity by having to decide whether assuming or not this ideology. This

characterisation of Hamid's lack of male strength leads to Gurnah's dismantling of gender based on biological sex.

Secondly, as stated, the gender identity of several characters will be properly examined for their rejection of conventional assigned roles. Accordingly, we will provide evidence of how our novel depicts certain male and female characters who deconstruct traditional thought. For that purpose, our analysis will be based on academics Dasi and Houlden's studies, given their brilliant mapping of gender identities in our novel. According to Dasi, "one way by which we become aware of ourselves if by gender categorization." (115). She asserts that "[d]ifferent types of men are produced in the novel with different types of relationships" (118), such as Mohammed Abdalla. He was in charge of hiring the porters and guards and of agreeing with them the share of the profit. The narrative describes Abdalla "had a reputation as a merciless sodomizer" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 47). Even Yusuf perceived Abdalla's homosexual lust during the journey to the interior, he felt his lascivious looks on him. Therefore, we can declare that this homosexual figure challenges the common thought that unwelcomes attraction to the same sex in that Muslim society.

According to Mwangi, "in most postcolonial societies, homosexuality is a serious crime." (117). Given Abdalla's own knowledge about his crime, "the only concrete way by which he can surmount attitudes of homophobia towards him is by adopting an aggressive masculinity." (Dasi 118-9). Given not only Abdalla's perception of himself, but others' recognition of his sexual identity, Abdalla manages to gain a manly reputation, one that would distance himself from homosexuality and that would prove his manhood, his valiant male identity. As a representative of sexual minorities, he knows he will be tolerated in his Muslim society only if he adheres to traditional gender codes. Not having a wife or children, which would set his manly manners, he wields his authority and bravery as heterosexual men would do, embodying stereotypes. That is the reason why he is also described as striking fear and pain into the company men. Thus, Abdalla's characterisation expresses the fluidity of postcolonial gender identities.

Yusuf's impressive beauty serves "only to bring problems" (Callahan 67). Indeed, poor Yusuf sees himself as a stalking prey. Not only Abdalla, but also Simba Mwene goaded the boy into homosexual action. Through these depictions of homosexuality, Gurnah is trying to destabilise categorical gender binaries. He is presenting a divided and fractured society which does not always go along with "the national unity so often associated with postcolonial African novels" (Houlden 101). For our protagonist's sexual identity, he seems

not much influenced by these male same-sex references. The narrator specifies how, despite the continuous male prompting, the boy does escape their lustful influence. Specifically, towards the end of their journey, we read that "Yusuf saw that Mohammed Abdalla had an erection under his cloth and immediately rose to leave." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 174). This epitomises the boy's evasion.

Regarding women in the novel, despite the fact that most of them appear repressed under their Islamic law, we can state that Gurnah created in *Paradise* "two gender variant of women", as Dasi holds (117). The first to be analysed is the character of Ma Ajuza, one of the African women customers of the shop Yusuf is taken to, a woman who was besotted with him. Ma Ajuza is described as an old, large and bulky woman. Her strength is given special attention to as Yusuf was unable to escape from her arms. In this regard, from her characterisation, we can assert that she is provided with particular facial gestures and an emphasised physical force which tradition assigned to the male sex. As per Dasi brilliantly describes, "[i]n most African and Muslim societies, it is completely out of place for a woman to try to woo a man and publicly profess love … [likewise to] consider the fact that a compatible love/marriage relationship … is one in which the man is older than the woman." (117). However, in the case of Ma Ajuza, she seems not to conform to this societal understanding, for she was the one who cajoled Yusuf with compliments, and who offered him pleasures. She tempted him and called for him in an obsessive way: "*Take pity on me, my husband*[26], she cried." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 31). As a consequence, Ma Ajuza's depiction shows how she debunks the feminine role society attaches to her sex. Even the men that saw her public exhibition to woo Yusuf seem surprised at such an atypical behaviour for a woman. They even offered themselves instead since they could not bear her misery. In that regard, Ma Ajuza's characterisation proves how she reverses the role that tradition has granted her in accordance with her biological sex, an inversion considered by her culture and society as *dishonourable*, *misery*.

The Mistress, Aziz's wife, is the second female character to be considered in these lines for her gender variant. Towards the end of the narrative, we read about her past and we learn that she had gained a reputation for remaining single and rich after her widowhood. After hearing from the seyyid through gossip, she sent him some gifts to encourage him. We also learn that, even though she was older than him, the age gap between them seemed not

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[26] Emphasis in original.

to be a problem for their union because, just in a few weeks, they were married. Sadly, the passage of time got her psychologically sick, her mental health was no longer well. Therefore, from her characterisation, it can be claimed that the Mistress does not align with the traditional female role her biological sex grants her, given her economic empowerment and ugliness. Such features are attributed to her so that she may stand among her female – dependent and beautiful – peers. We can solidly declare that she is the epitome of not meeting the cultural and societal requirements regarding her gender identity. The Mistress does not cope with the limits Arab households face in their decisions on lifestyle. Despite her gained *reputation* for the role her society gives to marriage, the Mistress married Aziz by virtue of her effort and her decision to woo him. She is the one who offered gifts and wealth to Aziz, not as expected. Besides, like Ma Ajuza, she eventually directed her attention towards the handsome Yusuf, however younger than her, as Aziz, because she thought that Yusuf would be able to cure her sickness. As a result, she "performs the role of a man by making advances at men", as Dasi contends in her analysis (117).

The relation between Yusuf and the Mistress, whose name is Zulekha – faithfully following the Muslim tradition that relates her with Aziz as described in section '3.3.2.' –, is dangerous, as Khalil points out. It should also be noted that, as her Arab culture requires, the seyyid maintains her confined in their walled garden and she is always shrouded with a shawl. However, like Abdalla, her character does represent the fluidity of gender identities for she does *not* mould into tradition, for instance she gets mirrors put in the trees of the garden. Through them, she sees Yusuf every day he goes to work there, sexually looking at the male subject as if bewitched with his striking, Koranic beauty. It might be suggested, then, that Zulekha's characterisation subverts the traditional role associated with male and voyeurs, as Gurnah does not depict the conventional devoted, loyal, submissive woman that Swahili society is accustomed to. As a kind of divine fascination, the Mistress eventually becomes obsessed with Yusuf, but he is so innocent and young that it is nearly impossible for him to realise the extent of their coming together. Despite Khalil's warnings about transgression and his own innocent/*manly* thinking, Yusuf succumbs to her desires and finally accepts meeting her.

Their encounter turns out to be a trap for poor Yusuf, as she just wanted to expel him from her house, to separate him from her husband. With this aim in her mind, she clutched at his shirt and tore it. Although he did not touch her, she then spread the rumour that it was him who attacked him, it was him who tore her clothes. She was even resolved to call on

imaginary witnesses to verify her testimony, such was her unbalanced mind. This scene illustrates how Zulekha's cunning behaviour does not correspond to the standards that attach her purportedly inferior sex to female gendered actions. It is unthinkable that a woman would perform such a role as she did, her Muslim womanhood seems hidden as her face. Consequently, it may resolutely be claimed that, through the depictions of Abdalla and of both women, Ma Ajuza and the Mistress, in the preceding lines, Gurnah provides strength so as to break free from societal and cultural constraints that regard sexual identities as working hand in hand with gender identities.

Thirdly, as declared, we now aim to examine Yusuf's sexual and gender identity. Having examined particular characters in the novel who do and do not follow conventional gendered habits and practices, it is our current intention to see whether our protagonist aligns with his African stereotyped culture as regards gender. Yusuf's two previous affairs with Ma Ajuza and Zulekha have been described as "undermining his manhood" (Schwerdt 99). Additionally, he has been categorised as "[f]eminised by his beauty" (98), a beauty that his tradition has always associated with women. Nonetheless, the narrative grants readers the specific nature of his *male* gender identity, hence our intention to map his maleness in the following pages.

At the beginning of the story, and together with the older boys he liked to spend time with, Yusuf heard that babies lived in penises. He was also taught what a man should do if he desired to be a father. Although Yusuf was a child at that moment, and he found such story incredible, he hold it in his mind for his own future purposes of showing his maleness. From that moment onwards, which is regarded by Houlden as "an interest in heterosexual procreation" (99), Yusuf's *male* sex and gender conjoin in that marriage, the typical and expected behaviour associated with teenagers in his society, entered the thoughts of whoever commanded him.

It has already been proved in our previous sections how Yusuf's perception of the world starts to be shaped as the story progresses. The forced migration maps his identity, his individuality and his age. With regard to his gender identity, his maleness, we are also given evidence of how he develops as regards his sexuality and his inner desires. It is in Hamid's house where he finds his first true, yet inconclusive, love story. He does act in accordance with his biological sex by pursuing Hamid's eleven-year-old daughter, named Asha. Even though we read both characters feel attracted to each other, it is Yusuf the one who feels the adolescent urge to consummate their love, as "[h]e moved his legs so she would not see how

much she stirred him" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 108). After several encounters in secret, Maimuna, Hamid's wife and Asha's mother, became suspicious. Later, Yusuf and Asha never met again, for our boy had innocently set his destiny with that male, but inappropriate, behaviour. As mentioned earlier, Hamid fostered Aziz to marry the boy, but the merchant ignored such advice because he did not consider it necessary for the time being. Marriage, as stated, was the expected outcome for Yusuf, who was supposed to limit himself with the society norms.

In the central chapters where he joins Uncle Aziz's caravan and they encounter Chatu, readers again observe how Yusuf is merely born to be married. Nevertheless, it should also be mentioned that it is within Chatu's dominion where he meets a girl named Bati, his second, yet inconclusive, love affair. Being now older and feeling a greater urge to prove his manhood, Yusuf knew he should show the man he thought he was, i.e., be more manly. This implied sexual exhibitions of his manhood, indeed his first and pressing sexual performance. Hence, our protagonist's gender identity goes along with his biological male sex, for he does take heed of the culturally rooted heterosexual male role and meets her, again in secret. However, it should also be noted that their youthful and sexual gatherings are seen as inappropriate by the surroundings, as they are not married yet. Therefore, as Maimuna before did, Chatu became suspicious and angry, for the boy was not behaving decorously. Yusuf was setting again his destiny with such male, but inappropriate, conduct. In this regard, Aziz declared they were about to leave Chatu's territory. As we can read, "[t]he thought filled him with anxiety, which he allayed by relieving himself of the urgent passion Bati had aroused." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 168). These words manifest Yusuf's eagerness for sexual, rather culminating, meetings. As a boy who follows his gender, he feels the pressure of proving he is a man, yet he is unaware of the fact that his Muslim society demands marriage from its people. Therefore, Yusuf has to be married, which means his sexual desires cannot be fulfilled until then.

Certainly, after returning from the journey to the interior with Aziz, Khalil teases Yusuf again with marriage and Ma Ajuza, both united. It is evident that, physically, Yusuf is now a boy – no longer a child and not a man yet – and everyone is conscious of that fact, especially his Uncle: "'You have grown up well, and now we have to find *something of meaning*[27] for you to do.' … 'Maybe it's time we found you a wife,' Uncle Aziz said" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 195). Perhaps as a definite attempt to distance the boy from his wife, the

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[27] My emphasis.

Mistress, or simply as the only viable destiny for Yusuf, Aziz sets – but does not fulfil in the end – his wish of marrying our protagonist, this way following their culturally-rooted Muslim society regarding sex/gender.

Yusuf, on his own tenacity to prove his *manly* duty, finds his third and inconclusive love affair in the character of Amina. An object of male desire, Amina has always been conditioned by her female sex/gender. As a child, Abdalla made her undress and stroked her for no reason, thus she has always been submitted to men's pleasure. Shaped by her culture and her Koranic doctrine, Amina was secondly taken as the replacement of Aziz's first wife when age made Zulekha undesirable. According to Ruberto, "[h]er doble role as household mistress and slave testifies to the added difficulties that enslaved women had in negotiating their identities with respect to their male counterpart." (154). Therefore, as a servant of the Mistress, Amina was present in the encounters both Zulekha and Yusuf had. From the first moment Yusuf senses her, her remembrance cannot escape his mind. It may resolutely be stated that the reason for his determination at accepting meeting the Mistress lies on Amina. Again, due to their approaches in secret, we read how "his body stirred with a passion that he neither summoned nor resisted." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 215). Again, like his two previous love stories, he feels his urgency for sexual, passionate experiences. In his imagination, Yusuf thinks he is a man, a man in love, so he gathers his *manly* courage and starts daydreaming about a future with Amina, out of their confinement. "He would say to her: *If this is Hell, then leave. And let me come with you. They've raised us to be timid and obedient, to honour them even as they misuse us ... We're both in the middle of nowhere. What else can be worse?"[28]* (Gurnah, *Paradise* 233).

