

THE COLONIZED EAST-AFRICA: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF ABDULRAZAK GURNAH'S AFTERLIVES IN LIGHT OF FRANTZ FANON

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Abstract

As of now German colonial presence on the African continent and East-Africa's campaign during WWI and WWII is little presented in history as well as in literature particularly novels. This present study aims to fill this gap by examining Abdul Razak Gurnah's historical novel Afterlives (2020) in the light of Postcolonial critic Frantz Fanon's The Wretch of the Earth (1961). Through textual analysis, the qualitative study intends to seek the ways colonialism (both German and British) influence East-Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the perspective of WWI and WWII and aftermath of its destruction. Moreover, the study attempts to examine how Gurnah's novel presents psychological effects of colonization on indigenous people who witnessed it and how violence and war contributed in the process of decolonization. The findings of the research shows that colonization as well as decolonization is a violent phenomenon in which both colonizers and colonized use violence as a tool to maintain or gain power. The native people, as described in aforementioned novel, strive to survive in inter and aftermath of war although their constant encounter with violence and identity crisis (degradation) led them towards severe psychological disturbance. The novel also presents the native people responses to such destruction and war through interconnected lives of its major characters Ilyas, Hamza and Afya who represented pro and anti-German views of colonization and of war. The study concludes that determination of native African to survive through love and kindness are key factors which help them to retrieve their lost souls after cruel circumstances of colonial life, war and ruin.

Keywords: Colonialization, Decolonization, Aftermath, Violence, WWI & II, Identity Crisis

Introduction

Abdul razak Gurnah-an East-African Nobel laureate of literature for the year 2021- was born in 1948 in Zanzibar, but later migrated to United Kingdom in 1968 owing to conditions of great chaos caused by a revolution in 1964. These traumatic incidents of his early life provided literary fuel to his creativity, reflected in his novels' themes of exile and destruction. He has penned many short stories, essays and ten novels so far. Some of them are Memory of *Departure* (1987), *by the Sea* (2001), *Desertion* (2005), *Paradise* (1994) and his most recent historical fiction, *Afterlives* (2020). He worked as professor of English and Postcolonial literature at University of Kent. He presently lives in Canterbury, England.

Afterlives (2020)

Afterlives (2020) exhibits composite relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. Gurnah narrates a story set in an unknown town in Tanzania (East-Africa) consisting Kenya and Uganda, a time when a large part of East Africa was under German colonial influence. It is a historical fiction that describes the colonization of East Africa first by Germany and later by Great Britain at the

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beginning of the 20th century-a little before, during and after WWI. In addition, the story describes novel characters' fate and experiences during uprisings, WW2 and aftermath of it. Gurnah's main focus is on the under-reported history of Deutsch-Ostafrika (German East-Africa) exhibiting destruction, bloodshed and displacement along with its effects on ordinary human hearts and lives. The author through some distinct major characters like Khalifa (the merchant clerk of Gujrati African descent), his wife Asha, Ilyas and Hamza who voluntarily joined Schutztruppe (German colonial army) and Afiya, Ilyas's orphaned sister, depicts the brutality and barbarity of warfare, dread, devastation and exploitation. He tries to make his readers understand the context which caused war and colonialism as well as how ordinary people who are the worst victim of colonialism and war deal with such hard circumstances.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Colonization is a complicated phenomenon having completely different definitions for the colonizers as well as the colonized. Naturally, it is not a new thing in human history where powerful nations invade, colonize, enslave and exploit other less powerful or weak nations through force (Johnston, 2011). The triumphant colonizers viewed it as glorious victory while for colonized, it is a disastrous loss of freedom and culture (Fanon, 1956). Colonialism in Africa occurred between 1880-1960s in pursuit of raw material and investment of the surplus capital due to industrial revolution. The chief European countries involved in colonization of Africa are Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. They subjugated many African territories and exploited them politically, economically, socially and culturally in order to control Africa directly and effectively. East-Africa was colonized by both Germany and Britain in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Abdulrazak Gurnah has penned a novel *Afterlives* about this particular time period because he wants to make his readers aware about the brutalities imposed upon native people living in East-Africa at that time. He in an interview himself admits that he wasn't interested in writing war and ugliness of colonialism while narrating the story of his recent novel. Rather he wanted to make his readers understand the context which produced war and colonialism because it is important to show how people tackle the difficult conditions and circumstances of war and life after it. As Hasan (2021) also admits that Gurnah's *Afterlives* takes the readers to the Tanzania (East-Africa) which was first under the German colonial rule in the beginning of the 20th century and later by another colonial reign, i.e., the Great Britain after WWI through a story that tells his readers how colonizers exploited and devastated Africa in the name of civilization. In fact, colonialism has only brought war, loss and displacement for the colonized. Mustafa (2021) makes a point that Gurnah, being an eminent scholar of African literature, has dealt the history of the region in a more overt manner. First half of the novel describes the peak of German colonial rule till their defeat in WWI, and exceptionally remarkable indigenous resistance against this authoritative colonial regime. Furthermore, he highlights the collective and individual cost of revolt and war aftermaths in a quite heart touching manner. Roy (2021) explores his views that *Afterlives* by Abdulrazak Gurnah is not only a chronicle of brutal German colonial rule, but a tale of ordinary people's lives-their struggle, love, and fear. The troubled history of East-Africa reflects through each single page of the novel, shuddering the consciousness of its readers to ponder it over. As *Afterlives* is a postcolonial African novel, the author has tried to put big history (Germany and British colonialism) against little histories of his four major characters' lives, i.e., Khalifa, Ilyas, his sister Afiya and Hamza and pointed out the aftermaths of colonialism and war on native people. Solloway (2021) elucidates this reality that Gurnah describes the worlds of the Indian Ocean where the characters encounter seismic shift from the rise of German imperialism till its fall, the rise of British colonialism till independence. Gurnah's chief aim was to bring into light the effects of these drastic incidents and colonialism on indigenous individuals coping with what happen after that, trying to reconstruct and live a life of their choice.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* has not been studied in the light of postcolonial African critic Frantz Fanon. This present study analyzes how European colonialism in Africa subjugated the natives in making them "other" through different ways. Besides, it furnishes the subaltern native African with a voice and reveal the reality that Eurocentric gaze is incorrect and has brought only destruction for non-white (Black).

