

NAVIGATING TRANSNATIONAL READING OF ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S TEXT
AS A GETAWAY TO CHALLENGE NATIONALISM

By

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Abstract

Transnationalism can be defined as an outcome of diverse dispositions and multiple belongings emerging together without reducing either the social context nor the national distinction. This paper examines how transnationalism provides altered space to the stories of displaced people or migrants beyond embedding their stories with nationalism. Gurnah is known as an 'immigrant writer', and his works shed light to the different perspectives of displaced people. This paper exemplarily analyzes the narratives of Abdulrazak Gurnah's characters in *Paradise* and argues that Gurnah successfully incorporated ambivalent experiences, displacement realities and hybrid identity strategically to contribute within the transnational narratives. Transnationalism provides extended attempts to depict the stories of migrants or displaced people. With the development of nation state and national identity, within the postcolonial contexts, nationalism plays a vital role while representing individuals or communities' identity and sense of belonging. Using postcolonial theory, this paper also focuses on investigating how Gurnah's novel contributes to transnational studies by not limiting character's categorization and dependence on nationalism for identification. Within the postcolonial readings, the narratives of displaced migrants are often seen through the lens of conventional migration theory as it limits the social context and sentimental effects of migration within nationalism confining the understanding of the migrated individuals' narratives. This paper attempts to contribute to extending Gurnah's work within transnational studies.

Keywords: Nationalism, Transnationalism, Hybridity, Belonging, Intertextuality, Ambivalence, Postcolonialism, Gurnah

Dedication

I am dedicating this to all those authors who did not stop writing and all those readers who do not stop reading. Thanks for contributing to literature and articulating life.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Overview of Abdulrazak Gurnah and *Paradise*

In the twentieth century, the world faced two major world wars which massively affected the world and its population. Wars result in massive migrations and millions of people are displaced who flee to different lands to ensure safety or better future. In the present world, the migratory phenomena occurs due to a number of factors including asylum, economic grounds, illegal immigration and more. The transborder population displacements can be both “involuntary” or “voluntary” movements. The notions of “displacement”, “evacuations”, “expulsion”, and “resettlement” are connected with migration. With the twentieth century history of mass migration, the study on themes of displacement, ethnic displacements, religious fundamentalism, nuanced nationalism and cultural conflicts rise with creating narratives by and for the displaced people. Within literature, migrant literature concentrates on the subject matters about migration, culture and tradition of the host nation. Within postcolonialism theory, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha play prominent roles to shape the migration literature, where they create scopes for migrant characters' spaces. Literature on migration creates space for the uncertainties, insecurities and nationalistic negotiations of a displaced person. Due to the socio-political and economic changes in the ex-colonies after the wars, forced migration took place that created fractured identities. The lack of national identity and sense of belonging of displaced people are portrayed in many literary works. The cultural contradictions, ambiguities, and national clashes between a person's host nation and displaced nation are key themes that can be investigated through stories of migrated people. From the late 1970s, within postcolonial discourse, the literary critics started to discuss the effects of colonization and the experiences of displaced masses. The writings of Gayatri Spivak, Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and other critics dealt with the

phenomenon of migration and they wrote about different concepts related to the migration. The development of transnational studies came in to examine the effects of the migrated people to highlight the transcultural, diaspora experiences that exceed the racial, national and linguistic boundaries. The critical intervention using transnationalism to connect the academy and broader world that approaches the shifting relationship between a person's host nation and homeland and linkages of inclusive narratives. Bhabha writes how transnational writers follow the emphasizing neither superiority of national traditions nor the universality of human traditions, instead a representation of those in-between spaces that go beyond the existing binaries and connect a bridge "between the home and the world"(1994). Frank emphasizes that the transnational characters "rewrites identities in order to evoke their impure and heterogeneous character (2008). Within the postcolonial discourse, there are an increasing number of transnational narratives. Some of the 21st century writers who contribute to the growing body of critical work on transnational literatures are Milan Kundera, Jan Kjaerstad, Günter Grass, Salman Rushdie, Chinua Achebe, Jhumpa Lahiri and Abdulrazak Gurnah. On one hand, there are writers like Rushdie and Achebe who create works under the critical lens of individuals making through the diasporic life experiences, on the other hand, writers like Lahiri and Grass create works tapping into the psychological adjustments of displaced people in their new homes. Gurnah belongs to the transnational community himself and all his works focus on including perspectives of transnational figures going about life while facing psychological, physical and emotional displacement.

In 1948, Abdulrazak Gurnah was born in Zanzibar. He along with his family migrated to Britain in 1968. His first novel was published in 1987 named, *Memory of Departure*. Later his works were highlighted because of his fiction and critics of African literature. Living in Britain most of his life, he started his career as a writer at 21 years of age. His first novel, *Memory of Departure* was published in 1987. Most of his works deal with the themes of

displacement, belonging and explore what it feels to have a hybrid identity amid unfamiliar or new situations. In his early works, he focuses on questioning different political and social changes a person has to face in the shifting and unstable developments of the twentieth century. The theme of “unhomeliness of place” applied for the significant demographic of people keeps getting explicitly touched upon (Nasta, 2004). He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2021. He earned his Ph.D in 1982 and his thesis was on the topic of “Criteria in the Criticism of West African Fiction”. Although he writes in English, his first language is Swahili. Throughout his career, he uses a wide array of literary traditions in his works including Persian poetry, Swahili travel diaries, surahs from the Holy Quran, Arabic literature and Shakespeare. With his recent work, *Afterlives* published in 2020, Gurnah wrote a total of 10 novels besides his vast work in academia.

Colonialism was based on exploitation. The indirect ruling, postcolonial turmoil and socio-economic ramifications of colonialism can be noted in African literature. The distorted African institutions were incapable of overcoming the postcolonial effects of colonialism. Thus rose new and mutant complex situations for African nations. Achebe and other prominent writers heavily influenced African literature by representing colonial realities. Disruptive socio-economic and demonizing institutions of African natives ended up being obstacles for the unity and nationalism of African people. The African leaders have been trying to develop the sense of African unity through nationalism but this is where the representations of Achebe, and other African writers is substantial to critique the postcolonial effects and outcomes in African nations.

While researching for this paper, several works of Gurnah were examined and the common themes are noted to create a connecting thread among his profound works. However, this paper intends to concentrate on *Paradise* (1994), his fourth novel, as a centralized work that explored the complicated themes of displacement realities, adjusting as

a hybrid identity, ambivalent experience and the strategic nationalistic negotiations within the research framework. *Paradise* is set in the late 1880s till the war starts. Yusuf, the protagonist's coming-of-age story takes a turn when his journey to interior Africa turns into him observing how the traditional way of life is being transformed by the encroachment of colonialism. Like Achebe, Gurnah too writes about colonial representation and African challenges. Few critics mentioned that this novel is a response to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Even though this paper does investigate the intertextuality of the novel, in particular, the paper assesses how *Paradise* as a novel adds to the postcolonial writings while being a response to some of the existing narratives. The novel subverts from the idea that the Europeans were the only curious people exploring different lands, and they were the only ones who had developed proper trading systems. The novel also allows the reader to familiarize with the reality that Africa was not a homogenous mass prior to colonization. Through Yusuf, the narrator emphasizes on the increased threat of colonization taking over, where Yusuf initially sees a few white people and as the novel progresses, the overbearing presence of Germans to a point of unsettling and forced meddling of the colonizers on the locals grows. The novel provides views of the cultural aspects of the colonized people through fiction. Therefore, this allows the readers to experience the transitions taking place as colonization takes over and what are the responses to colonial encroachment.

The novel offers the chance to readers to immerse themselves in a time, place and culture of Yusuf's life that leads to reading between the lines within a cobweb of complex themes. The metaphors and symbolisms used in the text reestablish Gurnah's perspectives on a sense of ambivalence between individual and collective identity of pre-colonial non-homogenous Africa. The very plot of Yusuf's situation of living with Aziz in servitude to pay the debt of his parents is a metaphor for the way children inherit the consequences of their parent's doings. Offering the perspective that people form transnational identity are not

always inclined to have an ambiguous identity, rather for many, it is enforced due to survival issues. Including the tragedies and traumatic consequences of displacement, Gurnah narrates Yusuf's loss of sense of self and the world he was surrounded by before traveling. However, while observing the journey of Yusuf coming-of-age, the novel tracks how different lives of the novel retrieve, reshape and reorganize concepts of identity, culture, outsiders and so on. Gurnah mentions that one of the inspirations of his writings was reflective writings where he intended to offer different dimensions to his readers regarding identity, belonging and more to life.

Chapter 1.2 - Historical and Social Context

The history of nationalism is replete with diverse political, economic, and ideological impetus which led to its uneven developments across the world. Western European nationalism significantly differs from American nationalism and its variants in the colonized parts of the world clearly contradict much of its theoretical precepts. Before defining nationalism, it is required to have a clear analysis of the etymology of the term 'Nation' needs to be understood; when and how this word has a significance. As for nationalism, there is a lot to explore but for the sake of placing transnationalism in the contextual and theoretical boundaries related to this paper, the history of nationalism is summarized from the late 18th century onwards. Firstly, the history of nationalism will be tracked to observe the emergence of it as an ideology and later on, through the postcolonial theory, nationalism will be explored as a discourse. Nationalism did not emerge for a single reason nor is it limited to a certain territory. With the lack of uniformity of nationalism and its history, this paper will divide the history of the emergence of nationalism into three distinct categories before transitioning to the fourth one, which is the kind of nationalism that became a problematized version of nationalism.

Revolutions are an integral part to bringing in change. Throughout the 18th and 19th century, it was through the different revolutions, both successes and failures of these revolutions across Europe and Asia. Radical socio-political changes in Europe had been the result of a number of revolutions, and one of these changes was the transition from old monarchies to new democracies. However, similar to the destruction of a Death Star, the aftermath of these radical and progressive changes had far-reaching impacts on every imaginable aspect of life. So, the impacts of such political transformations did not stop with the formation of innumerable nation-states, first in Europe and then in other parts of the world and continued by introducing newer ways of constructing identities by diaspora, displacement and dispersion. Thus, the reconfigured identity in the 21st century is referred to as 'transnational'. In order to approach Transnationalism for this paper, Nationalism as a socio-political theory has to be understood. Thus, the background of nationalism is extensively researched.