Yusuf's interior monologue shows how he determinedly *plans* to rescue his beloved from such Hell, and in doing so, he wishes to prove his manhood. He has learnt throughout all these years that, in his environment, being a man is a synonym of exerting authority and power, thus he wishes to confront his master and be a man/hero. Nonetheless, he does not succeed in an aim like that on account of two decisive factors. On the one hand, Yusuf does not expect nor understand why Amina refuses to leave. Disempowered, Amina's subjectivity was appropriated by powerful men. She has internalised her slave individuality so deeply that she does not even consider the possibility of running away from her captivity and her master. She perfectly complies with her expected female gender and decides to stay with her

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[28] Emphasis in original.

husband, breaking Yusuf's heart in pieces though. On the other hand, he was unable to utter the words he had been planning so that the seyyid could free her from bondage. His own cowardice took control of himself, thus, he fails in the task his culture imposes on him, the task of proving his manhood. His pursuit of a female lover never reaches its highest point because he is not a brave nor a married man as he should be. Poor Yusuf, who does not succeed in showing the *man* he thinks he is, evincing, once more, his state of in-betweenness.

To conclude this fourth section that has dealt with the analysis of sexual and gender identities, we can declare that Gurnah has brilliantly given voice to the limitations that colonial rule imposed on innocent people. Regardless of the exposition of Mohammed Abdalla, Ma Ajuza and Zulekha's gender variance, which moulds the fluidity of postcolonial gender identities, the rest of the characters fall in line with the conventional, expected and limited gender behaviours. As for Yusuf, who successfully evades homosexual approaches and older women's callings as proof of the pure Muslim man he is growing into, he ultimately fails in shaping his *male* gender identity because of his in-betweenness condition.

In this line, and as a way of summarising the analysis of personal identity in *Paradise*, Yusuf's life *in-between* spaces maps his self. Our protagonist's *individuality* as 'Other', as a slave, was shaped by colonial, external forces that hindered the recognition of his own subjectivity. His imposed migration defined his dislocation and marked his marginalisation from his master's community, that is, his failing at mapping his *status*. Likewise, his forced migration disordered his coming-of-*age*, never acting in accordance with his own eagerness for being older. Sadly, he was unable to map his *gender* identity, for his desire to be a brave man was never fulfilled. Hence, bearing in mind Yusuf's displaced heart, i.e., Yusuf's inability to define his personal identity, we now delve into the study of *national identity* to see why he identified himself with the German, imperialist settlers.

3.3.5. "'[T]he European dogs are everywhere.'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 186)

As we have been discussing throughout this Master dissertation, Yusuf does not own a very defined idea about his life, his environment, his age nor his gender, i.e., he completely lives in-between as regards his personal identity. Considering our protagonist's failure at mapping his self, in this fifth and final section of our analysis of *Paradise*, we intend to get to the heart of the colonial invasion in the country that is home to our novel, Tanzania. To this aim, we will expose the progressive German occupation into that land, witnessed by the

own characters of the story. We seek to account for the reasons that motivated Yusuf for joining the German Army, thoroughly described in our part '3.3.1.' as regards his hybridity and the claiming of his own voice, however now detailed in relation to nationalism. To put it differently, we attempt to understand why the 'National identity' the Germans embraced was conceived as 'superior' and so deep-rooted to the extent to which Yusuf tragically identified himself with them, hence failing at mapping his own national identity.

Yusuf's fate is situated within a very conflicting context, not only involving Africans from the interior and Arabs, as we have dealt with, but also Europeans, our present concern. When we first meet our protagonist, he is living with his parents in an invented location named Kawa[29], a post station which the Germans had built along the Tanganyika railway. In his innocent and childish behaviour, Yusuf often visited the station to watch the trains come and leave, as an entertainment. Yet now he faced for the first time two Europeans standing on the platform, two unfamiliar, European faces which really mesmerised him.

Evoking McLeod, "[n]ations depend for their survival upon the invention and performance of histories, traditions and symbols which sustain the people's specific identity" (89). With regard to those symbols, the first one we perceive for the forced entry of the Germans into the country is their national flag waving at the station. At that time, the narrative specifies how "the huge yellow flag with its picture of a *glaring*[30] black bird" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 2) fascinated innocent and pure Yusuf. The German national flag was the truest symbol of their superiority, their dominion over that territory they were in possession of. As for our young protagonist, he felt marvelled at the bird, which irradiated blinding brightness. Besides, the German faces hypnotised him. He felt incapable of removing his eyes from those strange rulers until one of them showed his teeth to him, like a dog. Yusuf heeded such warning and immediately fled, scared as he was. Later, when he was sold off and compelled to travel with Uncle Aziz to his new home, he saw, again at the station, "the yellow flag with the *angry*[31] black bird" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 17), symbolising this external powerful nation which ruled over the area. Curiously enough, the German black eagle no longer dazzles Yusuf, rather it is seen as his own current state, as the anger that was starting to grow in Yusuf's consciousness by that moment, separated as he had already been from home. The narrative further offers to us more images of this symbolic flag, a sign of the

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[29] It seems Kanga, a real location in Tanzania (Bardolph 79).
[30] My emphasis.
[31] My emphasis.

German power and authority, their supreme deity, their control over the land and the minds. By way of illustration, at one of their first stops during the journey into the interior, Yusuf saw again that a "huge yellow flag flew over [a] building, rippling and snapping in the breeze, making the *angry*[32] black bird on it seem hysterical with rage." (Gurnah, *Paradise* 58). As mentioned, that rage that is described is the same our protagonist already feels for his abandonment years ago, his displacement and his continuous migration.

The narrative further presents us the allegedly beneficial work the Germans granted the native inhabitants with, visible symbols of their presence in their area. For instance, Yusuf knew that the parents of the older boys he spent time with worked as vibarua[33] for the Germans on the line-construction gangs. However, Yusuf had also heard that the Germans hanged people if they did not work hard enough. That is, those foreign new rulers offered opportunities to natives, considered the 'Other', along with the aftermath of their idleness. Despite hearing these atrocities, Yusuf seems not to be aware of the German malice.

Also, their presence in the central chapters of the novel is paramount. One day, as a way of doing business, Hamid took Yusuf in his visit to the villages on the mountain slopes. There, a man appeared out of nowhere, a man who was wearing the uniform of European employment and whose face was marked by scars. He was actually an askari, a native soldier working for a government German man who was his bwana[34]. He was one of the African troopers who were fighting on the German side, who had internalised the same racist, imperialist and warlike thoughts that had conditioned the lives of his blood brothers years before. Therefore, as a complete hybrid trained to hunt for Muslim men, as a dog, he did not tolerate Hamid's presence over that area, which was now under German control. Despite Hamid's protests arguing that he had camped a long way down there, that they would not even share the same air, this soldier imposed his 'German' will and expelled them from that settlement. "Hamid shrugged and said, *Let's go. His bwana must think he owns the whole world.*"[35] (Gurnah, *Paradise* 78). Truly, this European master thinks the whole world is his, hence everybody is at his mercy, as Hamid's submission proves. However, Yusuf does not discern yet the German evil that is occupying his own nation. In fact, and considering the above-mentioned histories and traditions Germans performed to sustain their 'superior'

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[32] My emphasis.
[33] In Swahili, it is the plural form of 'kibarua', meaning 'labourer'.
[34] In Swahili, meaning 'master'.
[35] Emphasis in original.

national identity, their invasion is brilliantly reported by the omniscient third-person narrator, as the following fragment illustrates:

> Everywhere [the caravan men went] they found the Europeans had got there before them … telling the people that they had come to *save*[36] them …They take the best land without paying a bead, force the people to work for them … Their appetite has no limit or decency … Taxes for this, taxes for that, otherwise prison for the offender, or the lash, or even hanging. (Gurnah, *Paradise* 71-2)

Undeniably, Germans feel they are superior to natives. The German nation, after such real process of colonisation over the African continent, as reported in section '3.1.', did interiorise a higher position in the world, and therefore did "sense that they [were] the rightful occupants and owners of [that] specific landscape." (McLeod 89). As a consequence, in their imagined right, they lie to natives telling them they are there to save them, to 'civilise' them. They exerted their power over the inhabitants, they imposed taxes without reason. They even killed people as they pleased. In other words, that was their true history and their tradition, the German national identity which conquered the East African land by force, leaving natives at the mercy of such abomination –a thought which echoes Said's conception of 'Otherness'. Consequently, in their attempt at 'civilising' the native individuals, Germans used whatever means they found necessary to carry out their mission and no one could stop them.

It is worth considering the historical context in which our novel takes place, viz., the conflict that was about to happen between Germany and Britain in our continent. Characters are certainly aware of that imminent war that would, once again, divide the borders of their nation. Young Yusuf, in the company of Khalil when he first arrives at Aziz's household, is instructed to identity himself as a rehani, therefore pawned to his Uncle as a slave. He also learns to be a man, as we have already given shape to in the previous sections. In addition, he subtly starts to learn about this external battle when hearing rumours of war between the English and the Germans from old men that sat on the shop's terrace, as a kind of foreboding. This dread is seemingly secondary in the narrative because of the importance of the seyyid's journey into the interior. However, characters are conscious of the turmoil that is around them, of the European true determination to conquer their land and their own lives. They know that "'the Europeans dogs are everywhere.'" (Gurnah, *Paradise* 186). Regarding Yusuf, who is a real witness of this chaos the Germans provoked, he seems absent-minded.

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[36] My emphasis.

The rumours he hears should alert him about the identification of the Germans' evil intent, but his mind is so perturbed that he is unable to get to the bottom of those signs.

As the story progresses and the caravan's men together with Yusuf immerse themselves in the 'wild' interior where Aziz goes to trade, we feel the characters' admiration for this European presence in the area. For instance, Simba Mwene spoke highly of their strictness and praised their ruthlessness. Furthermore, we observe the characters' esteem of those German neighbours through some encounters they personally face. By way of illustration, in Chatu's region, some of the merchant's goods are stolen by the sultan. These differences between them are settled by a true European man who appears accompanied by those askari they recruited to benefit European colonialism. Via examples of other 'rebel', disobedient people the government had admiringly silenced and put into chains, this European big man managed to dominate Chatu, who gave the goods back to Aziz. Therefore, this scene in the novel could be read as another example of the apparent benefits the Germans granted natives with, yet in our minds it evidences the German presence over the region, and their brutal control over its people. In the meantime, Yusuf stood aside, a mere onlooker who should be noticing the cruelty with which the German man speaks and behaves, however he just observed the celebration of the merchant's men for having their goods returned, as if praising that foreign European individual. Despite being a direct witness of all these exchanges, Yusuf seems not to understand whether the Europeans have a good or bad will. Thus, he wonders whether he should also worship that external, national belief the Germans embraced, pondering over the comfort and the integration that loving a country different from his own would bring to his own self –the eternal quest for identity.

In such an attempt, and as we anticipated in our section '3.3.1.', when he saw a column of askari marching behind their European officer, he ran after them and voluntarily enlisted to defend the German cause. Poor Yusuf, who is so confused that, once again, fails in mapping his own national identity. By joining the German Army, he is contributing to the expansion and perpetuation of such colonial patriotism, however, he is unaware, only looking for recognition throughout all his life. As McLeod states, "[n]ations can evoke powerful feelings of identity, belonging, home" (89), and that is why Yusuf joined them. He knew he did not possess identity, he knew he belonged to nowhere, he knew he had been separated from his home, which was at that moment a blurred memory after all his migration. Poor Yusuf, who does not succeed in mapping his identity as regards his own African nation.

To conclude this section that has covered the analysis of national identity in our first novel, as for Yusuf, who is no longer a child, the above-mentioned thoughts and comments he continuously hears from the expedition's men get to his innocent mind, making him wonder who the Germans are, what benefits he could obtain from them. He thinks whether assuming and defending the German nationalism would definitely *map* his *identity*. Sadly, he believes it will, hence he joins the German Army, willing to die for a country that has trampled on his own nation, a country that has denied him his subjectivity. Sadly, poor Yusuf could not discern the dangers in leaving his home behind and joining that colonialism the Germans embraced, as he would still be considered the 'Other' for them, serving at their mercy, never assuming the German national identity in the end –proving, once again, his *in-betweenness.* Therefore, he fails in defining himself as a man because he cannot make a doable contribution to the struggle of *his* people (Farah 20), which would entail rebelling against that European unfair domination and control.