Theoretical Framework

Postcolonialism is an answer to colonial assumptions and a reaction to the representation of colonized by the colonizers. It is a literary theory that searches European colonial domination in various regions of the world, its impacts on the lives of the colonized along with its representation in Occidental philosophical and literary works during the 19th and 20th centuries. It also deals with the emerging new kind of literature- of opposition and resistance- written by people of ex-colonial countries. Some of the eminent postcolonial exponents who have made impressive contribution are Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. This present study employs postcolonial theory and the observation made by postcolonial African writer Frantz Fanon in his postcolonial text *The Wretch of the Earth* (1961) as a theoretical framework specifically in relation to Fanon's observations presented in chapter one, "Concerning Violence," and chapter five, "Colonial War and Mental Disorder." In addition, it undersees how European colonial power subjugates the native masses through different tactics and persistently degrading and dehumanizing the natives (othering). It also intends to unveil ways subaltern Africans find in order to survive during and after colonial reign.

The Wretch of the Earth(1961)

The Wretch of the Earth presents Frantz Fanon's observation in relation to Impacts of colonization on colonized as well as colonizers' behavior towards the colonial masses. Fanon in the first chapter, "Concerning Violence" of his distinguished postcolonial text asserts:

1. Colonizers falsely devise the identity of colonized and construct the complete mentality of submittal and inferiority. Thus, decolonization strongly needs utterly opposite mentality which is required to achieve freedom.
2. For colonists, the world is divided into two-the one for white colonist and the other for black colonized. They interpret the colonized as entirely evil, primitive or a just animal.
3. In Fanon's opinion, colonizers uphold power over their colonized subjects through exerting more power openly by means of violence through colonial soldiers/police.
4. Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon (P.35).
5. In order to defiant colonized, colonizers try using other strategies like education or use of technology, but use of violence by the colonized to get their land back from the colonist, unite them all and generate a novel, active and unconstrained subjectivity ready to take the place of previous submittal and passive colonized subjectivity.

Fanon in chapter five "Colonial War and Mental Disorder" is of the view:

1. Colonialism has harmful effects on both colonized as well as colonists and can generate different sort of psychological disorder.
2. One of the probable sources of psychological disorder for colonized is the identity crisis as a result of consistent dehumanization by the colonist.
3. Violence is another possible source that both colonized and colonist persistently confront.
4. Fanon pointed out that psychologists noticed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after WWI and WWII particularly on soldiers, bombing victims and civilian refugees who witnessed violence and destruction. Same goes for colonialism which is kept up by violence. So, colonized can have identical psychological disorder and colonists, too, aren't spared either.

Keeping the aforementioned observations made by Fanon in mind, Shama (2018) has analyzed Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* and concluded that Achebe's novel is a fictional representation of Fanon's ideas. Like Fanon, Chinua Achebe is of the view that pre-colonized African territories were not primitive and savage. Furthermore, Achebe conforms with Fanon's disapproval of colonial gaze that Eurocentric gaze does not provide identity to African (non-white-the other). Similarly, Parmar (2016) reiterate Frantz Fanon's observation in a postcolonial study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and strongly agrees with Fanon in his view that it is a dire need to expose the untrue assertion regarding colonized African who are absolutely not "other."