1.3 From Globalization to Transnationalism: Based on postcolonial theory

Transnationalism is demonstrated when an individual retains and sustains a wide range of political, religious, social, economic and cultural practices within the country of origin and displaced place (Tedeschi & Jauhianinen 2020). Sending out wealth from one place to another undertaken in two territories can be considered as institutionalized and frequent in nature. This paper limits to the immaterial transnational practices through illustrating literary work pertaining to the dissemination of norms, values, living aspects, and cultural integration across borders. This practice is also referred to as social remittances (Levitt 2003). In order to connect with transnationalism through tracing the emergence of nationalism, the social remittances is a key aspect for this paper.

Transnationalism was originally included within the field of diaspora and migration studies. According to British historian Patricia Clavin, transnationalism is a phenomenon which provides a new 'research perspective' to study the increase in connections, exchanges and practices between communities across geographical or socio-political borders (2005). It refers to the cross-border connections between the migrated people from a country to the people who remain in the origin country. It emerged within the international migration studies from the late 1980s (Basch et al., 2015). Instead of focusing on the recurrent themes of migration generating lack of sense of belonging and dangling identity between two nation-states or multiple territories, transnationalism illuminates remaining hidden aspects of migrants. Calvin demonstrates in her research on transnational methodologies that without transnationalism, people of different communities will be marginalized in the cultural emphasis. Transnational studies offer the perspective that identities and activities are not bound within the nation-state borders. As Calvin proceeds to define transnationalism as a phenomenon and the development of it as a theory in both international relations and politics, she concluded her research by echoing how 'globalization' encourages the study of transnationalism. She further concludes that transnational studies examine the social, economical, political and overall effects on migrants. Therefore, through connecting how transnationalism is a resulting inevitable phenomenon of the globalized world, the importance of this research is established. Furthermore, most empirical studies demonstrate the diversity of connections between the native nation-state and the new displaced place of a migrant. The cross-border migration results in illustrating the different aspects of cultural activities, cultural merging and forms of nationalism. As a result, this paper enables us to comprehend why transnationalism is crucial to ensure an inclusive and even alternative phenomenon to nationalism.

Before elaborating more on the concept of transnationalism, globalization has to be addressed. In the 21st century, the world has become drastically globalized- socially, economically and politically. With the expansion of communication, the identities of individuals and communities are no longer bound by the limitations of the nation-state. Alternatively, based on a transnational scale, the identities and practices of people are uniquely formed and often merged. Transnationalism is closely linked to the two major global developments- globalization and progression of communicative technologies (Tedeschi et. al., 2020). It is because of these two developments, transnationalism as a theory and social phenomenon has intensified significantly after the second world war. On one hand, the economical, social, cultural and political interconnectedness boomed as a result of globalization. On the other hand, the enhanced opportunities to network and sustain long distance ties created by the development of technology keeps on boasting. Through the combined development of both the aspects, transnationalism emerges inevitably. Bhaba's explanation of the phenomenon of transnationalism in individual's lives is examined within this paper while using the transnational identities, diasporas, sentiments and childhood that transcends the bounds of nation-state through the character analysis.

According to academics, transnationalism can be defined in broad or narrowed versions. For the sake of this paper, multiple definitions are examined in order to make the concept as relevant as possible within the postcolonial discourse. "Transnationalism" is "processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al., 2015). While defining the term, other scholars such as James Clifford added the necessity of ideas and feelings of solidarity across borders that serve as a means to form transnational identities (1994). In 'Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation', Vertovec claims, "...the massive

literature on globalization, an array of world wide transformations are currently underway due to a convergence of contemporary social, political, economic and technological processes”(2004). He later connects that it is through transnationalism that the consequences of globalization can be traced and new observations can be found out. Scholars like Levitt and Schiller conceptualize transnationalism more broadly through including concepts of constructed identities, social expectations and cultural values as proof of transnational lives (2004). Considering the variety of definitions, there are some common grounds of transnationalism both as a theory and perspective. Despite the numerous definitions of transnationalism, common aspects such as senses of identity, connection with external places, networking and relationships across national borders remain the prominent aspects of transnationalism. Diaspora is an integral part of transnationalism. According to Kissau and Hunger, the narrower definition of diaspora is structures and patterns of migrant contacts and networks, that eventually dissociates ideas of diaspora from ideas of transnationalism (2010). Transnationalism is mostly criticized due to theoretical ambiguity, confused concepts of distinctiveness compared to other concepts like globalization and lack of enunciated general social theory (Nowicka 2020). While demonstrating about transnational history, studies and methodology, Calvin emphasizes that the relationship between transnationalism and nationalism is particularly problematic (2005). In literature, considering the classic disagreements in defining the ‘nation’ (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990; Anderson 1991), transnationalism is interlinked with diasporas in the global age as individuals have multiple national identities and loyalties. Thus, interpretations and multiple perspectives on transnational lives need to be examined to test whether without nationalism migrated or displaced peoples identities and experiences can be holistic and stand distinctively.

1.4 Postcolonialism

Colonialism is the occupation of a territory and exploitation of colonized people socio-economically to maximize profit of the colonizers. In history, colonizers intended to benefit themselves greatly while justifying their colonization by claiming the colonized to be ‘uncivilized’ and ‘inferior’ (Karadag 2015). It is evident that colonialism occurs currently in different forms. Hence, the prefix “post” does not refer to temporality because colonization is not yet over. In terms of the discourses on colonialism and post colonialism, in the 20th century, revolutionary works by Palestinian American scholar Edward Said and French politician Aimé Césaire contributed to the development of the field of studies. To approach Postcolonialism as a literary theory for this paper, I have focused on postcolonialism’s intention to reclaim, reconstruct and reinterpret the narratives, information, challenges and misrepresentations of colonialism. According to Césaire’s “Discourse on Colonialism”, there is no innocent colonization, and he adds, “between colonizer and colonized there is room only for forced labor, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swinishness, brainless elites, degraded masses”(2000). On the other hand, Edward Said approaches the discourse in a systematic and lucid manner. In his text, *Orientalism*, he theorized the connotative and denotative meaning of ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ to establish the colonizers (Westerns/ Europeans) and the colonized (Everyone except the Europeans). In order to examine transnational identities and experiences for this paper, Said’s and Fanon’s ideas on postcolonialism where they elaborated on ‘self’, ‘other’, oriental perspectives, and inferiority complex respectively are necessary. Gurnah mentioned in his interview that through his works, he was interested in the issues of displaced people negotiating their ‘identities’ with respect to their place of origin and dislocation (Nasta 2004).

In the Postcolonial studies, there are innumerable fictional and critical works from across the former colonies consistently addressed and enrich the postcolonial school of

thought. that attempt to address and add to the postcolonial discourse. From notable postcolonial writers such as Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Mary Louise Pratt, Gayatri Spivak, Salman Rushdie and others, different perspectives on dominant colonization narratives, challenges of representation, and controversial viewpoints are derived.

Postcolonialism is supposed to reify the transitory styles, expression and try to resolve the historical contradictions of transnational capitalism (Juan 1996). Literature enables to form and cultivate ideological beliefs of its readership, so postcolonial literature contributes to reexamining colonial texts and analyzing the trajectory of colonial history. In his work, *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha frames the parameters of postcolonial studies. He claims that the Postcolonial perspectives "... intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic "normality" to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantages, histories of nations, races, communities, people" (1994). Lazarus, Said and other theorists argue that colonialism continued in different forms. Criticizing different approaches on postcolonialism, Watson and Wilder stress that there is an increasing need to replace postcolonial theory's "cultural turn" with a "political turn" they call "the postcolonial contemporary". Therefore, it is a major problem postcolonial studies that it is not based on activism geared towards broader social and political transformation. As this paper focuses on Gurnah's works - he explained in his interview that he creates fictional places being inspired from real places in order to allow his readers to relate and comprehend the text even if they do not know the place. Irrespective of national identity, a reader can visualize the character's surroundings through extensive description of Gurnah. To not limit postcolonialism to geographical bias, literary works like Gurnah's *Paradise* demonstrates a humanist stance and advocates a holistic approach to representing migrated or diaspora individuals. Thus, this paper applies postcolonialism as a merge of both cultural and political aspects and

multilayering of essential ethos and realities of interactions between the colonized and colonial powers.

The 'post' in postcolonialism does not nullify that the ramifications of colonialism is studied enough or does not have impact any longer. Colonialism is carried out in one way or another, and in different forms. As the novel by Gurnah deals with the perspectives of what happened during the post-world war colonial regimes and how colonized people's lives were impacted by it, I decided on using the post colonial literary theory to position the essence and impact of the text within the postcolonial discourse. In order to examine the transnational narrative of the novel, a postcolonial writer's work is crucial and Gurnah is one of the claimed postcolonial writers. As postcolonial theory provides the expansive structure to incorporate my analysis of Gurnah's novel, this paper uses the theory as a rubric to analyze and study the text.

1.5 Contextualizing Nationalism and Transnationalism within Postcolonial discourse

Through observing the history of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the emergence of Nationalism both as a political ideology and theory progresses through different examples across the world. The fall of large nations and further divisions of territories becoming their own nation continues. Similar to how empires disintegrated, by the late 20th century, the large nations got divided. Especially with the two world wars being at the center of the world political transitions, the defeat of Hitler's imperialism in the second world war discredited the oppressive idea of the large empires autocratically ruling over the masses. Enormous powers like China, Britain and France were deeply weakened after World War II so the post-war decolonization occurred distinctively across Asia, Africa, America and other nations.

Through the 20th century, the birth of nation states like Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos

grew in number in Africa and Asia. These new nations had to choose between capitalism and socialism as political systems to combat the post-birth of the nations (Nyerere 1974). India and many nations adopted democracy to avoid the concentration of power by the elite classes. By the mid 20th century, while the concept of nation was developing, Nationalism entered into different colonized territories in the Indian subcontinent and Africa. Theorists and historians like Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and other researchers approach nationalism from different perspectives. Depicting a 'nation' as a socially constructed community imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of the group, Anderson defined nationalism as a modern phenomenon that inscribes individuals within a historical and social context transcending individual basis (1983). Gellner, theorist of modern nationalism, defines Nationalism as a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones and it follows that a territorial political unit can only become ethnically homogenous ... if it either kills, or expels, or assimilates all non-nationals (1998). Ernst Renan explains that based on the national idea of the culmination of a long past of devotion, sacrifice and endeavors as a nation, nationalism is developed (2018).