In brief, the analysis we have presented in the previous pages about *Paradise* has proved how German colonisers imposed their will, i.e., how they asserted their authority in the area as they felt their mission was 'superior' and 'civilising'. Yet, the perception was quite different from the native population. As we have been mapping throughout our entire section '3.3.', our protagonist Yusuf is an innocent boy who spends his life enslaved and migrating. On account of this forced bondage and dislocation, he cannot map his personal identity because it is denied by his same black counterparts who were complicit colonial subjects, who occupied the colonisers' commodifying role. He spends his life trying to understand his abandonment, suffering the consequences and limitations of colonial rule. He becomes a complete intruder in his own land, actually ignoring it for the sake of another different country, the same country that shaped his tragedy. By joining the German Army, he was confirming his hybridity. Poor Yusuf, whose entire existence has been mapped by white, European colonialism.

3.4. *Afterlives* (2020)

After analysing the fictional world Gurnah offered to his readers in *Paradise*, at this moment we come to our second story chosen for this Master Thesis. Abdulrazak Gurnah's latest novel, *Afterlives*, which was published in 2020, is our present interest. The novel was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize for Political Writing 2021 and longlisted for the Walter Scott

Prize for Historical Fiction 2021. As we will give evidence of in the subsequent pages, *Afterlives* is another brilliant, riveting novel that needs to be read in order to understand what colonialism did to its subjects, what it stole from them –how it shaped their identities.

Afterlives, as we have been anticipating, will present to us how lives were shaped after a warlike ambience. As its own title evokes, this novel will teach us how characters manage to continue with their existences after the conflict, how they are able to cope with their everlasting injuries, how they survive, in the end. Thus, it will fill us with hope, however little, after a lifetime marked by bondage, disavowal, and migration. It will be a ray of hope in such an atmosphere because the characters will slightly succeed in mapping their identities. Yet before embarking ourselves on the analysis of this heartbreaking novel, we can mark some similarities and some differences with our previously studied story, *Paradise*.

The analogies of both novels will be clear to us. If we recall the story of *Paradise*, it presented the story of Yusuf, his tale of maturation marked by colonialism. Particularly, *Paradise* exhibited events prior to WWI in East Africa, finishing with the German enlistment of askari who were to fight that European war on colonial Germany's behalf. In this line, like *Paradise*, the fictional universe that surrounds *Afterlives* is the world of German-occupied East Africa, of German atrocities committed in that region. However, our present story covers fifty years, extending from late nineteenth-century to mid-twentieth century. This way, it could be seen as a sequel to *Paradise*, given its presentation of the loss of German territories in the area by the British after WWI and the proper British conquest of the land. By taking it as a sequel, we could draw a parallel between Yusuf and Hamza's lives. It is also important to mention that the final pages of *Afterlives* briefly note the recolonising movement the Nazi government led to recover its colonies and the independence process the territory underwent under the leadership of Julius Nyerere in the mid-1950s. Besides, like *Paradise*, our present novel includes Swahili phrases, songs and words, but we also find an ambitious inclusion of German words, even references to German literature –proof of the domination people endured, not only physical but also psychological. We should also note the inclusion of untranslated terms in both texts, a technique used by Gurnah to convey the sense of cultural distinctiveness of his area. According to Ashcroft et al., "the choice of leaving words untranslated in post-colonial texts is a political act, because while translation is not inadmissible in itself, glossing gives the translated word, and thus the 'receptor' culture, the higher status" (66). Furthermore, like *Paradise*, the narrative in *Afterlives* is granted with a third-person omniscient narrator, who moves us closer to the

inner world of the characters. There are also continuous flashbacks that break the linear telling of events.

Other outstanding differences between our novels are worthy of remark. Unlike *Paradise*, which is set exclusively in Africa, *Afterlives* is set between Africa and Europe. Additionally, we can mention that *Afterlives* is divided into four untitled parts, in contrast to *Paradise*, whose six parts were clearly titled. In this same line, African cities remain unnamed in *Afterlives*, which makes it difficult for readers to identify and locate the characters and their migration movements –it will ask our imagination to position the borders of the nations. Also, as we know so far, *Afterlives* is such a recent novel that neither its themes nor symbols have been thoroughly discussed yet. Despite that, we present in this dissertation a modest mapping of the identity of its protagonists, the first real mapping of the migrant identity of its characters.

As we did in *Paradise*, the analysis of each aspect of identity in *Afterlives* will be preceded by a quotation taken from the own novel so that we follow the same order up to now. We will start by knowing the two male protagonists' *individualities*. We will witness how Ilyas, after being captured, internalised the colonial discourse and acted as 'civiliser' and 'saviour', like the German colonisers, and how Hamza's slave condition marked the perception of his migrant identity. Then, we will study Hamza's *status*, i.e., his incorporation into the Muslim community he sees around him, achieving this way the personhood colonialism denied him. Next, we will analyse Hamza's pretence of being older, his continuous rejection of his true *age*, along with his beloved Afiya's imagined age. We will meet the lovers' *sex*ual *and gender* identities afterwards, proving how Hamza fails in mapping his male identity, whereas his wife Afiya does succeed in constructing her female identity. Finally, we will describe the *national identity* the Germans embraced in order to understand Ilyas' involvement in the campaign for the return of the German colonies after the British conquest of the land, likewise Hamza's motivations for joining the German Army.

That said, in the following pages, we truly proceed to analyse *Afterlives*, another brutal story of migration caused by European colonialism and its effect on characters' identities. As a way of anticipating the identity of his future characters, Gurnah wrote in his *Paradise* that "[t]hey like nothing better than to kidnap little children and make use of them as they wish." (6). If there is a possible, magical yet startling way to blend the two novels chosen in this dissertation it is via the previous quotation, which tells us Ilyas' fate.

3.4.1. "He felt like an intruder." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 135)

As stated, the first analysis we will carry out in *Afterlives* will be centred around 'Individuality'. We will guide our study around two male characters. We will present Ilyas, a child who was kidnapped by a schutztruppe askari and whose hybridity later prompted him to enlist as a soldier for the Germans. Then, we will present Hamza, a boy who volunteered for the schutztruppe on impulse, who then regretted that decision and who was therefore forced to live with that burden. The lives of both protagonists will be compared to show that the colonial environment has a profound bearing on the identity of the African individual.

As regards Ilyas, when we first meet him, he has just arrived in town. By means of a flashback, we learn that his childhood was quite difficult, mainly caused by the European will to conquer his land. The Maji Maji fighting, i.e., the battle for resistance which the Germans brutally repressed, was going on by that time, hence there was agitation and desolation in the area. As for natives, they were the real sufferers of the war, like Ilyas' parents, whose poverty was resonant. Ilyas' clothes were always rags and he was always hungry. His mother was also pregnant and his father was unwell. Thus, in an attempt to avoid such an ambience, to search for a different and better environment, Ilyas decided to run away from his house. This was his first migration movement, arguably forced by the colonial exhibition of power. Ilyas was just a child without a destiny, so once he was on the road, he just kept walking. Alone, he wandered around for several days, begging for food and being frightened, until he arrived in a big town on the coast. There, as his innocent country was at war, he saw soldiers marching through the streets, and he joined them until the train station. He was just loitering around that troop of askari, merely watching and listening as a kind of entertainment, as he had nowhere to go and nothing else to do. Suddenly, one of those schutztruppe soldiers pushed him on the train and kidnapped him. That askari, who was behaving like a merciless coloniser, took no notice on Ilyas' refusal, only aiming to recruit subjects and mould them according to colonialism. Therefore, from this decisive moment in his life, Ilyas' eyes were open to the hybridity inherent to the colonial power. He subtly became aware of the assumption of the colonial identity in his own black peers, a new consciousness identified as a turning point in his self.

After being kidnapped, Ilyas was forcibly taken to the mountains, the second migration movement he had experienced in his short life. This journey would mark Ilyas' future. By way of illustration, we read how our protagonist had to attend a German school,

that is, a mission school, to be taught the supreme religion and language. In this respect, Ilyas was to pray like a Christian. Initially, Ilyas pretended he was praying, as professing devotion to another God different from his Muslim creator would entail sin. This act may have been understood as Ilyas' claiming of his own voice, as Ilyas' expression of his subjectivity. However, considering the separation from his parents, his feeling of dislocation and his unfixed mind at that time, his pretence could not last long. Indeed, he soon attended church school, which was only for converts. As we stated earlier, religious experiences demarcate forms of identities within groups (Siundu 115). Consequently, we may claim that this imposition of Christian prayers was the first moulding Germans performed on Ilyas' individuality, the first attempt at denying his subjectivity. It then followed the boy's internalisation of the German looks and manners he saw around him. Ilyas also internalised the German language. In this respect, and as per Ashcroft et al., "[l]anguage becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established" (7). Therefore, via his acquisition of that foreign system of sounds and words, Ilyas was contributing to the perpetuation of the hierarchy of power Germans established. He was collaborating with the establishment of 'order' among his peers. Most importantly, during the nine years Ilyas spent on this German environment, he assumed their same ways of thinking and their pursuit of a more 'civilised' land. The Germans denied his own identity and shaped it to their liking. In other words, they turned Ilyas into a complete hybrid self who eventually assumed the colonial 'superior' identity.

Ilyas' stay with the German farmer in the mountains provided him with comfort, he thought. Our protagonist also believed that he had established a friendship with the European farmer, as he got him a job in a large German sisal estate. Certainly, the coloniser was benefiting from the boy's undefined individuality, that is the reason why Ilyas arrived in town. By this third migration movement, Ilyas could have returned to his origins, to his past and true environment. However, we can read that, at his arrival, he looked like a government man, such was his hybrid self after those nine years. The colonial discourse was so internalised in him that he never realised they were putting together a relationship of master/slave. Ilyas was unaware of the brutal colonisation his mind and his self were experiencing. Although we do know the Germans were drawing the boy's attention to their cause, he was so blind to his 'inferior' social position that he imagined the Germans embraced his nature and that he was, therefore, one of them.

Ilyas arrived in town with that internalisation of the Germans ideals. In that unnamed town, he met Khalifa. Both characters would work together and establish a friendship. It was actually Khalifa the one who prompted Ilyas to visit his place of origin and see his family. Our protagonist accepted and travelled to his village, which was nearby. As a migrant individual, he felt like an intruder, dislocated when he reached his own home, unable to remember names, facing the disorder war had caused in the air –as Gurnah himself when he returned to his country from the exile. Via some neighbours, Ilyas learnt that his mother had passed on a long time ago, that she left a baby girl for his father to look after but he gave her away to a family. Eager to find his unknown sister Afiya, Ilyas moved to another close village and discovered that she had been treated as a slave by her uncle and aunt –though they were not related biologically. That same day Ilyas found Afiya, he took her away with him. He rescued her from such dehumanising world, as the family were acting as colonisers, repeating the same "discriminatory identity effects" (Bhabha 154) their black people had previously experienced. By enslaving Afiya, her subjectivity had been completely denied by them. Luckily for the girl, her unknown brother appeared and saved her. Although the mutual knowledge of having a brother/sister had been denied to both siblings as a consequence of the European presence, Ilyas and Afiya were now happier as they were not alone in the world as they thought. On his part and as the older brother, Ilyas seemed determined to build a future with her. He was resolved to reconstruct their *lives after* such separation, which would be the claiming of his voice. Yet, the two siblings distanced themselves from each other, again caused by European colonialism.

Given Ilyas' self-image of a German, 'superior' man, and the rumours of the coming conflict with the British, he announced that he planned to volunteer for the schutztruppe. Such decision puzzled Khalifa and Afiya, who could not grasp the motivations for Ilyas' idea. They could not understand our protagonist's hybridity. Ilyas was resolved to help the German cause in the coming big war, as he believed he had met nothing but kindness from them. However, Ilyas had been colonised, his mind used like a product to own for colonial purposes. His decision proves he is "the product of shaping … ideological forces." (Griffiths 314). That was the European mission. In this regard, colonial forces again exhibited their power by Ilyas' voluntary enlistment in the German Army, as he was a boy proud of his actions. He became, in truth, an askari like the one who kidnapped him years before, eager to fight for that external, racial cause that had shaped his individuality. In other words, our protagonist was behaving like a coloniser, for he was assuming the colonial identity. The

conquest prevailed over his sister, who was sent back to the 'family' that had enslaved her before. Later, she was fortunately freed by Khalifa, who took her to his house. Poor Afiya would be waiting for Ilyas' return her entire life, hoping that they will again be reunited. Sadly, Ilyas never reappears in the narrative, he is like a ghost. Even though readers can grasp Ilyas' tragic end, the third-person narrator offers to us his last steps as askari, as 'Other' in the eyes of the Germans –thoroughly described in section '3.4.5.'.