In this paper, while navigating through the development of nationalism, using the postcolonial perspective, the nationalism that emerged in the colonized territories is deduced as the most problematized version. National consciousness among the under-developed nations was the result of the mutilation of the concept of nation and its significance to the colonized people by the colonial regimes. In his essay, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness", Frantz Fanon critiqued bourgeois nationalism that does no good to the nation's mass. Rather he devotedly argued that "... the only thing that will give us an international dimension...[I]t is national liberation which leads the nation to play its part on the stage of history. It is at the heart of national consciousness that international

consciousness lives and grows” (1968). Predominantly, according to the postcolonial theory, nationalism as an ideology evolved in colonial territories are exported from their colonizers, and applying Fanon’s perspective, this paper introduces how the colonized version of nationalism emerged, how European Nationalism diverges into other branches in different territories in order to discuss that nationalistic discourse is created from the reaction to the initial idea of ‘nation’ and ‘belonging’. So, nationalism as a concept varies dramatically based on the nation and timeline. Furthermore, Nationalism in the ex-colonies is not entirely the product of the native political intelligentsia's endeavor for a better state, rather it was the result of the people's resistance against colonial oppression. In Europe, one of the driving factors behind the emergence of nationalism as an ideology was political: Europeans envisioned a better state. For the colonized people, it was not like that, as different people with completely different cultural and linguistic identities had been living in Asia and Africa without the idea of a state. Thus, postcolonial studies prevails as a dominant field because colonization continues to take place over the centuries in different forms. As for connecting nationalism, it is due to the reaction and resistance to colonialism that generates eccentric forms and consequences of nationalism.

The Indian colonial experience is characteristically different from the African colonization experience. British colonizing America, India, Africa and other territories have varied reactions and repercussions. For South Africa, the apartheid resulted in Africans being enslaved even within their own territories. On the other hand, British colonization in Bengal was strategized in ways where the colonizers created a new class of middlemen Bengali people who worked with the British to ensure the lower class demography of Bengal to yield in submission to the British. Because of the state of colonialism across different timelines and geographical dissimilarity that for approaching nationalism, it is nearly impossible to use a

singular fixed methodology or tool in order to interpret, define or concise the theory or ideology of nationalism.

Indians after independence aspired to become a new identity while holding on to their ancient culture, traditions and so on but certainly aimed for avoiding the ancient pre-colonial socio-political forms. For India as a nation, it is highly diversified from religions, spaces, languages and so on. Thus, it remains a challenge to unify India's diverse identity into a single state identity (Dutt 1998). Among different prominent figures across India's emancipation from colonial rule, Mahatma Gandhi remains an influential role. He was an Indian nationalist who made great efforts to oppose the British and took steps such as promoting Indian clothing - 'Khadi', to unify India. Unlike Lenin and Stalin, Gandhi believed in nonviolent movements. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru worked for a unified India that transcended the conflict between Hindu and Muslims. On the contrary, despite the efforts of a nonviolent unification movement, the reality of the transfer of power and partition was extremely violent and unordered. Once the British left with the independence, the creation of India and West Pakistan and East Pakistan (Currently Bangladesh) led to a drastic change. Mohammad Ali Zinnah had predicted his perspective contradicting Gandhi's vision of a unified India. He had proposed the Two-nation theory with the basis that two 'nations' had to be created because Hindus and Muslims could not live together and he referred to Gandhi's idea as an 'artificial construct with no basis in reality'. But, Hindus and Muslims did live together for hundreds of years because it was a political necessity within the shared territory. His standpoint addressed the Muslims being different from the Hindus in terms of diversity in social, class, origin, beliefs, culture and so on. Zinnah did not consider the millions who were forced to leave their ancestral homes after the partition. It was after the partition of 1947, millions of people were killed, abused and displaced that the reality of nationalistic ideas emerged in South Asia. Despite his efforts of building a unified India, Gandhi was

disheartened with the partition and failure to unify Muslim minority and Hindu majority. He was assassinated by an extreme nationalist because Gandhi was assumed to be lenient towards Zinnah and muslims instead of supporting the Hindu. Thus, through the birth of nation states like Pakistan, Bangladesh and India after being colonized for centuries show that colonization reacts differently to nationalism, similar to other decolonized nations.

In order to trace transnationalism from nationalistic approach, postcolonial studies play a vital role to contextualize the realities of the globalized world of the late 20th century till the present 21st century. It was through the independence of many nations as decolonization took place across the globe, especially notable after the second world war, that colonial boundaries got redefined. In most cases, the new nation states till to this date remain arbitrary or pernicious in terms of geographical boundaries, socio-cultural identity, and political system. As the Europeans claimed to bring in higher civilization and promising economic development, these steps were not effective for Asia or other colonized countries because the Europeans never considered the context or betterment of the colonized areas. The core intention of the colonizers was always to extract as much wealth and resources as possible. The infrastructures in Pakistan, Bengal or other colonized areas were done only for the colonizers to get their resources out to their lands easily. Meanwhile, the social reforming steps that the colonizers took to advance the colonized people were also always a strategy to ensure consensual colonization. Nation states like India and Bengal were heavily sabotaged in every way possible by the time the colonizers left.

Furthermore, once decolonization took place and nations were born, the former colonized areas were not equipped with necessary resources and institutions that would ensure them to thrive. The post-second world war conditions were the newer and enormous

challenge which the new nation states faced. Amid all the chaos, nationalism was one of the key ideologies which most nations asserted to combat the political crisis. A factor that problematized the nation states to build their own national identity was the lack of intellectual thinkers, philosophers or socio-politically aware people. Most colonized lands had educational institutions built and controlled by the colonizers (Fox et al., 1989). For instance, India and Bengal's most prominent institutions were built or controlled by British colonizers, who promoted western education and ideas. From the plan of Macaulay's speech, he explained how through using western education they will create "a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect"(Babington 1862). The elite class of the colonized era mostly worked as proxies or collaborators with the British. The Zamindars are the accurate representation, who are the elite class collaborating with the British to assert rule over the peasants. Thus, the middlemen created for the colonization to be easier by the British ended up being deemed as the local rulers (upper class men) of Bengal and were clearly rejected and abandoned by the lower class of Bengal as they were illegitimate and seen as betrayers. As a result, most of the nations had a lack of leadership. Meanwhile, the revolutionaries or new group of people had to rise up to ensure the nation institutionalized governance. These new groups of leaders had little experience to combat national matters and there was always a divided group which remained stuck to the post-colonial mindset. In other cases, the powerful leaders who rose to govern the post-war nation were from the military.

Although nationalism and patriotism are not the same. In some literary works, both concepts overlap (Audi 2009). The love and loyalty that are expected from Nationalism and Patriotism are themed to be under the same idea of dedication towards one singular identity of nation. Vertovec points out that "Transnationalism (as long-distance networks) certainly

preceded 'the nation'. Yet today these systems of ties, interactions, exchange and mobility function intensively and in real time while being spread throughout the world"(1999).

According to contemporary research on nationalism by Samuel Goldman, he identified technological transformation and identity resolution as the two contemporary challenges of national unity. In his book, *After Nationalism*, he extensively studies the historical, social and cultural origins of the challenges of nationalism, especially how it lacks the aspect of national unity. As a consequence of western expansion, nationalism studies as a theory evolved around the idea of a national identity upholding certain political and moral principles of that respective nation after institutionalizing the theory connecting to the second world war (Audi 2009). With the goal to extend cohesion within a nation, nationalism articulated the theory to serve the nation's welfare while the cold wars and disrupted conditions of the world seemed bleak for most nations. Even though nationalism as a theory with such goals in mind to establish national unity and identity developed differently and continuously across the world, the ongoing process eludes the people resulting in streams of extremist nationalism.

Audi elaborated on nationalism in his research "Nationalism, Patriotism, and Cosmopolitanism in an Age of Globalization", where he explained the spectrum of nationalism from minimal to extreme. He also proceeded to connect how global developments affect nationalism, where he lastly posed the question if there could be an intrinsically international realm endorsing transnationalism. Also termed as 'Ultrationalism', the extreme form of nationalism developed as one of the mutilated forms of nationalism and can be noticed in different forms around the world (Audi 2009). In India, Hindutva is an example where Hindu nationalism is established on the basis of cultural justification formulated by Hindu hegemony. It promotes "Hindu-ness" as an ideology defining Indian culture critically based on Hindu values and criticizes secularism in India. In 1992, the supporters of Hindutva demolished the famous sacred mosque in India called the

Babri Masjid, and following that major conflict broke out among the Hindus and Muslims of the area. Although contemporary India was based on committing to secularism as its political figure, the current government is skeptical about it with a sense of nationalism provoked based on Chandranath Basu's portrayal of Hinduism being the ultimate origin of India's nationhood and belonging. Ironically, the considered father of contemporary Hindutva, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, is the one who wanted Hindu-Muslim unity through tracing the fascinating history of cohesion in India (Purandare, 2019). However, the current form of Hindutva is a form of extreme nationalism where millions of Muslims in India are victims of ethnic cleansing by supporters of Hindutva. Ultrationalism is detrimental hegemony where political violence destabilizes the nation and mass murders take place within the international context (2009). Another form of extreme nationalism originates from the merge of nationalism and fascism, stated by British political theorist Roger Griffin. He points out how forms of extreme nationalism are legitimized "through deeply mythicized narratives of past cultural or political periods of historical greatness or of old scores to settle against alleged enemies"(Griffin 2013). He comments how such vulgarized forms of nationalism are associated with dehumanizing individuals. Elaborating on Nazi Germany being the ultimate foundation of ultrationalism, Griffin connects the psychological framework behind the fascist, totalitarian and other forms of extreme nationalism. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Russian President Vladimir Putin is exercising ultrationalism through his aggressive actions centering the multiple figures of the past like Ivan Illyin, Nikolai Berdyaev (Kaleem 2022). With the increasing discourse on nationalism, there are several critiques of nationalism. Such examples of different forms of nationalism are prevalent which this paper includes in order to approach the significance of a different approach to socio-political identity development in the 21st century. Examining whether transnationalism could be a probable alternative to nationalism, so that the resulting narratives of nationalism do not

threaten the individual lives of people from indigenous communities, minorities and so on is the primary goal of this paper.