As we have just detailed, Ilyas never offers resistance to be colonised, his subjectivity appears sacrificed in the name of a 'superior' mission. He never speaks, thus he fails at recognising his domination serving at the mercy of those Germans. He remains a mere 'Other' shaped according to dehumanised forces. Given his disappearance throughout the narrative, we are asked to imagine where and how he is, which proves the tragic effects of colonial rule. Meanwhile, we are presented a second male protagonist named Hamza. He is another black boy who will remind us of Yusuf and who will fill us with hope, hence the study of his individuality now.

Chapter three in our novel *Afterlives* begins precisely with Hamza's identification as askari. In order to understand his voluntary enlistment in the German Army, we should look back and describe his early years. Hamza had hardly lived among a family, only briefly as a child. He experienced a forced objectivity the moment he was harshly taken away from his home by a merchant who owned him and who was addressed as 'Uncle'. Then, as if he were a product, poor Hamza forcibly migrated to the coast to be penned in the merchant's shop and in his walled garden for years. He was only 'released' during the several months he spent with his master on an arduous trade journey to the interior. That journey showed him blood, oppression and alienation. When Hamza returned to his uncle's walls, he managed to understand his own bondage and his own powerlessness, that is, he finally realised he was a mere silenced subaltern. Consequently, as a brave act, he run away to become a schutztruppe askari and serve the Kaiser, however, he was ignorant of what he had sold himself to. He was dislocated and filled with sorrow as that decision was separating him from another slave boy who was like his brother and from the woman he was learning to love. Hamza fled thinking he was acting by himself, he believed it was his own consciousness speaking. Nonetheless, the colonial discourse was deep-rooted in his self. This way, colonisers compelled him to join their cause and be like them. Soon after his voluntary enlistment, Hamza realised that he had made a terrible mistake as he embarked upon a European system of serfdom which was more tyrannical that his master's.

The first days of his recruitment were arduous. His anxiety surged powerfully as they marched out into the countryside in the heat of the day. He sweated and tired as they marched along the dirt road. They passed many paths that had been abandoned at the call of the schutztruppe' ferocity against the people. The squads walked all day, sometimes barefoot, only stopping for a drink of water. Hamza's legs and back ached so much that he walked by rote and instinct, without any choice. He was numb with hunger and exhaustion, his heart racing with an uncontrollable distress. He did not remember the final stages of that somewhat forced migration, arriving confused at the camp. However, he did know he had nowhere to go, thus he stayed and endured.

In the camp, the regime was harsher. There, he was given the proper uniform of his new condition as askari. He thought he would be at the same level as his superiors, as they were all there in favour of the same cause, presumably. Yet, he was soon instructed not to make eye contact with a German officer, symbolising the difference in their ranks as masters/slaves. By implication, that demand meant he had to bow and be servile. Hamza was soon assigned as the Oberleutnant[37]'s personal servant, his batman, and was required to report to his residence first thing in the morning to be instructed in his duties. As section '3.4.4.' will give shape to, Hamza's duties were seen as very womanly in his society, as he was to fill the officer's washbasin, fetch his coffee, make his bed, straighten out his clothes, and clean the mess. It was actually an intimate servitude, as our protagonist also had to tidy and air the officer's apartment while feeling the commander's eyes on him. At four in the afternoon, he had to take a cup of coffee to the officer and then was sent on various errands. In brief, this was Hamza's life in the camp, a life submitted to colonisers' pleasure. For years, his voice and his place in the world seemed lost.

Like his peers, Hamza witnessed the war between Germany and Britain. Even with their maps, there were occasions when they did not know where they were. Colonisers and askari crossed existing and imaginary borders, capturing local people in their violent way. The schutztruppe askari were instructed according to their officers, who were high-handed experts in terror. They devastated Hamza's own land "while they struggled on in their blind and murderous embrace of a cause whose origins they did not know and whose ambitions were vain and ultimately intended for their domination." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 91). In other words, as an askari performing his duty, Hamza saw sheer terror, blood, disease, desertion,

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[37] The highest lieutenant officer rank in the German armed forces.

starvation, death, and simultaneously, his own involvement in a pointless battle in his own ground. Those images would be embedded in his mind and delimit his future. It is also noteworthy to point out that, during the war, Hamza's condition of servant was not neglected. Whereas he was compelled to serve at the mercy of the German 'missionaries', he was also a mere 'Other', ordered to transport equipment, to forage, to make camp, to cook and to clean the dishes. He was exhausted by the relentless pursuit, by the heavy loads and the degrading work he was required to carry out, but his superiors remained indifferent. In this regard, Hamza stands for the ambivalence present in the colonial discourses, as he was regarded as the *same* but also *different*.

Echoing Said's conception of 'Otherness', we continue mapping Hamza's treatment as inferior. He thought his enlistment would provide him with belonging and with individuality, as he knew he belonged to nowhere. However, his identity as an askari – as 'Other' – marked his existence, as he was held responsible for the desertion of twenty-nine askari who could not bear the humiliation, the extreme tiredness and the dire straits they were in. Hamza was the scapegoat for their indiscipline, a traitor in the eyes of the German subaltern Feldwebel[38] Walther. Notwithstanding that the German officers believed it was beneath their dignity to strike an askari, the Feldwebel slashed at our protagonist with his sabre. Hamza turned sharply to avoid the blow, but it caught him on his hip and ripped through flesh and bone. Then his head hit the ground with jarring force. Poor Hamza struggled for breath, but he passed out bleeding heavily. He was trembling constantly, groaning involuntarily as spasms of pain ran through him. When he woke up, he noticed he had been placed under the care of a pastor and his wife, the Frau pastor, who worked in the mission station Germans had built there. He was allegedly a lucky boy for staying in that 'mission community' recuperating while the rest of the askari and the officers went back to their senseless war to kill and to be killed. Over the weeks that followed, Hamza's wound healed and his condition improved steadily. Nonetheless, movement was painful for him in the hip joint and across his groin, thus he was in need of crutches to walk. In accordance with schutztruppe rules, what the Feldwebel did to Hamza was a crime, yet nobody complained about that dehumanised behaviour. As a 'superior' German in that 'uncivilised' land, the officer hated the natives and constantly broke the rules about what he was allowed to do to them, including the askari, who were always regarded as *different*.

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[38] 'Sergeant' in German.

After many months of wandering, Hamza arrived in town with all his possessions in a cloth bag. He arrived characterised as 'Other', feeling an imposed guilt for his peers' desertion and physically harmed. His confusion and dislocation was conceivable, as his hometown was not the same after the war, hence it took him time to getting used to it. Looking like a vagrant, he walked aimlessly through the streets, panicked, tired. Hamza left a town of Deutsch-Ostafrika years before and it was now a British colony, thus he was unable to recognise the new environment. He saw some neighbourhoods had disappeared. In particular, he noticed the disappearance of a house with a walled garden and a shop at the front, which shocked him. Besides, some people greeted him in the streets as if they knew him, but, in any case, he did not know them. Briefly, "[h]e felt like an intruder" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 135) in his own tow, just as Gurnah himself, as Yusuf and as Ilyas.

Soon after arriving in town, Hamza had the prospect of work by the hands of the merchant Nassor Biashara, who hired him as the night-watchman of his warehouse. In the company of Khalifa, the merchant's worker, Hamza would learn his duties and would try to reconstruct his existence. It was indeed difficult for him to delimit his present and his future, given his constant gloom and the memories of his past. As a consequence, our protagonist evaded the questions Khalifa posed about his previous experiences and locations. Hamza remained silent, and at times he only shrugged, incurring Khalifa's wrath: "'What's wrong with you? Can't you speak?'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 145). Certainly, the armed conflict silenced Hamza, it made him shrink. He lost part of his memory along the way, overwhelmed by the cruelties he lived through. Poor Hamza only had fragments which were snagged by troubling gaps, things he would have asked and moments that were inconclusive. In other words, Hamza is now unable to utter what is in his mind because the only time he was allowed to speak, seven years ago, he made a terrible mistake due to his fear of humiliation and nobody can relieve him of that physical and psychological burden.

The first night he was hired, Hamza slept by the doors of the warehouse because he had nowhere else to go. He was a homeless person. When Khalifa realised, he rescued Hamza and took him to his house, providing our protagonist with a feeling of safety he had never experienced before. Apart from sharing his roof with Hamza, Khalifa took care of the boy's welfare. He provided nourishment to our protagonist, and he gave him advise on all matters. Like a father, Khalifa also cared for Hamza's aching legs. Like a prodigal son, Hamza was joyful at his good fortune. Besides, it was in Khalifa's house where Hamza met Afiya, his love. As we described earlier, Afiya was rescued by Khalifa after she was

abandoned by his brother Ilyas and sent to the 'family' that enslaved her. Therefore, she was living in his house when Hamza appeared. The following sections of this Master Thesis will detail the relationship Hamza and Afiya constructed together, i.e., the couple's life. Yet, for Hamza's individuality, which is our concern now, we may claim Afiya mapped his identity. She *healed*[39] his physical pain and his troubled mind as she soon realised he was a man who was uprooted and who felt adrift. Her love helped Hamza forget his askari past, his torment and his servitude. On his own, he assisted her in the pain that she was going through for her brother Ilyas' disappearance. In a nutshell, we may claim Hamza and Afiya came back to life together. They both succeeded in restoring their *lives after* the war and its chaos.

To sum up this first analysis regarding *individuality* in *Afterlives*, we can declare that the European prestige was maintained at the expense of the African natives, whose identities were moulded at their liking. As for Ilyas, we have proved how the white-owning society that welcomed him in the mountains shaped his individuality. Without subjectivity, Ilyas mistakenly claimed his voice and internalised he was one of the Germans, he assumed their cause willingly. Yet, he died for their ideals being the 'Other'. Concerning Hamza, he lived a fugitive and itinerant life, escaping when he was an adolescent from a slave system and voluntarily immersing himself in a more tyrannical one. Although he was regarded as 'Other' and he was physically and emotionally wounded, he managed to continue with his existence and map his identity to a certain extent. He found his right place in the world when he returned to his own town, which offered him a feeling of home, belonging and also love. Through Hamza, we have witnessed how *lives* were restored *after* the warlike ambience white colonisers senselessly declared in innocent lands. Taking into consideration such hope the character of Hamza has filled us with, we now intend to examine his *status* in order to see whether he is marginalised or integrated into his environing community.

3.4.2. "Ramadhan was a communal event". (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 195)

Regarding the examination of 'Status', and given Ilyas' vanishment, we will focus on Hamza, since it is our intention to study his incorporation into the local Muslim community. Even after the European conquest and the imposition of non-real borders, our novel *Afterlives* provides us with hope for natives managed to feel a powerful sense of union and community. Unlike *Paradise*, in which communities were fluid, our present story

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[39] In line with her own name, which means 'good health' (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 180).

presents the consolidation of one Muslim community that does not distinguish between races and ethnicities.

As we have just mapped, Hamza's migration to his hometown provided our protagonist with shelter, with a sense of belonging and the affection of his beloved Afiya. To put it differently, he gained the subjectivity and the identity colonial rulers denied him when serving at their mercy. Additionally, we should remark that his town offered him personhood, that is, the state and condition of being a person. As we know so far, within African nations, that state of the individual is limited to specific communities. In this regard, and drawing on scholar Menkiti again, it is the community the one that defines the person as such. In his own words, "[i]t is in rootedness in an ongoing human community that the individual comes to see himself as man" (171-2). Consequently, for Hamza – who is a colonial subject – to perceive a powerful sense of identity, he needed to be integrated into the local community he perceived when he arrived in town.

We can reasonably argue that our protagonist was integrated into that Muslim community ever since he returned to his town. By way of illustration, we read how the immediate dislocation Hamza felt diminished when approaching the Muslim place for worship. Given the absence of mosques during his journey, he missed them deeply. One day, by hearing the muadhin calling at noon, he discovered that there was a mosque close to the warehouse where he was working. He did not hesitate and went in there to wash and pray. Hamza was determined to cross the threshold into that holy place, but deep inside, he was afraid of being denied entry. However, he felt astonished when "[p]eople shuffled up to make space for him" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 150). Therefore, receiving such unexpected warmth and integration, as he felt like a stranger in his own land, Hamza decided to stay for a while. He remained there for the company his own black peers were granting him and which he was in need of. His visits to the mosque continued while leaving with Khalifa, always looking for comfort and for the sense of being one of many. The mosque was home to a Muslim community that represented identity for Hamza. Our bewildered protagonist just desired time and space to arrange his lost mind, which he found in that Muslim community. In the mosque, he only had to sit quietly with downcast eyes until it was time to line up with the other worshippers. After the prayers, he just was to silently shake hands with the other men. In other words, Hamza was not required to speak there, which was the primary concern he had after the war.

Supporting our assertion of a consolidated Muslim community, we further read how "Ramadhan was a communal event" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 195) during which the cooks prepared special food. It was also considered virtuous to share meal after sunset in order to make the breaking of fast. As for Hamza's integration into this specific community, he also felt part of their sacred period of fasting, which symbolised prayer, reflection and community in the Muslim tradition. He was pleasantly invited to share those delicious and varied dishes with Khalifa, who never denied our protagonist the company he yearned for. Besides, during Ramadhan evenings, which were full of talk and comings and goings, Hamza was agreeably summoned to sit on the porch with Khalifa. They were soon joined by Khalifa's friends and some other neighbours, and they all exchanged their standpoints on political intrigue and human foibles. Regardless of Hamza's silence and evasion of questions, the mere fact of being invited to share his views granted him personhood. In this respect, Hamza successfully achieved a sense of community and of belonging to the same nature than his counterparts.

In short, to sum up this second section that has delved into 'Status' in *Afterlives* as an important aspect of identity, we aver that Hamza was integrated into the Muslim community he saw around him with great success. He managed to be part of that cultural group which did not question his troubled past. His warm welcome to the mosque and his later integration into the Muslim period of fasting manifests our protagonist's complete accomplishment of personhood, hence we resolutely claim that Hamza defined himself by reference to his environing community. More simply put, via his incorporation into the horizontal comradeship that prevailed over his Muslim society, Hamza came to see himself as a man. He therefore, achieved the description of 'person' which colonialism had denied him, a crucial depiction for his personal identity. Hamza has hitherto been able to rebuild his identity concerning *individuality* and *status*. Thus, bearing in mind such ability, we now aim to discuss whether he can map his identity as regards his *age*.

3.4.3. "[He] had lied about his age". (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 57)

Regarding the analysis of 'Age' in *Afterlives*, we will focus on Hamza and Afiya, familiar characters to us so far. As for Hamza, we will discover why he lives *in-between*, hence why he fails in mapping his own identity as regards his age. We will give shape to his troubled mind, for he is a teenager who pretends to be older, never abandoning childish behaviours though. Considering Afiya, we will learn how her age is *imagined* throughout

the narrative on account of the armed conflict which denies her own right to know how old she truly is, not having any blood relatives to ask when she was born.

On the one hand, when we first meet Hamza in chapter three, he is among the recruited men who were to fight as askari. Aiming for recognition in his way of escaping a life of bondage, "Hamza had lied about his age, claiming to be older than he was." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 57). Although at that moment we cannot grasp how old he is, we imagine he is a young man around twenty, as askari used to be. Thus, it can be assumed that this act of lying to German officers is a clear indication of his refusal of his teenage years, his teenage identity. We are consequently presented an adolescent who wishes to be recognised as a man, who yearns to be older. Mediated by gender as a cultural variable of age (Longhurst et al. 85), we may imply the fact that being integrated into this group of male askari would recognise him as a man, therefore it would welcome him to act without restrictions based on his short age. We may further imply that this pretence would free himself from his previous oppressed life –as he enlisted to escape such bondage. However, Hamza is not aware that this lie will enclose him in a wider controlling system for askari and officials will make use of them as they please. Indeed, the officers, who were eager to recruit subjects, do accept Hamza's statement about his age and therefore he enters their army. Hence, surrounded by those men who are older than him, he starts his own task of confirming his lie –to the group and to himself. Nevertheless, his desire to be regarded as a *man* will not be fully completed for the company men will never address him in that way, as we will see.

First, Hamza is treated as a child by the Oberleutnant, who gives specific instructions to him as well as to the rest of askari. Hamza is ordered to answer *Ndio bwana*[40] every time the officer would call on him. Later, when our protagonist performs such required behaviour, he is treated with disdain by the same officer. "'Are you frightened of me?' 'Ndio bwana,' Hamza said loudly. The officer laughed … '[Y]ou answer me in that childish language. Now answer me properly'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 86). This brief passage is crucial for defining Hamza's identity as regards age. We should pay close attention to the fact that our protagonist is answering affirmatively as to whether he is or is not frightened, which proves his inner childish nature, for his society does not conceive such infantile fright at that teenage age. Mediated again by their male gender, those askari are supposed to show their bravery, that is the reason why the officer clearly addresses Hamza as a child. Besides, he is answering

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[40] Meaning in Swahili 'yes, sir'.

to the officer's question as he was instructed to do, he is doing what he has to. However, this contradiction the officer proclaims makes poor Hamza wonder what age really involves, as he thought the commands he had received were directed to *men*. Additionally, Hamza is treated as a child, as an object of amusement, by the other German officers, who used their own foreign language to ask the simple and friendly questions an adult might address to a child, such as 'Wie alt sind Sie?'[41]. This dismissive conduct clearly bewilders Hamza's inner self, as he does not understand the comment, firstly, and he does not want to be recognised as a child, secondly. Yet, his surroundings mistaken and mockingly identify him as such.

Hamza's desire to be a man could be thought as fulfilled when the rest of the askari address him as 'young man'. However, readers do know that this identification is not the one he is looking for. The qualifying adjective 'young', though insignificant as it may appear, does play an important role in the shaping of Hamza's identity, wondering why he is not regarded as a *man*, what acts he should perform so as to be an adult, and not a boy as he truly is. It is not until chapter seven when we are given more details about his age: "'Your record says you were twenty when you joined up but … [y]ou could not have been more than seventeen'". (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 118). The officer's cleverness confirms Hamza's youth and urges him to reveal the truth, warning him against maintaining his lie in everybody's eyes, as it could bring severe punishment to him. Yet Hamza remained firm in the face of the officer, avoiding realising his own appearance was betraying himself and still pretending he was a man.

It is the ombasha, the instructor of askari, the one who correctly recognises our teenage protagonist as a 'boy', for his seventeen years categorise Hamza as such. Despite this proper designation, Hamza is confused because he *thinks* he is a man. He has internalised his adulthood via his lie and is unaware of his troubled mind. Therefore, this denial of his maturity by his peer group of askari, this refusal to recognise his man identity by the German officials, does tear Hamza apart, wondering what deeds he should particularly perform so as to be identified as a man. This mental confusion he holds during his stay at the askari army will accompany him after leaving them and migrating to his old town. To him, this new place will mean another opportunity to map his identity as for his age. Here, he will attempt to show his adult condition to his surroundings, once more.

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[41] 'How old are you?' in German.

Hamza is twenty-four years old when arrives to this new location, hence a young man. Taking into consideration the fact that his culture demands an *appropriate* behaviour for his age, this entails acting accordingly. Thus, following this common thought, he falls in love with Afiya and marries her, having a baby named Ilyas like his vanished uncle. Mediated again by his gender and following the traditional thought his society proclaims, which is that men should procreate, it can be stated that his fatherhood marks his consolidation as a man. In this respect, we assume that he is acting the way his society demands at his age. However, there are few passages in the narrative that contradict this statement. For example, he should not be visited by disturbing dreams. He should not be troubled by nightmares because these were associated with frightened children and men were supposed to be valiant. Yet, poor Hamza is unable to release himself from this anguish that torments him even after marriage, confirming his childish nature this way. Additionally, he is twice addressed 'young man' in this new scenario, acknowledging again his true condition to readers, however blocking the development of his own identity, as poor Hamza does not accept that adjective. It is worth mentioning that while he holds this 'childish' conduct and his youth is correctly remarked, in his mind he still feels his manhood. The narrative reports that it is particularly the staggering visions of brutality he saw with the askari in the war the cause of his nightmares, of his distress. We do know his society conceives such sorrow as childish, but, in his mind, he thought that was the fate a 'man' could not escape.

Consequently, he *plans* to act as the man he thinks he is, proving to his society this way that he is an adult, but he will fail once more. His son Ilyas grants him the identity he has always yearned for, as he is now a man who has behaved appropriately, but this is the only behaviour his culture considers suitable for his age. His fatherhood is the only act by which he is regarded and valued as a man. It may be stated that Hamza's wish has been finally fulfilled, that he has gained the recognition he has always been yearning for –being a man. Nonetheless, considering his 'infantile' nightmares and his constant fear as we mentioned earlier, we assert Hamza lives *in-between*. We declare that he lives in-between because the child he carries deep inside never abandons him, because he rejects his adolescent condition and pretends to be a man for most part of the narrative without realising his appearance and manners betray himself. In short, Hamza defines his identity as regards his *age* by living in-between spaces, being a child/teenager/young man protagonist.

On the other hand, in relation to Afiya, her specific age will remain forever a mystery. Poor Afiya never knows how old she really is because no one recorded her birth. Clearly,

this paramount assertion has a bearing on her identity. Orphaned, alone in the world, without any blood relatives to ask, Afiya lacks that essential knowledge as regards her age. Although she is offered the possibility of selecting her own date of birth, a supposed kind of privilege not everyone is blessed with, we do know Khalifa's words were only a palliative remedy to the burden she was forcibly carrying. After Afiya's choice, Khalifa told her: "'So from now on you'll know exactly how old you are'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 105). Nonetheless, we aver that her age identity will remain throughout all the narrative *imagined*, uncertain. This confusion will undoubtedly mark her.

Despite this lack of knowledge, the first descriptions we read about Afiya label her as a child. However, she does not really behave accordingly. Without fathoming her exact age, we guess she is around six or seven years old. Instead of attending school and playing as her age entails, Afiya is presented as a child who is ordered to do chores. Mediated from the very beginning of the narrative by her *female* gender, her society and the family she lived with demanded that she behaved appropriately, therefore she was always called to do something, like sweeping or fetching water or running to the nearby shop. Born a female baby, poor Afiya is destined to please and be by her family's side until her adolescence, when she would be required to marry and satisfy again her society. Besides, as a child, she is instructed not to move away from her house. By means of imaginary and folkloric stories about a snake and a dishevelled old woman which were used to frighten children, her 'aunt' forbade her from going up the hill in an attempt to protect her. It could be understood as an attempt to maintain the child's purity and innocence, however, Afiya suspects when she realises other male children did go up the hill and then came back safely, never talking about the snake nor the woman. In truth, her 'aunt' was acting in accordance with her societal beliefs, protecting the vulnerable child because Afiya's female gender puts her at risk, in comparison with boys.

Years after that, now in the company of Khalifa and his wife Bi Asha, we read that Afiya is thirteen years old. Although still a 'little girl' for us and for her current family, Afiya seems not to adapt to her age identity because she firmly thinks "I'm not a little girl." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 103). This statement evidences her confusion because she is unaware of how old she really is, having been denied that knowledge, yet she *imagines* she is older and wishes for that recognition. Her thought shows her opposition to that qualifying adjective Bi Asha attaches to her, likewise her *in-betweenness* condition, for she is not a child nor a grown-up girl. Remarkably enough, in her fifteenth year, Bi Asha calls Afiya 'young

woman', confusing our poor little girl even more. Again, conditioned by her female gender and her society, Afiya's first menstruation could signify she has reached her womanhood. Therefore, 'young', that second qualifying adjective Asha attaches to Afiya troubles our protagonist because, in her mind, she *thinks* she is older, she believes she is already a *woman*, thus she does not understand why her aunt denies her that condition. She wonders what acts would definitely map her imagined nature. She resolutely desires to be regarded as a woman, skipping those qualifying words that made her shrink and almost invisible. To put it differently, she wonders what behaviour would mark her identification as such.

Later in the story, we read Afiya is seventeen years old. It is important to point out that the third-person narrator explains that she was "no longer a girl but a kijana[42], a maiden, and beginning to understand the endless resentments that were part of the sequestered lives of women." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 100). Notwithstanding Afiya does not know her true age, the narrative confirms her *teenage* identity and sets her destiny to become a woman in that society. Undeniably, this categorisation would entail acting accordingly, that is, marrying and being a mother. In fact, she performs those acts in her twenties for her purpose of proving she is a woman. By marrying Hamza and having a baby, she finally reaches the recognition she has been desiring for years –her woman identity. Consequently, we may assert that in her society's eyes she is a woman, although for her own self and as we have been arguing, she is an *imagined* woman who lives *in-between* for most part of her life.

To conclude this third section that has covered the analysis of 'Age' as an important aspect of identity, we have perceived once more how Gurnah presented the devastating consequences of colonialism in the innocent native individuals. Regarding Hamza, we have proved that he is unable to map his identity as regards his age. He fails in such mapping because, on the one hand, he is not a child, but his society considers him so. On the other hand, he is not a man either, but he pretends to have internalised his adulthood, not realising his actions and his appearance betray himself. Actually, he is a 'young' man, but he never accepts such qualification. Therefore, he lives *in-between*, being a child/teenager/young man protagonist who never managed to map his identity as regards his *age*. This would handicap his ability to move into complete manhood, as we will examine in the following section about *sex and gender*. In relation to Afiya, her society and the warlike ambience that surrounds her entire life were blocking the development of her identity as for her true *age*,

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[42] 'Teenager' in Swahili.

thus her portrayal represents the ambiguity of such atmosphere. Through her, Gurnah is giving voice to those who were denied such basic and determining knowledge of when they were born. Therefore, without such notions, Afiya remains forever an *imagined* child/girl/woman because she was the one who decided on her own birth. Bearing in mind Hamza and Afiya's inability to define themselves as regards their *age*, we now aim to examine whether they manage to give shape to their *sex*ual *and gender* identities.