Chapter- 2 - About the paper

2.1 Literature Review

In order to evaluate how to methodologically use transnationalism, I researched through different studies done on transnational concepts. This paper focuses on exploring the instabilities and precaries suffered by a transnational figure and how Gurnah rejects the conceptualizations of transnational figures. Through detailed analysis of Anna Amelina's research (2010), I approached how to use transnationalism through postcolonial methodology. Firstly, through Homi Bhabha's definition of "culture" guiding social practices (2006), defining transnationalism as a process of cross-border networks, diasporas and entities along with constant interference within cultures is established. Amelina suggests transnational methodology as an ambivalent socio-spatial phenomenon. Her research observes the scopes of plurality and interdisciplinary research using transnational methodology. Thus, this paper will provide attestation that through transnational reading and research, methodological nationalism can be avoided while including plurality, ambivalence and complex dynamics of cross-border narratives.

Despite the lack of concrete definitions of 'Postcolonialism', this paper heavily depends on Neil Lazarus 'Postcolonial Literary Studies', where the accumulation of several postcolonial works and studies are explained. This paper refers to Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, in order to apply postcolonial perspective and incorporate the postcolonial theory as a methodology to approach transnationalism through nationalism. Bhabha argues that, "The postcolonial perspective... departs from the traditions of the sociology of underdevelopment or "dependency" theory. As a mode of analysis, it attempts to revise those nationalist or "nativist" pedagogies that set up the relation of Third World and First World in a binary structure of opposition"(1994). Thus, using Bhabha's take on 'postcolonial' approach, in my

analysis, I examine how Gurnah offers a transnational postcolonial perspective as an attempt to recognize the complex cultural and political boundaries.

I intended to compare Gurnah's writing curve in order to derive commonality of themes and representations that could add grounds to the transnationalism perspectives that I applied in *Paradise* for this research. Through reviewing several critical papers and journal entries on Gurnah's work by contemporary critics like Watson and Wilder, Esty, Lazarus, Timothy Brennan, I tried to combine few of the major findings and consistent patterns about Gurnah's works as this paper only limits to base the claim of transnationalism as the ultimate transition from nationalism for inclusive narratives of migrated people. This paper also includes the critical analysis and reviews of notable critics to offer the chance to make this paper's grounds more argumentative and critical. One of the prime secondary sources of this paper is based on Sean James Bosman's extensive comparative research on Gurnah and two other contemporary writers (Viet Thanh Nguyen and Luis Alberto Urrea) writing in the same field of transnationalism theory. However, I have only taken the observations and claims on Abdulrazak Gurnah for my research and avoided bringing in comparative analysis with the other two writers. Through the postcolonial studies, the social phenomenon of nationalistic discourse is prevalent that points out how the UK and US have been conceptualized for migrants and racialized communities (Bosman 2021). Authors such as Abdulrazak Gurnah, Luis Alberto Urrea and others explore the concepts of identity, belonging and ambivalent stances or representations between diasporic places. Through literature, Gurnah's works reflect on exploring the precarities and instabilities suffered by a transnational figure. In his research, Bosman focuses on how Gurnah rejects essential conceptualizations of migrants as the helpless and indistinct individuals and offers enacting agency to his characters (2021). He refers to Gurnah's work as "immigrant novel" (Lewis 2011). Through exploring the economic

and social aspects of a transnational person experiencing the hostile systems of power, Gurnah constructs a diasporic space named Zanzibar. To analyze *Paradise*, this paper elaborates on the setting of the novel and uses Bosman's observations to pinpoint the reflections of "vastly different transnational experiences" within a diasporic space. Furthermore, in his entire chapter about Gurnah and his compared review on Gurnah's novels, through examining how Gurnah rejects both essentialist binaries and nationalistic discourses, Bosman concludes his work by offering a critical account of Gurnah's work so that the observation of figures which are often portrayed as 'helpless victim' in many postcolonial literary pieces is not misinterpreted. Hence, this paper reexamines transnational identity and agency using Bosman's critical analysis of detecting connections between power, identities and individual experiences. I will emphasize on highlighting the non-linear narrative structures of critical roles of the novel while observing how Gurnah negotiates the colonial past or present of the characters. One of the ways through which this paper approaches transnationalism while retracting from postcolonial nationalism is by linking or questioning Gurnah's strategies of hybridity, navigation through hostile power systems and reflection on complex migrant characters. So that, the paper can elaborate on "shared sense of homelessness" (Lewis, 2011) and entanglement of narratives of migrants instead of anti-individualistic and binary representations seen in nationalistic narratives.

One of the means of analyzing Gurnah's work is to interpret the web of transnational references throughout the novel. So, this paper elaborates on intertextuality as a literary element that allows the readers to experience the characters beyond national boundaries. In order to analyze the intertextuality dominant within the themes and other elements of the novel, I have used Fawzia Mustafa's comparative analysis of Gurnah and Naipaul. Although I negated the comparative sides of her work, I used this research to solidify the scattered

references to Arabic culture, the Holy Quran, African literature and other elements that I mention during the analysis of intertextuality in *Paradise*. References to chapters in the Quran are sprinkled throughout the novel. Chatu, leader of the native tribe allegorizing the African world during the peak of colonialism, refers to “the land of darkness, the land of jinns and monsters”. Then, Khalil does the same with referring to “Gog and Magog, brutes who {have} no language and who [ravage] the land of their neighbors all the time”. Mustafa argues that Gurnah’s works emerge within a diasporic narrative territory and thus, there is a failed nationalism because the novel is based on the narrative territory of its place of origin. In other words, Gurnah focuses on well-documenting paradise as the ultimate abode instead of setting the novel exclusive to Africa or Arabia. This aspect allows any reader across the world to experience the struggles, individual perspectives and lives of displaced people without questioning the depth within the details of cultural, political or social identity. Initially the story begins with the protagonist Yusuf’s life in a small town in Tanzania, then the novel shifts into a larger setting in the city of East Africa and also accounts to the travels of the protagonist to the interior of East Africa. The plot revolves around the major caravan trading trips of the early twentieth century within the coast and interior of East Africa. Another recent work that is extensively used as a secondary resource for this paper is ‘Yusuf’s choice: East African Agency during the German Colonial Period In Abdulrazak Gurnah’s Novel *Paradise*’ by Nina Berman. Her work addresses some of the key aspects of Gurnah using specific character representations without generalizing them. I used this paper to also examine the colonial realities of East Africa.

For research on Gurnah’s take on postcolonial writings, this paper refers to several of Gurnah’s interviews and lectures. He mentions in his interview with Susheila Nasta about his memory being the source and subject of inspiration for his works. When Gurnah was born in 1948, he was born in the Sultanate of Zanzibar, which is currently Tanzania. As Zanzibar was

invaded in 1964 by Tanganyika, Gurnah along with his family moved to England in the 1960s. He has only British citizenship because Tanzania by law does not allow dual citizenship. Therefore, accurately, Gurnah is Zanzibari instead of being Tanzanian. Gurnah mentions while talking about his works that he intends to often keep gaps within his fictional works in order to allow the readers to reconstruct themselves instead of writing 'real' already constructed stories. Thus, I emphasize on focusing on his work to trace transnationalism within postcolonial studies given the background and intention of the author himself.

To study *Paradise* through transnational postcolonial reading, I referred to Jacobs' analytical paper, "Trading Places in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise*", on Gurnah to assess how this piece is developed as a postcolonial fiction. He claims that Gurnah provided a reversal and revision narrative of Conrad's canonical text, *Heart of Darkness*. Adding several intertextual references, Jacob derives the comparison of oriental texts excluding ambivalence of individual's identities. According to his analysis, Gurnah self-consciously returned the colonial gaze from a postcolonial position (2009). Not only is his paper essential to include the intertextuality present in the novel but this paper also provides arguments about how Gurnah showed the subjection and enslavement of European colonization in East Africa woven into the social fabric. Through using some secondary sources like journal articles and novel reviews of prominent scholars, my analysis on transnationalism is made. These secondary sources are used to assert my findings and observations on whether Gurnah escaped from the generalized nationalism or conventional migration theory or not.

2.2 Research Question and Methodology

Through the postcolonial approach, Gurnah's novel is explicitly concerned with the negotiations in identities and realities of displacement. Experiencing displacement himself,

Gurnah presents his readers with a complicated strategic nationalism. Gurnah sets the novel in East Africa and under the socio-political, cultural and economic circumstances of the colonial fate, how did Yusuf, the protagonist, navigate himself and his life? Considering the novel, why did Yusuf choose to rationalize his feelings as a displaced person? What forced Yusuf and Khalil to stay compliant to the ambiguous power of Aziz? How does the narrative of Yusuf's life evolve around the series of events of German colonialism in East Africa? Does Yusuf struggle extensively with his diasporic identity or is he aware of the realities of East Africa? Are the experiences of the different characters confined to their national or social identities or their experiences are influenced by numerous sources within or outside of their surroundings? How much the influence of colonization or transnational reality restricts their live experiences? The author, Gurnah impeccably captured the circumstances of post-world war East Africa through presenting the competing stories to the readers. Does this novel offer a holistic stance to the transnational perspective or to what extent? I intend to read Gurnah's text, *Paradise*, from a post-colonial perspective to examine how this text can be positioned within the transnational studies.

The study focuses on Yusuf's circumstances of being displaced and coping with the unsettling and unfamiliar surroundings during the German colonization that was taking place in East Africa. The primary source for this paper is Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel, *Paradise*. Since the paper focuses on navigating transnationalism, the paper also demonstrates on the development of nationalism and how diasporic perspectives are developed. Along with the studies on the history of colonization and nationalism emerging in the late 18th century till the pre-first world war, East Africa's socio-cultural situation is explained through the primary text. Along with this, my study proceeds to highlight the ambivalence in identities and how the migrated people's lives are shaped based on their heterogeneous surroundings composed of diversified tribes, nation-states or groups. Unlike the idea of a person's identity having a

homogenous national identity sharing unity in economic, cultural and other social aspects, this paper will discuss the complexity of an individual's identity and life experiences living in a transnational world.