3.4.4. "'You are my beloved.'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 197)

As regards the analysis of 'Sex and gender' in *Afterlives*, we aim to examine distinct but complementary sections. Firstly, we will present a married couple who act in accordance with their biological sexes, hence they follow male/female-gendered stereotypes. Secondly, we will focus on our main female protagonist to observe why and how she aligns with the traditional gendered behaviour her society expects from her. Thirdly, we will study Hamza's sexual and gender identity in order to see whether he is able to solidly map his male self.

Firstly, and as declared, we intend to analyse the sexual and gender identities of Khalifa and Asha, two characters who are married and who behave following their traditional Muslim system regarding male/female-gendered values. Just in chapter one, we read that their marriage was an agreement negotiated and arranged by the merchant Amur Biashara –Nassor Biashara's father. As a kind of prize for all the years Khalifa had spent working for him, conducting himself with respect and efficiency, Amur prompted him to ask for his relative, a twenty-years old young woman named Asha.

Drawing on Buchbinder again, gender is understood as ideological in that sexual difference turns into a system of values we perceive as natural, as appropriate (39). Considering the characters' patriarchal society, we expect to find the bride's silence and ignorance as to whether she desires to be married. Actually, Khalifa was aware of his bride-to-be's lack of knowledge, a normal behaviour associated to her female gender. She was unknown to him before and even during the wedding. Men were the organisers, the leading subjects of such a ceremony that relegated women to a second place. After Khalifa said yes before the imam, Amur Biashara as a senior male relative gave consent in Asha's name, a shared practice nobody complained about because that was their tradition as for genders.

As we described in *Paradise*, in *Afterlives* the word 'honour' is frequently used too. After their somewhat forced marriage, Khalifa and Bi[43] Asha start to become acquainted with each other, they begin to fathom the true reasons that were lying behind their union. By arranging this wedding, Amur was indeed getting rid of his niece, relieving himself of the burden Asha and her gender entailed. This way, he made her Khalifa's responsibility, as if the mere fact of being a woman could block Asha's independence. She represents the commodification of women in this society, their marginalisation and exclusion from that world dominated mainly by men. Besides, this marriage meant the security that the family's name would be preserved, protected from any possible dishonour. If we read between the lines, we understand Amur was anticipating to any shameful liaison his niece might be tempted into, as a typical and expected act of women, as if that was indecent, an unbearable conduct either him or his society could accept. Poor Asha becomes 'Other' in this scenario.

In this regard, we can assert that postcolonialism served to reinforce gender stereotypes, for Khalifa and Asha interiorised their corresponding gendered values, never questioning why women's habits were more restrained than men's. As we can read, during their first years as husband and wife, she submitted to her husband's ardour dutifully. Imposed by her uncle but accepted as her society required, marriage was for Asha a duty she had to fulfil. Therefore, she became pregnant as her female gender encouraged her to do. Notwithstanding she could not fully comply with her female requirements because she sadly miscarried three times in those early years, Asha had deeply internalised the female role and submission women should profess to their husbands. She never noticed her own subalternity. Such thinking would be then inherited by Afiya, the little girl they were left in charge of.

At this moment, and as we stated, we come to our second objective for this section, i.e., the analysis of Afiya's sexual and gender identity, in order to see why her acts and manners are *appropriate* according to her societal gendered values. Before Afiya was rescued by Khalifa, she was living with the family who took her after her mother died and her father became sick. Although she knew that Makame and Malaika were not really her uncle and her aunt, she treated them as such, as she did with the couple's offspring. The period Afiya spent with them and their children was short but decisive not only for her

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[43] In Swahili, she was 'Bi' since her marriage, meaning 'Mrs', 'madame', ultimately 'woman'.

individuality, as it was described earlier, but also for the development of her sexual and gender identity, our present concern.

Since she was a child, Afiya witnessed how Malaika wore the kanga, the typical clothing they were to use for being Muslim women in East Africa. Furthermore, Afiya learnt that the females were the ones responsible for the housework while her uncle enjoyed the water she herself had warmed for his bath. Makame is indeed the epitome of the male exhibition of power. As a very strong man, he was chosen to work as a security guard at the government's storehouse, that is the reason why everybody was afraid of him. As the patriarch of the house, Makame also had the right to beat and speak sharply to his children, including our little Afiya. Once and for no reason, when he slapped her, she staggered and felt dizzy, but nobody questioned him. Nobody stopped him either when he realised that Afiya could write and then exerted his brutality on her, breaking the girl's left hand in her vain attempt to protect her face from the blows and the lashes she was receiving. In Makame's eyes, Afiya's female gender could not bear such knowledge because women were relegated to the house, to a submissive and dependent position. It was actually his wife the one who told him about Afiya's ability, aware as she was of the punishment that 'rebel', inappropriate and dishonourable act would bring to the poor girl. Malaika even lied to the herbalist to whom she took Afiya, defending her husband before our protagonist and proclaiming that he did not mean to hurt her like that. Malaika viewed it as a mere accident, and announced it as such to the herbalist. This morally repulsive justification reaches Afiya and unconsciously maps her gender identity. Malaika was behaving dutifully as her gender required, since she knew that simple act of writing was forbidden for women. She was so conditioned by her female sex and gender, so excluded from that patriarchal world, that she instilled disempowerment and marginalisation in Afiya from a very young age.

Additionally, during her stay with this family, Afiya experienced how her body began to change. This womanly appearance turned her into an easy prey for her male 'cousin'. Sometimes, when she was alone, he pressed himself against her and squeezed her nipples. Poor Afiya, then, begins to notice she has become an object of male desire. All these unfair episodes trouble our poor girl, marking Afiya's life before arriving at Khalifa's house. They sadly teach her that her society values her gender as inferior, that women have no voice in that unequal environment because they are regarded as subalterns, echoing Spivak (476). Consequently, we may assert that Makame and Malaika certainly embody the gender binary associated with male-offering of social power along with female submission and obedience

to the husband. As for Afiya, this stay with them would undoubtedly mark her view of her gender identity, assuming that she should comply with those societal and cultural values, accepting this ideology. When Khalifa arrived to rescue her from such atmosphere, he took Afiya and her everlasting suffering to his home.

For Khalifa and Bi Asha, Afiya was the daughter life had denied them three times. For Afiya, they were the parents she never met. Although unaware, she had already witnessed how women should behave. The memory of her 'uncle' and her 'aunt' was embedded into her mind. However, it was the time Afiya spent under the care of Baba[44] Khalifa and Asha the turning point in the development of her sexual and gender identity. As we analysed earlier, Asha internalised her *female* identity and acted dutifully, in accordance with her Muslim society. For that very reason, Afiya, who had already perceived female inferiority and dependence to men in their previous 'family', truly aligned now with her female gender, behaving *appropriately* and following Asha's example.

Notwithstanding Afiya's hand never healed completely, she learnt to cope with her injury. In this new home, she managed to define her female identity despite her trauma because she knew what her society expected from her. Therefore, when her left hand healed enough, she helped Asha with chores in the house, as that was what her biological sex entailed. Besides, Asha instructed our girl in their *female* role by telling her that, in due course, she would go shopping for her, as that activity was deeply regarded as a female duty. By doing so, Asha was mapping Afiya's gender identity, she was setting our girl's destiny as a woman. Additionally, Afiya saw how Bi Asha prepared and served lunch to her Baba every day, hence she also learnt to prepare dishes for her future husband.

At twelve, Afiya got her period for the first time, becoming a woman in everybody's eyes. As she sensed years ago with her 'cousin', our protagonist noticed again the lascivious manners with which men welcomed her when walking in the streets. She felt how their eyes fell on her chest. In Asha's own words, Afiya was now required to cover herself when going up in order to preserve decency. Therefore, she offered a kanga and a buibui[45] to our girl and showed her how to wear them. Imitating Asha, Afiya covered herself, thinking her gender was responsible for any male improper act she might see or perceive. This decisive moment defines Afiya's *female* Muslim gender. We may resolutely aver that Afiya's gender identity

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[44] Thenceforward, she was to call him 'Baba', meaning in Swahili 'father'.
[45] Unlike the kanga, which was colourful, this was black and showed only the woman's face or eyes.

was fulfilled for the time being. However, her new categorisation involved some more restrictions which she was to obey as well in order to become a woman in her God's eyes:

> She was not to touch a boy's or a man's hand even in greeting. She was not to speak to a boy or a man in the street unless he spoke to her and was someone she knew. She was not to smile at a stranger, and always to walk with her eyes cast slightly downwards to avoid accidental eye contact. (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 101)

Asha always ensured that Afiya complied with her tradition, hence she policed her movements, she commented on what our protagonist did as seemed appropriate for her. She always commanded our girl's manners to ensure she arrived at her following female stage decently, i.e., dignified at marriage. Indeed, marriage was the only goal Asha had in mind for Afiya, as she should limit herself with her society norms. Although at nineteen she was still unmarried because she dared to refuse two marriage proposals, which was absolutely inappropriate, we can assert Afiya's *female* identity was completely mapped when she met Hamza. Their subsequent falling in love, their marriage and baby son gave shape to her gender identity, yet Hamza's was never fulfilled.

At the present time, we get to our third aim for this section, the study of Hamza's sexual and gender identity. We may state that he failed in giving shape to this *male* gender identity for some reasons. Despite his marriage and more specifically his baby son, which could have been the definite evidence of his manhood, the narrative grants readers his adolescence as askari, a time period which somewhat undermined his maleness and marked his future actions as a husband. In this respect, he lives *in-between* spaces, never behaving as a pure Muslim *man*, as we now proceed to describe.

From the first characterisation we are given of Hamza, we perceive a boy who does not really align with the traditional *male* role his biological sex attaches to him. He should prove his manhood as per his African stereotyped culture, that is, nothing should scare him, his valiance should overwhelm any adversity. However, few passages in the story confirm his lack of courage. For instance, his first appearance in chapter three verifies his fear as he was shivering in front of the German officer who was selecting askari. According to the officer's eye, each recruited man was directed either to the carrier corps office to be stretcher-bearer or porter, or to the firing line. To this last fate was Hamza sent, to this last destiny which would show his manhood and his bravery. If he were truly a man, he would have felt proud of himself, satisfied with his *male* responsibility of fighting for their cause. Nonetheless, he was confused and terrified, such was his cowardice speaking. In consequence, he is acting as female, for men should not display their fright.

Besides, as an askari, Hamza felt himself as a stalking prey. Unintentionally, he attracted the company men via his natural and impressive beauty –a beauty that his society associated with women and not with soldiers. As a case in point, when he got himself examined in the infirmary, he felt this homosexual lust. It was the officer who "gently and repeatedly squeezed Hamza's penis in his hand until it began to stiffen … [Then h]e let go of the penis, it seemed with some reluctance." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 57). Considering he was a German officer, the purportedly example of heterosexuality, this passage shows how Gurnah destabilises categorical gender binaries. Furthermore, Hamza became the officer's personal assistant, his batman. This assignment exemplifies how our protagonist's maleness seems weakened in the eyes of the rest of the men, as one of them told him: "'You are a shoga[46] … that's why he picked you. He wants someone sweet and pretty to massage his back and serve his dinner for him … just like a little wife'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 65). Hamza is therefore considered homosexual, feminised due to his beauty, a kind of mockery Germans lead as they know that condition is a crime in Hamza's society. Yet they are unaware of the German officer's alike condition, evidence of Gurnah's ability to deconstruct traditional thought and to bring to light European's non-compliance with the 'norm' as for genders.

Not only is Hamza regarded as feminised by his beauty, but he is also considered a woman when performing the acts he is ordered to do. The third-person narrator describes how Hamza was required to fill the officer's hand basin with fresh water, how he had to fetch the officer's coffee, make his bed and straighten out his clothes, set the table for breakfast, then clear and wash the dishes, put them away in the cupboards and clean the mess. It was actually a very orderly routine, yet *womanly* in the sense that those activities were devoted to the female gender in Hamza's Muslim community. There were even moments when Hamza, performing such duties, felt his thigh being stroked as he passed before the assistant, who leered at him. Although he evaded those homosexual approaches, such episodes definitely fade Hamza's manhood and mark his future. Bearing these decisive 'female' experiences in his troubled mind, Hamza got to his old town. He spent his migration pondering on why he was not considered a man as he should. After being accepted in the askari army, he *thought* he was a man, but then he realised he was not really seen as such. Therefore, this new town offers to him the possibility of proving his manhood, his *male* gender. As we know so far, it is there where he met Afiya.