Chapter- 3 - Critical Analysis

3.1 Reading and Interpreting *Paradise*

Paradise is Gurnah's fourth novel, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1994. The story takes place in East Africa, Tanzania and the timeline of the novel is set a decade before the first World War broke out. However, it was not explicitly mentioned as the characters did not know the future of having a world war breaking out. The novel streams through different characters woven through different competing stories. As an African writer, Gurnah avoids confronting the strategic nationalism within global contexts, rather he juxtaposes European influence and how it complicates the history of colonized nations. Surrounding the life experiences of the protagonist, the narrator introduces an array of characters with different origins, tribal and ethnic identities. Yusuf is the protagonist of the story and it is a coming-of-age story. Considering the spatial setting of the novel, Gurnah creates three fictionalized places as the setting of the novel, that allows the reader the flexibility to place the novel in a globalized context instead of bounding it within solely Africa or other land. The story starts in a small coastal town and then proceeds to a major town. Most of the acts take place in the city and lastly, the novel traces the journey to the interior. Gurnah describes the setting in the African region comprehensively and in distinct details. As the story progresses, Gurnah involves several characters from different religious, social, professional, races and diverse identities which portrays the clashes or harmony between these groups of people besides the evident presence of German colonialism. Throughout the novel, different characters portrayed different socio-political perspectives, with arab characters like Aziz using homophobic language, native East Africans in the interior using racist language and so on. Therefore, these varieties in relationships between these groups of people enforces the readers to realize how diverse groups of people complemented each other before pre-colonization. Through the novel, the multilayered

social, economic, political and cultural space of East Africa is portrayed. Parts where new places are introduced within the novel, the author adds descriptive paragraphs. The essence of Africa and how it looked for both a newcomer and a native is merged in an excellent manner to showcase the paradise-like beauty of Africa. The part of visiting Hussain in the foothills is explained in detail while the magical part of the greenery views of Africa is described to the readers. Upon analysis, this paper recognizes Gurnah's thoughtful novel successfully capturing the contexts of slavery, Islamic presence, caravan trading, religious and ethnic constitutions of East African society.

The story is seen through the eyes of a 12 year old boy, Yusuf. Within the first two chapters, Yusuf is seen traveling with Aziz, his 'uncle', to an unknown place. The reason behind the journey of Yusuf is not unfolded, thus, he goes through a series of emotions including curiosity, fear and confusion. As Yusuf starts experiencing living in a new place, he comes to know that Aziz is not his uncle. He learns that he was constrained in a form of servitude as his father could not pay off the debt owed to Aziz, who was an Arab trader. Through the narrator, Yusuf's psychological state is observed that reflects the thoughts of a displaced person. The dissociating feeling of abandonment by his parents, craving to go back to his past life and also the feeling of betrayal are observed in the novel. As he deals with the different situations faced in the large city while working in the shop, he experiences a number of emotions and encounters. Then the second part of the story is where Yusuf travels along for a trading expedition where the novel takes the reader to the interior through Yusuf. There he is left in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro, which is situated in present day Tanzania. He stays with a family for one year and then returns to the town to Aziz. Following this progression, in his life, there is another trading expedition to the deeper part of Africa crossing the lake east of Mount Kilimanjaro. Then there is the final return of Yusuf to the city once again and how he functions in the absence of Aziz leads to the ending. Thus, it is

through these journeys and back and forth the condition of Yusuf's life that contains the timeline of the story. In terms of relating the title of the book, 'Paradise' with the happenings of the novel, the concept of paradise or eternal abode is established through multiple interpretations. Primarily, the valley surrounding Mount Kilimanjaro is mostly rainforests geographically and is filled with lush vegetation. Thus, for the desert inhabitants such as Yusuf, this place to the interior of Tanzania in the valley is seemingly their concept of paradise itself. Relating to the narration of Holy Quran's description of 'Jannah', the setting of the novel hints to the concept of finding or chasing paradise amid chaos. Throughout the novel, there are innumerable symbolisms that associate with the different concepts of paradise and one of the obvious ones is garden. Either fantasizing the idea of an eden filled with beautiful flowers and lush trees would be the ideal paradise and on the contrary, the novel also symbolizes how despite the beauty of the garden, it might not be heavenly after all and could be a captive place within beauty that no longer remains a paradise. Following such a setting, the novel paints another paradise-like setting- it is the garden of Aziz's house. Surrounding the house, there is a lush garden where Yusuf starts spending time gardening and constructing apprenticeships with other gardeners. Thus, through such replicated paradise-like spaces within the novel, the author tried to provide minor earthly abodes to the characters, especially because these characters like Yusuf and Khalil lacked a proper space for themselves. Furthermore, the minor paradises of the novel are not only for providing space of homeliness and belonging to the characters but also there are mentions of how such paradises are in threat of being lost.

In order to address the vast complex relationship between territories, the novel revolves around the theme of diversity and divisions existing within the society. The entire territory comprises several tribes and ethnic groups and then the correlation or no-relation of

these groups of people are observed. The novel addresses the critical encounter between the Africans and Muslim Arabs. Through the Muslim character's lens, the novel shows how they perceived and communicated with the native Africans. Gurnah uses linguistic cues to portray the Muslim characters considered the Africans as 'savages' and inferior to them in every way, similar to the vocabulary the colonizers or Europeans used for the native people. The disdain the Arab characters have towards the natives, with whom they shared such a period of time together in the same continent is almost identical to how the Europeans saw and treated the natives. Holding this complex theme, Gurnah taps into the complication between the Muslims and Arab Muslims along the lines of perceiving the native Africans. The native's religion, worshipping the Gods, culture, superstitions and identity through the lens of the Arab Muslims and Europeans are revealed. Through this theme, the novel includes the advent of Islam in Africa and follows how both (the natives and the foreigners) viewed the other and where the differences lie. The effects of mixing culture and transfusion of religion is one of the key observations from Gurnah's writing, similar to many other African post colonial writers. This theme of the novel inclines how within borders, transnational cultural, religious, social and other aspects are interchanged. Gurnah did not associate any character by adding stereotypical details on them being an 'African' or Arab, rather he introduced their ethnic origins and gradually added details about their language, personality and so on. Thus, he willfully avoids categorization.

One of the other key themes is power dynamics. While constructing the characters, one of the prominent powerful figures is Aziz, through whom the author paints the influence he has over others not questioning his power. Both Khalil and Yusuf are powerless figures due to the presence of Aziz. They both gain minor power over the shop or during the exchanges with customers, but their roles are limited to what Aziz dictates them to do.

Projecting the inequalities in society, the novel draws how the parents had to give up on their children because of Aziz's power, and how that power seemed so mysterious until put in effect. Gurnah did not portray Aziz as a forceful power who tormented or abused parents to give up their children, instead the overbearing conspicuous power of money and influence of Aziz established him as a potent figure. It can be derived that even colonial powers were not always directly forceful, rather in many cases, the colonizers systematically compelled the colonized people to give up their agency and accept the influence of the colonizers on them. The helplessness of the people in front of the sustaining power and how their lives are dictated by such power is represented. As it is a coming-of-age novel, the journey of Yusuf becoming an adult remains the central theme that tackles sub-themes correlating with the surrounding social system. Thus, the prime time of building identity, questioning societal norms and being confused about one's position in society is during the teenage years, which is presented in the novel following Yusuf's coming of age. With her interview with Gurnah, Susheila Nasta inquired about the intended impact of the novel. She expresses that *Paradise* as a novel "presents the reader with a number of different and competing stories which not only interrogate standard European versions of history but also complicate the strategic nationalisms of some earlier fictions by African writers"(2004). Within the African context, the contextualization of Arab and Muslims in particular to Yusuf as a young boy dislocated to a new place and his course to growing into an adult remains the driving theme. In terms of the second phase of the novel, through venturing into the interiors, the author tried to subtly show how cultures are merged and aspects are negotiated. Therefore, based on the themes and plot of the novel deals with exploring the deployed agency and intriguing perspectives of the transnational characters.

3.2 Intertextuality within the novel

Throughout the novel, Gurnah used several references to the Islamic myths and the Quran. This aspect of using Quran and Islamic texts as inspiration is particularly evident through observing the naming of things and people. The very title ‘Paradise’ is a key aspect of the novel in terms of Gurnah’s characters defining and reimagining the Al-Jannah (in Quran) - ‘Paradise’. The concept of the ‘Jannah’ based on Quran and Islamic traditions is heaven as an eternal place which has seven different levels, where the highest level is ‘Jannah’. The description of this highest level is extravagantly beautiful, filled in lush greeneries, non-stop gushing of milk and honey from canals and a place of eternal tranquility. The dazzling description of such an abode is something a person living in the parched dry desert land could imagine an eternal blissful space as paradise. The characters discuss the idea of heaven through the Islamic ideas narrated in the Quran and other narratives. Considering the imagination, there is also the element of irony included through the novel about the concept of paradise and what man would do to attain it. Mustafa explores different points within the novel about how paradise is articulated within Islamic discourses and she connects that Gurnah used the religion Islam for the intertextual concepts of ‘Jannah’ as it was the religion of most of the characters from both the trading posts and coastal areas of the caravan’s routes. Using this evidence, she refers that Gurnah used it as a riposte to Conrad’s metaphor in *Heart of Darkness* (2015). In terms of Yusuf’s story in the novel, Elizabeth Maslen extracts the intertextuality with “two potent stories with their roots in the Bible and Quran” and she adds that Gurnah referring to Joseph or Yusuf or the entire Paradise aspect of the novel, “have developed rich literary traditions over the centuries which Gurnah’s novel draws on”(1996). Thus, through analyzing the intertextual references, the attempt of Gurnah to embrace different representations and ideologies is examined.

Through analyzing the hints within the novel, the naming of the title can be predicted. Besides the title, naming different characters and objects within the text points towards the

ambivalence as a device within the novel. There is also a critique of the concept of paradise within the novel through the Sikh character, Harbans Singh. He was a mechanic in the novel whose thoughts are based on scientific foundations and logical approach to religion. He represents an eclectic view on faith, based on his cross-cultural experiences. He poses the question to Yusuf, Hamid and the readers about the Islamic concept of paradise. He expresses India to be a paradise as it is the most beautiful place comprehended by him. His views create the space of doubt on an individual's concept of paradise and he adds how his perspective is based on his love and loyalty to India as a nation containing all. Thus, his questioning the idea of paradise based on only faith integrates as an assessment to the concept of paradise being bigoted. The nationalistic outlook of this character represents how many nation states' people evolve their religious and social identity as an ideal one that unifies them with the nation's religion and social identity. Unlike the discussion of paradise and the title of the book foresighting the waiting for the perfect life, there is a presence of juxtaposed situations through the brutal realities of the characters. Yusuf and other characters suffering from the sense of dislocation and lack of belonging within their territory while facing the challenges to thrive within the unknown adds irony to the title. Yusuf and Hamid were questioning Sikh's idea of India being ideal but they were more thoughtful about the fact that both of them could not find a nation for themselves which they could associate with their identity. Thus, for both of them, there was no space of national identity.

While naming the characters, there are constant references of the Quran throughout the novel. Yusuf, Zulekha, Aziz, Hussain and other names of the novel are notable in the Quran and the intertextual references are evident as Gurnah incorporated the characteristics and similar scenarios. Mustafa points this observation as a major textual evocation that occurs in characters- Aziz and Yusuf; whose fate and relationships are inevitably framed by their biblical and Quranic namesakes (Powerful Omani merchant Aziz and Joseph). Through using

the textual realms of Quran, travel accounts of regional practices of slavery, Arabic traditional texts and Conrad's or perhaps other oriental texts, Gurnah is mobilizing the historical facts within discursive realms which envelops the transnational populations within a region. This aspect of the novel is particularly vital to establish how transnational individuals are of several cultural, historical and social dimensions and not belonging to a particular language or origin. These transnational elements incorporated within the writing of the novel acts as a means to interpret the novel within a transnational context, not simply native African or oriental perspective.

Love is a prominent theme of the novel. In order to sew the cross fates and tragic love between the characters, Gurnah retrieved some of the beloved stories from the Islamic book, Quran and Arab mythology. While doing close-reading of the text, intertextual references are prominent throughout the novel. Gurnah using a similar setting and personifying the characters while staging the situations inspired from scriptures and real accounts from the Arab world is striking within the novel. The story of Yusuf and Zulekha is an evident example of the theme of love. In the Holy Quran, there is an entire surah (chapter) named after Yusuf. Zulekha was the wife of Aziz, the Prime Minister of Egypt. Zulekha is mentioned in the Holy Quran as the wife of "Aziz" and this reference can also be found in christian and jewish traditions, where she is addressed as the wife of Potipher, a merchant. In some of the scenes, Gurnah reenacted different parts from the story mentioned in the Quran. Similar encounters with the Quran are narrated in the story like the instance of Yusuf's shirt being torn from behind in the novel. He did it through changing the setting into an Arab-African context and constructed a life of Yusuf struggling in the unknown. The fusion of love and lust under staged events of the novel offers a newer take to the Islamic cultural perspectives by Gurnah. Zulekha being enchanted by Yusuf's beauty and her instance of

seducing Yusuf is inspired and based heavily on the Islamic myth of the love story of Yusuf and Zulekha. To comprehend the impact of the story and relate with the Islamic version, one has to observe the similar scenarios and conditions of Yusuf and Zulekha encounters. Gurnah managed to add new perspectives to ancient myths and traditions that supports his intention of adding unsaid and unknown individualistic perspectives within transnational studies.

By the end of the text, Gurnah allows the characters to delve into the idea of taking things in their own hands and test their fate. This aspect is promoted by Gurnah to assert that the transnational individuals bound by the struggling and unknown circumstances still have the capability to have agency instead of accepting the fate of abandonment or un-belonging. Zulekha invites Yusuf to cure her, knowing that she truly desires him. On the other hand, Yusuf comes to terms with his feelings and desire for Amina, who is the half sister of Khalil. Khalil tries to prompt Yusuf of the palpability of his actions. Despite knowing that Amina is the wife of Aziz, Yusuf desires her and thinks of eloping with her. However, unlike the name suggests an eternal elated living, the story ends in a tragic manner where Yusuf accepts the helplessness of his position and knows that he has no place to run with Amina. The inevitability of the characters' fates leaves the novel ending in a bitter reality of power and love. During this anguishing end of the tale, the beginning of the first world war takes place and the atmosphere of the situation changes into uncertainty. This particular chaotic and unsettling scene of the war breaking out sets the stage of how migrants or displaced people lose their stability once wars break out, leaving them with little to nothing to move forward. Through connecting power and complex representations of migrants, Gurnah emphasizes his storytelling strategy to focus on the "entanglement of stories"(Gurnah 2006).

This paper cross-checks that all characters and their relationships are used as elements to represent the complex and diverse representation of migrants and minority communities. Both Khalil and Yusuf share the sense of estrangement but they do not deem themselves as

helpless. With the ambiguity that if debt is paid off, they could go back to their lives within Aziz forcing them regardless of their willingness to work for him denotes Gurnah carefully placing the characters with their agency and through the narrative also mirrors that they were not helpless victims within the system. Gurnah maintains performativity to narrate all characters and situations, especially Yusuf's character, making it more reliable that the characters were not critical of their individualistic or group-oriented, neither they were essentialists. "Essentialism is undermined by its commitment to the denial of particular identities that they regard as clearly holding"(Della Rocca 1996). To elaborate, essentialists assume that individuals have essentially common characteristics and that naturally they are all inherent, innate and unchanging. However, while rereading and examining Gurnah's characters, there is a prevalent sense of identity, agency and emphasis on their multifaceted nature.

3.2.1 Examining the characters

Gurnah signifies the influence of names within the novel to establish the foreground of the character's past, present and future. Yusuf is the protagonist of the novel. The name 'Yusuf' adds great significance to the story. Firstly, the name has significance in Judaic traditions (Joseph) and Islamic traditions, Yusuf is a prophet. The character of Yusuf is based on the precedence of the historical context of Yusuf. Besides the leaving of home, one of the key characteristics which draws attention to the similarities between character Yusuf and historical Yusuf is the exceptionally beautiful appearances. Incorporating intertextuality, right at the beginning, Yusuf's appearances are mentioned but as the story develops, the narrator describes how beautiful Yusuf is through the aspect that he grabs attention effortlessly and people marvel at his incredible beauty. According to the Islamic traditions, different prophets possessed different attributes. Prophet Yusuf's was the epitome of beauty and pureness. The

spiritual perspective of Yusuf character's appearance refers to the Islamic analog reference of Prophet Yusuf's beauty. 'Husne Yusuf' in Farsi translates to 'the beauty of Yusuf'. Built on the aspect of the enchanting beauty that signifies the purity and magnificence of Prophet Yusuf is incorporated into Yusuf's character. Related to this attribute, the other Muslim characters in the novel acknowledge Yusuf's speciality through considering his attribute as a gift, and this embodiment is used as a tool to represent Yusuf's character. His character is a reflective character as he tries to figure out the world.

Another vital character of the novel is Uncle Aziz. Gurnah created a complex character who contains a mysterious and ambiguous identity for many parts of the novel and this figure fits into different characteristics of being a benevolent, adventurous trader, and he is portrayed as a practicing muslim, and is courageous. However, Gurnah juxtaposes his character traits through showing how Aziz practices the system of providing excess loans and when people accumulate too much of the debt, they have to give away their children as a compensation. Yusuf ends up being enslaved to Aziz through such practice of his parents. Yusuf remains perplexed with this character.

Khalil is another major character that influences Yusuf's character. Similar young boy, abandoned by parents due to being indebted to Aziz, Khalil is the companion and co-worker of Yusuf. Unlike Yusuf, Khalil has a clear understanding of his master, Aziz, and shows the realistic conditions of the society to Yusuf and even stays insistent to make Yusuf understand that Aziz owned them without any attachment. Although Khalil is portrayed as the smart one who understands the power influence and how the world works, he is also the one who cannot get past his reality. He ends up befriending Yusuf and the relationship between the young boys develop as brothers. With the twists of fate, Yusuf ends up falling in love with his lost sister, Amina, who weds and is enslaved to Aziz.

Besides the major characters, Gurnah introduces other characters gradually and does not emphasize on developing their role instantly by introducing their origin, ethnicity, appearance or so on. Similar to Aziz, many other characters of the novel remain mysterious or ambiguous to trace, which illustrates the space of understanding the characters without the national or cultural identities solely. When taken into the interior, Yusuf is left at a small shop owned by Hamid and his wife. In the story, Yusuf stays with them for a year and it is through this time that these two muslim characters share a journey with Yusuf traveling to the hills to trade. During their trading tour, they come across another shopkeeper named Hussain. The narrator used the voice of Hussain to give voice to the criticism of Aziz and his practices. He criticizes how psychological power over another forces one to willingly comply to absurd treaties, even though Aziz does not forcibly take the children from their parents, he makes the system such that parents are left with no choice but to give up their children to pay off the debt which they thought would change their lives. Through his character, Gurnah critiques the impending colonialism and also adds to the inevitability of colonial reactions. His character foreshadows the presence of another identity. He warns the people about the arrival of the Europeans. Another daunting figure in the novel is Abdullah, who is the overseer. Besides Yusuf's mother, other female characters are Zulaika, the mistress and Amina, Khalil's sister. These two characters are introduced late in the novel. Amina is the adopted sister, whom Aziz marries later.