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[46] In Swahili, meaning 'homosexual'.

From the first moments when they both meet, the remembrance of each other cannot escape their minds. After brief gatherings where they could only share some looks and exchange quick words, Hamza declared to Afiya: "'You are my beloved.'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 197). Despite Khalifa's disapproval, Hamza decided to ask for Afiya's hand. Given his tradition and the knowledge we already have about proposals of marriage in which women are absolutely displaced, Hamza "should speak to Khalifa who would speak to Bi Asha who would ask Afiya. Then her reply would travel back the same route." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 208). However, as he aimed to show his male valiance once and for all, Hamza went ahead and asked Afiya, receiving her affirmative reply. Although Hamza's behaviour as for the marriage proposal did not align with their culture, the lovers' wedding fourteen days later did conform to the customs. Like Khalifa and Asha's ceremony, women were in separated rooms than men. Before the imam, Hamza just asked if Afiya would accept him as her husband. Then, Khalifa, as her male relative, gave consent in her name, stealing Afiya's own voice as that was the custom.

Now as husband and wife, as lovers, Hamza and Afiya continue with the mapping of their gender identities. Allegedly as a man, Hamza spent his time with Khalifa pondering the state of the world and analysing the latest outrages. Some other times, he just strolled the streets and met new friends in a café, contributing to his maleness this way. Meanwhile, as a pure Muslim woman, Afiya devoted her time to "attending one of the stream of obligatory functions that filled women's daily lives: memorial gatherings after funerals, betrothals, weddings, sickbeds, visiting a mother and her newborn." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 218-9). This list of 'compulsory' duties was only destined to women, as if their gender merely entailed that. Though unacceptable for us, Afiya copes with her gender keenly for she performs such tasks and also becomes pregnant.

Afiya's first pregnancy was not fulfilled. Knowing his wife was lying down, bleeding and at the risk of suffering a miscarriage, Hamza brushed aside Asha's restraining hand and sat with Afiya. Taking into account the society's shared practices, accompanying pregnant women at such moments was a matter only for other women. Therefore, Hamza is viewed as female given his disregard for Asha's prohibition. Without realising, he was bringing to light his *in-betweenness*, following mainly his maleness but behaving at times as a female. As for Afiya, even after her miscarriage, she went out to the market every morning to prepare her husband's lunch, forgetting her own sadness, exhaustion and lack of strength as she had internalised her female, domestic role.

Undoubtedly, we can claim that Afiya was the epitome of the female gender identity. Several months later, both acting *appropriately*, she fell pregnant again and delivered her child Ilyas at home. Although Hamza wished to be present during the childbirth, the midwife ordered him to wait at the guest room because it was inappropriate for the husband to be sitting so expectantly on the birthing. Having apparently defined his male gender through marriage and fatherhood, Hamza's 'rebel' desire to be nearby while Afiya was in pain slightly weakened his manhood again, as that act was not proper for men in his society. Unlike Afiya, who resumed her female household chores on the third day after the birth and never questioned her position, who defined her *female* gender identity, Hamza failed at his mapping. He remains throughout the narrative a character who lives *in-between* spaces. As for his gender identity, he *thinks* he is man because he gets married and becomes a father, yet his actions betray himself on occasion, turning him into a man who behaves as a woman. Despite that, it is necessary to remark that Hamza and Afiya spent the rest of their lives together as a family, loving each other and their son Ilyas.

To conclude this fourth section that has dealt with the analysis of sexual and gender identities in *Afterlives*, and before delving into our fifth and final examination of national identity, we can aver that Gurnah has brilliantly mapped the limits colonialism imposed on its subjects. Regarding Afiya, she did learn to define her *female* identity by example and repetition, first with her 'family' and then with her Baba and Bi Asha. Looking in retrospect, Malaika and Asha conditioned our girl's sexual and gender identity because they had previously experienced the same commodification their black nation had long suffered. Their same black counterparts were in this sense complicit colonial subjects who regarded women to merely a nobody. Therefore, Afiya does what she observes, she repeats what is considered appropriate for her sex. She maps her gender identity, but never realises she is 'Other' for her male surroundings. In relation to Hamza, he represents the fluidity of postcolonial gender identities because he lives *in-between* spaces. Our author has created in Hamza a character whose only purpose is to show his manhood. Nonetheless, Hamza's natural beauty, his imposed actions and his uncontrolled feelings of fear positioned him as a woman in his society and in the German officers' eyes. Successfully, Hamza evaded German homosexual approaches as askari. The appearance of Afiya in his life may mark his consolidation as a man, for both married and procreated, assuming their corresponding male/female gendered behaviours. Yet, even after marriage, Hamza did not always act

properly, for he performed particular actions his surroundings considered as *womanly*. Consequently, we can solidly state that he failed in giving shape to his *male* gender identity.

To summarise the analysis of personal identity in *Afterlives*, we can firmly declare that Gurnah has countered the erasure of those Africans who were brutalised and left voiceless in the name of a tyrannical European mission. Our boys Ilyas and Hamza were migrant slaves to an external cause that regarded them as the same, but also as 'Other', that is, as different. Their subjectivities were sacrificed to the detriment of their *individualities*. Ilyas voluntarily identified himself with his masters, hence his disappearance throughout the narrative. Luckily for Hamza, he reconstructed his identity when he migrated to his old town, though carrying with him a physical and psychological wound forever. Hamza also managed to map his *status* by entering into his Muslim community at his return, achieving this way the condition of person. Nonetheless, the war troubled the perception of his *age* and his *gender*, as he never shaped his true age and did not always mould his actions in accordance with his maleness. Therefore, taking into account Ilyas' and Hamza's identification as slaves, we now delve into the study of their *national identities* to see why the former tragically identified himself with the settlers whereas the latter successfully evaded that imperialist and domineering identity.

3.4.5. "'We have come here to civilise you.'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 65)

As we have been discussing throughout this Master Thesis, European colonialism played a crucial role in the mapping of the African natives' identities. We have seen how our two male protagonists experienced the consequences of such white dominance in their individualities, that is, in their bodies and minds. In this fifth and final section of our analysis of *Afterlives*, we intend, one more time, to get to the heart of the colonial invasion in the country that concerns us, that is, Tanzania. As stated, we will guide our present analysis around Ilyas and Hamza. We seek to account for the superiority and the 'national identity' the Germans embraced in order to understand Ilyas' tragic identification with them, hence his failing at mapping his own national identity. We will relate his enlistment in their Army as well as his subsequent involvement in the campaign for the return of the German colonies after the British conquest of his land. Besides, it is our purpose to study Hamza's motivations for joining the German Army, likewise his success at mapping his own national identity.

Considering the fictional universe that surrounds *Afterlives,* namely, the world of German atrocities committed in East Africa, most of the battles for resistance to colonial rule were cruelly one-sided. Particularly, in Tanganyika, the Germans suppressed the Maji Mahi Rebellion by inflicting terrible repression from 1905 to 1907. In his *Afterlives*, Gurnah brilliantly describes the brutalities of the uprising, and how it was suppressed at a great cost in African lives and livelihoods. Our author gives voice to the ruthless rulers who faced the steadfastness of the refusal of natives to become their subjects. We read how the Deutsch-Ostafrika empire "had to make the Africans feel the clenched fist of German power in order that they should learn to bear the yoke of their servitude compliantly." (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 16). Sadly for the reluctant natives, they were finally subjugated to the German control. African subjects witnessed how the German nation depended for its survival upon the invention of certain symbols. In that regard, they had no option but to see how churches and fortresses were forcibly built in their land to provide them with a means for a 'civilised' life.

Regarding Ilyas, as we described earlier in relation to individuality, and as we now detail in relation to nationalism, he was perceived as a complicit colonial subject. Distanced from his home and alone, he found a powerful feeling of belonging in the German nation during the nine years he spent in the mountains. His stay with the German foreigners coincided with the above-mentioned savagery they led to occupy his region. Therefore, he was a direct witness of this German victory over his own peers. He should have felt the conquest and the brutality towards his people. However, as his mind was gradually being colonised, he became a passionate advocate of the German national cause, a hybrid self. As a case in point, in the company of Khalifa, Ilyas vehemently proclaimed that his German brothers "'had to be harsh in retaliation because that's the only way savage people can be made to understand order and obedience.'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 42). For him, the Germans were kinder than the British, they were honourable and civilised people who only had done good since they settled in the area. Such words he uttered epitomise his deep internalisation of the colonial discourse. Like a 'European dog', Ilyas was trained to hunt for his same black counterparts. As McLeod declared, "[n]ations can evoke powerful feelings of identity, belonging, home" (89). In this line, Ilyas thought his new German family were providing him with home and an identity, that is the reason why he voluntarily joined them. He ignored the devastation the Germans left in the thirty years they had occupied the country, which was littered with skulls, bones and blood. Ilyas never realised he was in reality the 'Other' for them, a mere product used for the specific purpose of spreading the 'civilising' mission.

Ilyas' presence in the story lasts only one chapter. After deciding to serve in the schutztruppe army, we lost sight of him. We just feel his spirit until the last pages of the novel, when we are detailed his last breath. During his disappearance, we have particularly read that the big European war was over, entailing that Germany finally surrounded and the land was handed over to Britain, as if it were one slice of cake. Perhaps East-African people were exhausted after the German rule, as they became British subjects at the midpoint of the story without offering resistance. Later, in 1924, coinciding with the year of his nephew Ilyas' birth, the British were in the early stages of the mandate the League of Nations awarded to them to administer the old Deutsch-Ostafrika. As for natives, albeit ignorant, they were witnessing the beginning of the end for European racist empires. Bearing in mind such disorder, readers were asked to imagine the tragic destiny that awaited for Ilyas.

Towards the end of the narrative, and through a letter Hamza received in 1939, we discover that Ilyas had migrated and was living in Germany –the country he thought that was his nation and his home. For Hamza, finding his brother-in-law was an arduous task, since he was just a missing askari and the war had destroyed everything in its path, including his innocent country. Hamza was informed that there were hundreds of thousands dead and so many unaccounted that it was impossible to obtain information on an individual. Thus, he accomplished his goal by himself. Using the little German he knew, he decided to write to the Frau pastor –who saved him from life-threatening injury in the mission station. As she was living in Germany at that time, Hamza thought she could locate the whereabouts of Ilyas, and she did so. The first reference to Ilyas she had found was in 1929 when he applied to receive his pension as a schutztruppe soldier. The second was in 1934 when he applied to receive the campaign medal for the Ostafrika campaign, greatly proud of his armed past against his own people. Nonetheless, as we have been discussing so far, Ilyas remained forever the 'Other' in the eyes of the Germans. He was unsuccessful with the application for the medal as it was only awarded to true Germans, and not to askari like him –not to 'Other'.

Later, we read Ilyas enlisted in a German campaign to get back the colonies taken away by the Treaty of Versailles at the end of WWI. He marched with the Reichskolonialbund, a Nazi Party organisation which campaigned for the return of the colonies and which embodied the German national and 'superior' identity. It was Hamza's son the one who found our protagonist in Germany posing in a photograph taken in 1938 together with three Germans. Behind the atmosphere of *sameness* they created was the flag of the Reichskolonialbund, a corner of which displayed the swastika, which was the most

recognised symbol Nazis invented to sustain the Aryan identity. Via his name-sake nephew, we are reported Ilyas' involvement in the recolonising movement, i.e., his complete internalisation of the colonial discourse. Therefore, it can be resolutely affirmed that he personified the German national identity, as he even changed his name into Elias, dismissing his African name as improper.

Nonetheless, as mentioned, Ilyas was always seen as inferior, as *different*. As McLeod states, "[o]ne of the effects of racist ideologies is to produce a sense of national identity gained through the exclusion and denigration of others" (133). In *Afterlives*, the so racial Germans despised blacks on account of their different race. The German settlers were certainly performing the same history first in Tanganyika and then in their country –a performance their nation needed upon its survival. Such segregation is best described in the last page of our novel, where we finally map Ilyas' tragic end. Our protagonist had been arrested in Berlin the same year the photograph was taken because he had allegedly broken the Nazi race laws and defiled a German woman. As a result, he was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, dying in 1942. In this way, Ilyas was never recognised as a German, rather as 'Other'. Consequently, he lived *in-between* as regards his national identity, as we left his country behind and was never welcomed by the Germans.