3.3 Investigating Ambivalence, Hybridity and Diaspora

Considering the traditional postcolonial theory, the interpretation of identity often is comprehended in a binaristic way - the colonizers and the colonized. In this perspective, the colonized are far too often deemed as a monolithic group sharing the same culture, traditions and sentiments within the said colonized area. However, with the sophistication of

postcolonial theories, the interpretation and theoretical framework to evaluate in a binary manner transitioned into a holistic conceptualization of identity. One of the nuanced aspects of the novel is the state of an individual living between ambivalent identities within the colonial setting. The concept that individual and collective identities are different and sometimes merged into one, making it more ambivalent opens further conversation within the postcolonial space. Bhabha articulates the produced hybridized identities through stating, “It is in the emergence of the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of differences- that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (1994). Thus, Bhabha informs about the rise of ambivalence due to the ‘difference of writing’. Initially, the term ambivalence was developed within the psychoanalytic studies where it means a continual fluctuation between wanting something and simultaneously wanting its opposite. Referring to the object’s or person’s attraction and repulsion acting at the same time, Bhabha theorizes within the colonial discourse describing ambivalence as a complex mixture of characteristics of attraction and repulsion between the colonizer and the colonized. He adapts the concept by explaining that ambivalence allows to disrupt the colonial dominance within the relationship between colonizers and colonized. Within postcolonial studies, ambivalence creates a space for the colonized subject to own both nurturing and exploitative representations of itself rather than propagating the narrative that the colonized were ‘complicit’ or ‘resistant’ to the colonizers.

To put simply, ambivalence is the ambiguous way in which the colonized and colonizers regard each other. As Said mentions how the colonized are perceived as inferior yet exoticized. Similarly, colonizers are deemed to be enviable or superior yet corrupted. Bhabha emphasizes that the relationship between colonizer and colonized is not simple. Through the context of hybridity theory, ambivalence is conceptualized as a result of a mixed sense of blessing and curse. Ambivalence places itself as the structure between constructed

binary structures. Following the linguistic Ferdinand de Saussure's explanation on binary oppositions, ambivalent space offers a middle ground while playing both aspects of the binaries. For instance, if A is a colonized subject, he can have attributes similar to his colonizer while also containing attributes of his own cultural identity and subjectivity. Bhabha elaborates on the ambivalent sign and how it can be noted within culture. While developing his concept of hybridity, Bhabha plays with positioning ambivalence as a sign and also a social identity. In simple terms, hybridity is a mixture between more than one aspect of culture without confirming one's position either here or there. It can also be a hybrid of two extremes of the binary that can be traced. Ambivalence is open to accepting in agreeing or adopting influences of either side of colonial divides between colonizer and colonized. This paper investigates how Gurnah asserts ambivalence in his text, thus, implying that an individual might not have a strict binaristic position as their identity and peaks into the slippage between having a stabilized identity through a binary structure. Within the postcolonial studies, ambivalence offers a nuanced conceptualization of life and identity. Connecting it within the socio-political sphere, the politics that enable people to accept ambivalence are likely to acknowledge their opponents while establishing a negotiable space. It also allows people not to disregard the opponent's identity as an opposite to one's own, resulting in non-antagonist sentiments. Even within literary studies, by not taking strict positions of this or that, the literature creates a place in between to allow one to place themselves in a mixed position. In my perspective, ambivalence offers a productive stance to both socio-political and literary spheres. On the contrary, by associating oneself with a constructed idea of identity through representations of symbols, anthems, cultural signifiers and so on, nationalism thrives.

Using nationalism as an example, in Bengal, the Hindu Zamindars' loyalism to the British not only founded on the socio-political benefits they received, it also made sense for

the Hindus to segregate themselves from the Muslims of Bengal as a means to resist fusion or influence. Throughout the novel, the presence of different identities are highlighted. The ambivalent experience of the characters develops the novel's theme emphasizing the sentiment of belonging and unhomeliness. The transnational element of being in a tightrope of choosing identities and parties conditioned by belonging either ways. First, it is the Germans whose presence is conscious on the fringes of the story. Then, the other characters such as Yusuf, Aziz being an Arab trader and then there is the presence of native tribes within the territory. This paper will mention the diverse differences between the groups of people in the novel within the African region and how the presence of one dictates the other.

Firstly, the most distinct divide is between the Arab traders and the native African population. The figure of an Arab trader represents several aspects of the novel that addresses the multifaceted nature of colonialism in Africa. Although it is apparent through history and definition that traders as a profession are not to align with a singular territory or nation because their primary goal lies in trading as much as possible targeting highest value. Observing Aziz, him as an Arab trader is about making through territories safely to ensure exchanges with highest profit. There are several characters in different novels where the Arab traders are described and focused on. Joseph Conrad's novels have descriptive Arab trader characters - in *An Outcast of the Islands*, Syed Abdulla bin Selim is competing against the European traders to maximize his profit in the competitive market. Thus, there are several references of Arab traders and how they experienced the ambivalent space in different regions of the world are found in innumerable novels. For the novel *Paradise*, in the chapter 'The Gates of Flame', Chatu, the local chief of the native African tribe captures the trading conveyor and holds them captive. The hostile captivation is due to the fear and rebellion zeal of the African tribal people. They assumed that the group of traders were similar to the other horrible traders who kidnapped and transported the African people and mercilessly sold them

to the Europeans across America and other regions as slaves. Considering the pre-war context of the novel, Gurnah addressed the grievance, revolt and opposing measures taken by the African natives. The reason for such hostile measures were not because the group of traders were Arabs or outsiders of the region. Therefore, particularly the Arabs are not deemed as the only possible traders who traded slaves but also many other colonizers and trader groups who aligned with such slave selling business. Gurnah tries to evoke the two thousand years of trade history along the coast of East Africa and its interior islands. Furthermore, the ambivalent moment emerges when Aziz sides with the Europeans (German colonizers) as the armed men march inside the tribal area. Aziz turns to the colonizers to provide him justice and eventually sets him free from the captive native Africans. Such ambivalent experience of Aziz points out how the people 'in-between' as their identities tend to dangle with sides to choose. Aziz chose the Europeans because his interests aligned with the purpose of the colonizers, which was to bring down the native Africans and gain power over them. It is through this situational analysis that we observe that the ambivalent individuals are inclined towards the one which provides them safer options to establish power. Based on the economic demand and the location, characters like Aziz as a trader relied on his better positioning. He did not choose culture or tribal traditional values, instead chose to confide in the law and justice of the colonizers in order to restore his position within the hostile situation. The interest of an Arab trader is shown to align with the Europeans instead of the native tribal people despite having cultural, economical and religious identities respectively.

However, both Chatu and Aziz themselves were destined to become the victims of European colonization. Maslen comments that in *Paradise*, Gurnah showed "how deeply rooted the construction of otherness is as 'a necessary means of self-construction, self-affirmation'". Based on the transnationalism concept, this part of the novel is crucial to examine the ambivalent identities rather than deciding on the binary terms of identity and

belonging. The divide between the Muslim Arabs with the people of the native tribes is peculiar. Thus, the prominent divide between the Arab Africans in both east and west Africa is interpreted in many works from the post-colonial texts. Yusuf's co-worker, Khalil addresses the ethos of the trading world when he comments, "To trade with the savages... This is Seyyid's life... He goes to the wild people and sells them all this merchandise and then he buys from them. He buys anything... except slaves, ... Trading slaves is dangerous work, and not honorable". Gurnah distinguishes Aziz like Arab traders from the European slave traders. Connecting it with oriental texts, both Arab people and Africans are represented either as 'uncivilized and unknown' or exotic. Through postcolonial readings, identities of Arabs and Africans are misrepresented with no extensive characterization.

Furthermore, the author produces another notable ambivalent moment at the end of the novel. When Yusuf chooses to escape from his master, Aziz's house because he realized he could not ensure power within the system and his position as a submissive identity could no longer be sustained within his consciousness, he runs towards the German army marching to leave. Yusuf could not exercise his agency within the limited position in Aziz's house but the novel does not provide the conclusion whether he joins the Europeans or not. However, according to the interpretation of this paper, Yusuf hints that he would join the European army assuming with the hope that the position would allow him to change his status quo and transcend him in a powerful position where he no longer has to doubt his identity. Through the postcolonial reading of this novel, the ambivalent identity of people is teased out and how they choose their stances based on equivocal reasoning instead of binary oppositions (siding with either natives on one side or the colonizers). In the profound work, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Memmi elaborately discussed how the Jewish inhabitants of Algeria practiced their loyalties to the French (the colonizers), instead of the natives. He explains the relationship between the Jewish population of Algeria and the Algerian natives during the

colonization era of Algeria. He diagnoses the reasoning of the Jewish population being the business class who would not find themselves a position within the native society. Between the colonial experiences, the Jewish inhabitants coming in terms with the inevitable reality of them being outsiders establishes their position being in the middle. Through their interests aligning with the French, they locate themselves on behalf of the Europeans within the colonial system. The importance of addressing the ambivalent experiences within the context of colonialism is not intended to justify or suggest muddled realities, rather it is to shed light on the different loyalties, interests and constituencies people experienced within the colonial system. Through this text relating to the transnational identity of displaced or relocated people, one can understand history through an unbiased lens.

In his interview with Nasta, Gurnah clarifies that he intended to open up the contradictory legacies of the historical context of East African coasts. Particularly for *Paradise*, Gurnah suggests that, “the very reason that the coastal regions are so vulnerable when European imperialism comes - is because the society is already at full stretch”. Unlike Conrad, Achebe and other writers, Gurnah focuses on showing the complexity of what precedes in order to understand the complexity of today. Thus, the mixed racial groups living with the society in the novel avoids the reductive oppositions to distinguish people in a binary way offered in many Postcolonial fictions.

3.4 Analyzing Gurnah’s Contribution to Transnationalism

Post-colonialism is reclaiming the past. So, before interpreting the contemporary cases, one needs to understand what the identity of the state was (cultural, traditional, socio-political systems, etc) before the arrival of the colonizers. For understanding the concept of nationalism in literature, one needs to understand the beginning and transition of

the reality of the intended text. Quoting one of the main secondary sources of this paper by Bosman, “Gurnah is all interested in the entanglements of families, histories, just memories, and full ethical agency”(2022). This paper intended to critically close-examine the transnational individuals and narrative representations of migrants and it fulfills the intention of the paper through analysis of agency, identity and multifaceted nature of Gurnah’s character. Furthermore, this paper extensively discusses Gurnah’s efforts to capture the transnational social space under the interference of German colonialism. Observing how the novel unfolds to contextualize East African multilayered cultural, social, political and economic structures and how individual’s conditions were shaped due to the influence of colonial rule within the East African region. This paper discusses different highlights on the extent of the integrated transnationalism concepts through capturing the protagonist, Yusuf and other character’s agency shaped through complex East African conditions and colonial presence.

Gurnah is well-known for questioning nationalism and decolonization that are represented in the postcolonial and pre-colonial era. In terms of clarifying his position, Gurnah addresses the difference between the pre-colonial homogeneity politically and the new African nationalist narrative. In his interview with Nasta, he views the African nationalist idea as, “Everyone who is not like me or like us is a stranger is marginal to the real political, authentic citizen”. He considers this concept as an essentialist perspective, and he questions, “What is an African?”. In order to place himself, he constructs uncomfortable situations in his novels to complicate the vision of approaching civic and social life in Africa or any other place. Through the stories of migrancy and displacement, the narratives of current times have the potential to cross the national boundaries and extend to explore identities, practices and concepts on a cross-border or transnational scale.

Gurnah's novel is positioned as a complex novel with several chains of themes tied together within the life of a young boy. Following the postcolonial theory, the novel tackles different themes through tracing several issues. Firstly, the presence of Europeans or outsiders through the native's perspectives is represented. The feeling of a foreign presence that unsettles the characters are the Germans, who colonized the area. The natives deem the colonizers as implacable. The humorous gossip related to the Germans (Europeans) add to the tense atmosphere as they are assumed to eat irons and own vicious weapons that could destroy the nation. Through emphasizing on the strictness of the Europeans' laws and systems, the brutality and lack of negotiation is highlighted. Gurnah adds the interesting perspective of the natives who recognize the colonizers as greedy for something and also mysterious of the unknown. Furthermore, the strictness of the Europeans from the native's point of view focuses on their strict implementation of order.

Gurnah's *Paradise* contributes to African literature by providing an aggregated approach. In order to place the novel within the African literary space, the research for this paper extended to examine contemporary and past notable African literature novels. Some of the many exemplary novelists of African literature are Chinua Achebe, Alain Mabanckou, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, and Wole Soyinka. Considering the key element of Gurnah's novel-ambivalence, the primary analysis starts with Achebe. In terms of representation of Africa, Achebe is a well-known critique of Conrad's work *Heart of Darkness*. His critique focuses on pointing out how Conrad's work reinforces a negative, misinterpreted and colonialist representation of Africa and Africans. In his essay, 'An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*', he claims that the racist attitudes inherent in Conrad's novel make it 'totally inconceivable' (2016). However, upon examining Achebe's work *Things Fall Apart*, Simon Lewis finds a similarity between Conrad and Achebe, where he points out that Achebe

too limits the African perspectives in his work. He explains in his work, *British and African Literature in Transnational Context* that through focusing on the need for nationalism through traditional values and condemning the colonization, Achebe avoids the ambiguities within the stories of the Africans (Schatteman, 2012). Following the canon of opposed discourses of Africanism- (a)indigenism and pan-African rhetorics and (b)Eurocentric bias and power of the colonial ideology, in his critical paper Lewis questions whether other contemporary pieces of African literature go beyond the underpinning binaries (traditional or modern, colonized and colonizer, European and African, black and white) located similarly in *Things Fall Apart*. On the other hand, Gurnah culminates an attunement between the Arab Africans and native Africans while addressing the obvious tensions between both against and for the European invaders. Gurnah resists the overlap categorization of the characters through facile explanations about their identities as natives or Arabs or Afro-Arabs and so on. He acknowledges the central emergence of transnationalism through offering diverse ambiguous stories to shape the African text. Through developing the love story inspired from the Quran, the novel features going beyond the shapes of African tradition or colonial tragic love stories.

In the novel, the situation worsens with the arrival of the Germans and everyone is asked to stay indoors. Gurnah describes the German soldier greatly through details that explain the menacing mechanistic character symbolizing the soldiers of the war. The jaw of the soldier is not fully present, and through such visualizing details, Gurnah paints the unimaginable horrors of war and what it does to people. The presence of such figures within the new territorial conflict denotes the destabilized realities of war and the fearful encounters of the people in war-torn places. As the novel wraps up, the last scene leaves the reader with the unsettling feeling of the post-war effects. The Germans manage to capture a group of people who would be conscripts for the war on their behalf and they start to leave. The natives of the area are captured to be soldiers, and this denotes the example of colonizers

oppressing the untrained natives to fight wars on behalf of the sentiments of colonizers. For instance, the millions of Indian natives and Bengal natives who were forcefully drafted for the first world war by the British colonizers and they died with no identity or designated honor. In the novel, it is at the end when Khalil goes out and explores the city where he finds the remains of the German soldiers, and he goes through a series of realizations and reflections where he accepts himself to be unworthy and not brave enough to have a role of his own. Him losing his life's purpose because of the lack of agency through the years projects the perspective of innumerable people who tend to lose their identity when they are dislocated. On the other hand, the novel shifts to Yusuf going outside and running towards the leaving German army group while he hears the door behind him being bolted. The realization that he is incapable of going back dawns on him and the reality comes crashing down that in no way can he save Amina and bring her along with him. The novel concludes with an open end where Yusuf seems to be in the middle where he is no longer going back home nor is he leaping to join the army. The readers get to speculate what Yusuf chooses. Does he move forward to join the German army to fulfill his role as an arbitrary character or does he take a new route for himself? Although to many readers like me, the end of the novel is open ended. However, there are many readers who do not interpret the ending scene as open-ended; rather the stance that Yusuf stands facing towards the German soldiers and behind him, he no longer can go back to Aziz's abode establishes that Yusuf eventually would have to move forward and join the German army. Berman claims that it was a deliberate choice of Yusuf as the course of the novel "challenges us to consider the reasons motivating the young man to voluntarily join the German army" (2013). For her analysis, she refers to scholars who interpret the ending through different lenses.

Chapter- 4 - Conclusion

To figure out up to what extent Gurnah offers a holistic view to the transnational perspective, the novel's ending adds the resolution to individuals like Yusuf to own their identity within the complex socio-political and cultural context. In the final section of *Paradise*, through Yusuf's perspective, the readers are able to comprehend that the African world's history of slavery and servitude are not simply the outcome of European colonization, rather it has always been inextricably woven into the history and present of Africa. Yusuf's immense love for Amina, who happened to be Aziz's second wife and his futile end of not being able to take her away with freedom notes the loss of paradise amid the hierarchies of possession, compliance, power and servitude. The tragic end of the love of Yusuf and realistic twist of the romantic element of the novel represents the prevalent social and cultural reality of East Africa. Yusuf, serving an Arab trader facing constant challenges of serving his master blindly or to mingle with the native tribal people to build his own professional identity shows the importance of power in order to gain agency in one's life. Even if it seems like Yusuf did not have power or choice against his master, Aziz or the German forces, at the end, he takes agency of his thoughts and choices so that he no longer limits his position based on his socio-cultural identity. This ambivalence and agency in his character secures Gurnah's attempt to embrace accountability and reject victimization. In his book, "Rejection of Victimhood in Literature: By Abdulrazak Gurnah, Viet Thanh Nguyen, and Luis Alberto Urrea", Sean Bosman elaborates to write on, "Transnational writers are increasingly opposed to representations of refugees, exiles, migrants, and their descendants as emblematic victims. With the rise of populist nationalisms... targets of nationalist groups have increasingly been represented, and thus constituted, as individual suffering victims"(2021).

In the novel, Gurnah did not want to limit the characters' journey of finding themselves, so he did not represent any prejudice towards the Arabs, natives, or even the

local community people as the ultimate ‘ideal’ identity for the people of Africa. Rather he allowed the readers to acknowledge that once the transnational boundaries were mingled, so did the socio-cultural, economic and political aspects were often intermingled, interlaced or mutilated. At the end of the novel, whether Yusuf chooses to join the German military or not, it suggests that there is no absolute freedom from colonial domination. Therefore, this novel provides an insight into the ongoing postcolonial negotiations and continuous transactions, leading to space within transnationalism studies without limiting to nationalism narrowing down their life choices or ideologies. My analysis mentions the depiction of other postcolonial writers attempting to represent the history and portrayal of African displaced people in order to derive the understanding of whether their narratives were inclined towards a nationalistic take or were open for transnational studies.

Transnationalism as a theory and as a socio-political phenomenon is still developing and in this paper, I have mentioned that the studies done on transnationalism are diverse and manifold. Regardless, writing the accounts to station transnationalism as a solution to the nationalist narrative is challenging. So, this paper tried to add to the discussion on probable alternatives of multiple narratives and holistic perspectives based on the transnational essence of the current world through analyzing Gurnah’s *Paradise*. As this paper focuses on using some of the ideas developed in postcolonialism theory, it is challenging to write about the African colonization effects and be as inclusive as possible. Gurnah focused on narrating the history in East Africa within the gaps of the complex plot and relationships, therefore, deciphering the historical accounts and prevalent realities is not an easy task. Furthermore, this paper solely focuses on navigating transnationalism through Gurnah’s one novel, *Paradise*, thus, it limits the reverberation of this paper within academia. My account proceeds to demonstrate how transnationalism as a theory based on postcolonial discourse is positioned

while emerging distinctively from globalization. Starting from the understanding of colonialism and expansion of postcolonial studies, the significance of reading Gurnah's novel as a postcolonial transnational text is explained.

Through this paper, I hope to clarify that Gurnah's *Paradise* contributes to transnationalism as an impactful piece of literature that adds space for ambivalent experiences. With the ongoing developments within transnational studies, this paper launches a discussion to tackle issues of transnational identities colliding with national identities through representations of multiple and ambivalent narratives. My theoretical account faces some limitations due to selection of minimum work of Gurnah that links transnationalism with the experiences of migrants and transcends from nationalism boundaries. It remains to be tested whether my informed findings could be generalized within the transnational studies by extending the analysis of more of Gurnah's other works or contemporary postcolonial writer's works and comparing them with contemporary transnational experiences of individual migrants. Through extending my research on three different contextualized comparisons, this study could be added to a wider array of research on transnationalism. These are - i) ambivalent experiences linked to different diasporas where nationalistic zeal is dominant within individuals; ii) comparative narratives of forced and voluntary displaced people outside of conventional migration theory iii) nationalistic negotiations by displaced people expanding to transnational political participation. Based on exploring more literature on transnationalism by postcolonial writers like Gurnah, increased numbers of inclusive experiences of members of transnational communities can broaden the sphere of postcolonial transnational studies.

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