In sum, we aver that Ilyas believed his identity was closely tied to the German nationality. His kidnapping marked a turning point in his unfixed self, for he subsequently volunteered as an askari, imagining he was like the Germans. However, his soul was just a product colonisers used for their own purposes. He lived marginalised within that foreign nation, first in his own land and then in Germany. Therefore, he failed in mapping his own national identity, which would have entailed liberating his black peers from the white subjugation. He failed in defining himself as a man because he could not make a doable contribution to the struggle of *his* people (Farah 20). Briefly, through Ilyas' depiction, we have mapped the domination such 'superior' empire had over its subjects. That was the real European mission, which always regarded its colonised people as 'Other'.

Unlike Ilyas, Hamza managed to map his own national identity. As we declared as regards his individuality, he joined the German Army on account of his submission to his master/'Uncle'. Given the progressive German occupation of his land along with his confused mind, Hamza claimed his oppressed voice and decided to assume and defend that German nationalism. In other words, Hamza imagined that act would definitely map his identity. However, soon after his voluntary enlistment into the German Army, he regretted

that decision. In the camp, Hamza just witnessed violence and cruelty. His stay with those German invaders was filled with deprivation, alienation and serfdom. Consequently, he soon disregarded that 'superior' national identity, as we now propose to evince.

From his first days as recruited, Hamza opened his eyes to the inferiority with which the German officers treated him. Like a 'savage Other', Hamza was prompted to acquire all the enlightening knowledge the 'saviours' carried with them from their 'superior' continent. As he was taken away from his home against his will, Hamza was not allowed to attend madrasa, thus he could just read a little due to the short education he received in school. Yet, colonisers dismissed Hamza's ability, encouraging him to learn the alleged benefits Germans granted inhabitants with. Specifically, colonisers fostered Hamza to learn their sophisticated language and literature[47], mathematics, music and philosophy, without realising they were guilty of Hamza's forced migration and its subsequent denied knowledge. Via one of those German officers who deeply believed they were the rightful owners of that land, poor Hamza hears the real message they tried to instil in natives: "'This is our Zivilisierungmission … We have come here to civilise you.'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 65). Such words would be embedded in Hamza's self and would delimit his future steps.

Furthermore, soon after becoming the Oberleutnant's batman, Hamza realised that the officer was truly capable of violence. He saw his scornful and abusive rage when the officer crashed something against his desk and then gave an abrupt order for him to get out. Hamza dreaded those dark moments, as he felt vulnerable to any humiliation the officer longed to inflict on him. He became a victim of his superior's unfounded cruelty. Consequently, our protagonist learnt not to look up and keep his distance when he sensed the onset of this mood. Gradually, Hamza was learning the German ferocity towards himself and his people. It was also the Oberleutnant the one who bluntly told Hamza that he was being used as an askari: "'The schutztruppe is our instrument. You are too'" (Gurnah, *Afterlives* 86). In this respect, Hamza gently gained awareness of his self being moulded to colonial purposes, that is, of his commodification. Those dehumanised words emphasised the disdain with which Hamza had been treated up to that moment. Poor Hamza understood that he was a subaltern, as he was alone, dislocated, enslaved –a mere product. As a result, he tried to claim his voice and speak –following Spivak (476).

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[47] Hamza is urged to read Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), an influential German poet and playwright.

Hamza's first claiming of his voice is perceived through his 'rebel' thinking. After the Oberleutnant had taught him to speak and read German in his way of a 'civilising' mission, Hamza used that recently acquired knowledge against his superior and called him 'Scheißer'[48]. Regardless of the fact that Hamza did not utter such offensive expression for fear of punishment, he was really expressing his anger via that word, proving that his mind did not align with the German saviours. The second way Hamza had of 'speaking' against the German nation was shooting avoiding targets. Indeed, as a 'rebel' askari, he managed to avoid shooting any of the villagers he was required to take reprisals on. He was therefore trying to save his own home as best as he could, rejecting the German nationalism and mapping his national identity. Apart from these two subtle means Hamza had to claim his African voice, the third and most important refusal of the coloniser identity was observed during his fatherhood.

As we know, Hamza tried to forget his identification as a schutztruppe askari when he arrived in town. He strove for a new recognition in the bosom of his homeland, his community and his family. However, his country could not elude nationalism. Having the big European war finished, Britain held Hamza's country in 1920 to manage it. As another coloniser nation, when WWII started, Britain began a recruiting drive for their colonial army, the King's African Rifles (KAR), which they had disbanded during the severity of the Great Depression. Like the schutztruppe askari, the British rank and file were drawn from native inhabitants of East Africa. 'Luckily' for old askari Hamza, he managed to escape the recruitment for the KAR on account of his eternal injury. Nonetheless, his son Ilyas was solidly in favour of joining their cause. Perhaps the boy inherited his disappeared uncle's powerful feeling of identity towards a colonial nation. Maybe he just inherited his father's wrong ideas of home and belonging evoked by an invading nation. Actually, Hamza opposed to such idea of sending his son to risk his life for those British vainglorious warmongers. Hamza disagreed with Ilyas' decision to voluntarily enlist in the KAR, illustrating this way his resistance to another colonial system which would entail the same torture, migration, dislocation, domination and tyranny the German nationalism brought about. In this respect, Hamza was mapping his own national identity, prompting his son to fight for their own cause and liberate them from colonisers' will once and for all. Young Ilyas did enlist in the KAR in 1942, but the consequences of his choice would require a future more extensive analysis.

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[48] A vulgar word in German that expresses anger and annoyance.

In conclusion, in this final section about national identity in *Afterlives*, we have examined our two male protagonists to see how colonialism shaped their existences in different ways. Regarding Ilyas, he thought his national identity was doubtlessly linked to Germany. Ilyas believed he would be another 'superior' German, however, he never discerned the dangers that leaving his country behind embraced, as he would always be regarded as a different and savage 'Other'. Unlike Ilyas, Hamza gives readers hope for he does map his own African identity, dismissing the invaders' nationalism as cruel, despotic and disdainful. Hamza did open his eyes to that European unfair control since the first day of his voluntary enlistment. Hence, in this own way to resist oppression, he shot at shadows and not neighbours, he let his anger name the Oberleutnant and he firmly opposed to his son's recruitment to the British colonial military. In other words, we aver that Hamza contributed to the struggle of *his* nation (Farah 20), defining himself as a man.

The study we have proposed throughout our entire section '3.4.' about our second novel *Afterlives* has proved, again, how European colonialism dominated the land they conquered and also moulded the innocent natives' identities. As we have been mapping, our male protagonists Ilyas and Hamza are innocent boys who spend their lives enslaved and migrating. They are direct subjects to German colonial rule, thus, they feel dislocated when they arrive in their hometown. As for poor Ilyas, he confirmed his hybrid identity by joining the German Army, without taking notice of his denied subjectivity and his recognition as 'Other'. Considering Hamza, whose *life* has been analysed as the *after*math of Yusuf's tragic decision, he did reconstruct his existence after witnessing the conflict in the firing line. The greatest success of Hamza was precisely claiming his voice, i.e., prioritising his innocent mother country over those external, imperialist and 'civilising' European nations which not only looked for already-occupied lands, but also the indigenous peoples' lives.

In essence, by covering in 'Chapter III' the mapping of the identities of the main characters of our two novels, we conclude that their identities were hybrid, i.e., incomplete in themselves on account of colonial rule. Drawing on McLeod for the last time, our characters "remain perpetually in motion, pursuing errant and unpredictable routes" (254) that hinder a fixed perception of their identities. To put it briefly, having the migrant identity of our literary author and the colonial history of his own country as a backdrop, we have conducted the study of Yusuf, Ilyas, Hamza and Afiya considering them as *the grass that suffers when elephants fight.*

4. Conclusion

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Throughout this Master Thesis, I have tried to examine the relation between important aspects of identity and the historical context of our neighbour African continent. If we had to give a simple definition of what *identity* is, we may state that it is the knowledge of who we are. The limits of one's identity are set in accordance with variable aspects such as individuality, status, age, gender and nationalism, among others. If we then had to locate this sense of identity within contemporary criticism and cultural studies, we would resolutely fathom the great effort oppressed groups made to define themselves. It is at this point where my Master dissertation gains importance, as I have undertaken the task of mapping the identities of subjects of white colonial abuse. I have mapped the physical and psychological processes black natives suffered because of our arrogance and tyranny.

Contextualised in East Africa, particularly in present-day Tanzania, this research paper has tried to evoke the decisive role white, European colonialism played in drawing the borders of that land. As a divine right, we positioned imaginary boundaries for centuries, hence we re-mapped that innocent ground. As for the local, 'inferior' inhabitants, who could not resist dominance and who were merely viewed as 'Other', they also became colonised. In this line, their identities became discriminated by the 'superior' colonisers –they were shaped like products to own because it was our 'civilising' mission. So, by conquering lands, bodies and minds, these white ideological forces denied the purest sense of black existences.

The first-hand experience of our talented literary author, the Zanzibari Abdulrazak Gurnah, reinforces the above-mentioned historical account of events. Although he did not experience German *colonialism*, he did witness British dominance and the subsequent, long-awaited, independence of his homeland. Sadly, he was persecuted for his Arab origin, he felt like an intruder in his own country. As a result, he had no option but to flee his motherland and migrate to that white continent that was his former 'owner'. Still feeling like an intruder in his new environment, again on account of his race, he decided to write and unveil the lives of ordinary people who were ignored by European historiography. By means of his heart-rending prose, he tried to reconstruct his present in the light of his past, that is, to give voice to those indignities that were inflicted on his people and then silenced. Via his studied novels *Paradise* and *Afterlives*, at which centres is the enigma of the self, Gurnah wished to remake and reshape his own *identity* of *migrant*.

As for *Paradise*, its analysis has provided us with consciousness of the German conquest of Tanganyika. Poor Yusuf suffers the consequences of that intrusion in a direct way. His *personal identity* is hard to be mapped because he is "removed from all lines of social mobility" (Spivak 475). Yusuf's innocence as a boy hinders the conquest his self and mind is gradually experiencing. He is abandoned by his parents, enslaved by his 'Uncle' and compelled to experience a migratory life, feeling perpetual dislocation and alienation. Therefore, as a subaltern, our boy cannot fully map his actions according to his *age* and his *gender*. Likewise, the intrusion he inevitably senses in his own land leads him to identify himself with the same German *nationalism* that shaped his entire existence. Such 'free' action confirms his hybridity and the success of the European mission.

Regarding *Afterlives*, we studied Hamza as young Yusuf's reminiscence. We examined the destiny that awaited for him and for Ilyas after deciding to voluntarily enlist in the German Army. Their *identities* as askari are the epitome of the tragedy that German colonialism inflicted upon natives. As another hybrid, Ilyas mistakenly thinks of himself as another 'superior' German whose mission was 'civilising' his own peers. However, he never opens his eyes to his real recognition as 'Other', dying in the hands of his German *nationalist* 'brothers'. Fortunately, Hamza rejects his hybridity and becomes aware of his 'Other' characterisation and reconstructs his identity as regards his *individuality*, his *status* and his *nation*. His askari identity and the war troubles the perception of his *age* and his *gender*, evincing that it is impossible to leave the conflict unharmed.

In other words, our three male protagonists Yusuf, Ilyas and Hamza joined the damaging German colonialism because they had nowhere to go. As grief and terror reduce resistance, they offered no defiance to be colonised and to be attracted to the 'civilising' Army. Only Hamza rebelled against colonisers' treatment as a mere product used to perpetuate the capture and torture. Only he could claim his voice and speak towards his oppressed people, i.e., towards his own nation. He has therefore filled us with little hope.

Succinctly, this Master dissertation has been presented as a modest attempt at refusing to forget the – often silenced – historical contexts of oppression inflicted upon innocent black subjects which inform the cultural products of white colonialism and its aftermath. Further research would therefore benefit from analysing whether the existing relation between colonialism and the above-mentioned detailed aspects of identity is identifiable in the rest of Gurnah's literary *oeuvre*. Interesting as well, it could be thoroughly looked into different subcategories of identity, such as religion and ethnicity. Equally, it

could be tremendously valuable to test whether the literary contributions of Gurnah's coetaneous are open to the same close analysis that I have here mapped.

In brief, we should thank Abdulrazak Gurnah for his masterpieces, which have brought us closer to the unequal relations between coloniser and colonised. As Saxena remarks, "[b]y recounting the simple and unassuming stories of the oppressed and their small victories in the face of overpowering adversity, Gurnah tries to counter the erasure of those who have been brutalised and rendered voiceless." (20). Our author's success lies precisely in his presentation of the heart-rending effects of colonialism in the subjects' offspring, living forever *in-between* imaginative and real borders, i.e., living forever in a condition of incompleteness. Gurnah's brilliance as a literary author is irrefutable, hence his worldwide recognition as the 2021 Nobel Prize for Literature.

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