Analysis

Colonialism and Violence

Just like Fanon, Abdulrazak Gurnah thinks European colonial power, control and oppression is destructive for local people. He displays complex and deep study of African people's lives residing in Deutsch-Ostafrika (East-Africa) extensively damaged as the result of war owing to Germany's

colonization from late 19th century to early 20th century. German colonial history is still less investigated by fiction writers in their literary works and they eliminate Germany in their discussion in European colonization in Africa. Germany established its empire on the African continent in the late 19th century which included Namibia, Togo, Kenya, Rwanda, Cameroon, Burundi and present-day Tanzania. *“The Germans were latecomers to empire-building in this part of the world but they were digging in to stay for a long time.”* (p.17). As per Fanon’s description of cruel colonial rule, German colonial reign was vicious, oppressive and violent and was responsible for the genocide of Herero and Nama revolt in Namibia in 1904. Germany’s military stratagem were extremely hostile and the targets were achieved by German colonial army called Schutztruppe askari, the local soldiers rendered their services in order to forcibly imposed the colonial regimen. The function performed by African mercenaries in Germany East-Africa colonial army is also an important aspect of colonialism on the continent of East-Africa depicted by Gurnah in his novel *Afterlives* as mentioned by Fanon in his work that colonists use colonial police/soldiers to exert power through violence. The story presents how the oppressors wittily used local people against their own people to curb resistance and even to fight a war which had no connection with them in any way as in the words of Khalifa *“this is between two violent and vicious invaders; they are fighting over who should swallow us whole”* (40). Both Ilyas and Hamza-two major characters of the novel-joined the Schutztruppe askari voluntarily, but were lacking the knowledge that they are just puppets and are playacting in a ruthless story already staged for their region. Gurnah narrates how much the colonized are worthless for their colonizers through unmeasurable number of dead carriers during the war that weren’t even bothered to be counted because that’s how little they were valued. (80) Their families were left alone and had no way to get any new of them.

Furthermore, Gurnah is quite thorough in describing the German colonial enormous cruelty and violence making *Afterlives* a tour de force. It has brought to life the realities of German colonialism which were never mirrored or acknowledged before. The deployment of German colonial protective force (Schutztruppe askari) is described as *“a highly experienced force of destructive power. They were proud of their reputation for viciousness, and their officers and the administrators of Deutsch-Ostafrika loved them to be just like that.”* (10). Native African, too, know Schutztruppe and their ferocity against people. They even know about their stone-hearted German officers (40). Germans are ready to execute many people and would do in the coming year as a mission to bring order and civilization to these parts (9). Gurnah pinpoints this cruel system constructed by German colonial regime through his omniscient narrator and through the dialogues and interactions of his characters. The people know *“there is no one as stern as a German”* (39), and *“in the thirty years or so that they have occupied this land, the German have killed so many people that the country is filled with skulls and bones and the earth is soggy with blood”* (39-40). Gurnah tries to seek the impacts of askari’s systematic brutalization on native people, the war experiences of Ilyas and Hamza as volunteer askari as well as the aftermath of WWI in East-Africa’s lives-afterlives. Hence, we can witness how German colonists use violence through their Schutztruppe askari to control their subjects and exert power over them.

Resistance and Violence

Fanon is of the view that colonists who tried to use violence to contain their subjects, can face violence in the form of uprisings, violent revolts - unified fights of locals against the colonists. Similarly, Abdulrazak Gurnah enumerates the frightening results of resistance against German Colonialism. He mentions many uprisings particularly al Bushiri uprising in which Arab and Waswahili coastal and caravan traders resisted the German. (7) This rebellion was crushed and the German administration made a public spectacle of al Bushiri’s hanging (p.9). The German rulers encountered many other people who were not ready to be their subjects: the Wanyamwezi, Wachagga, Wameru, and most troublesome of all the Wahehe (p.10). They almost overcame it, starving and crushing and burning out their resistance, cut off the head of Wahehe leader Mkwawa and sent it to Germany as a triumph trophy (p.10). Maji Maji uprising in 1907 was the worst rebellion of all and elicits even greater ferocity from the Germans and their askari army (p.10) *“Maji Maji uprising was in the final throes of its brutalities, suppressed at a great cost in African lives and livelihoods”* (p.16). The German colonists suppressed all uprising in their Deutsch-Ostafrika and as the widespread resistance to their reign sank in, so the response of the colonial administration became more relentless and brutal-they proceeded to starve the people into submission when they saw the revolt couldn’t be

defeated by military means alone (p.16). The steadfastness of the refusal of these people to become subjects of the Deutsh-Ostafrika empire had come as a surprise to the Germans (p.16).

The story of the novel spans over 70 years almost from 1890s- the early troubled years of German colonial rule, their defeat in WWI leading towards British colonial regime till independence in 1960s. East-Africa witnessed many uprisings and violence during this period of time. *"They burned villages and trampled fields and plundered food stores. African bodies were left hanging on roadside gibbets in a landscape that was scorched and terrorized"* (16). Gurnah depicts disastrous strives between Schutztruppe askari and native rebels which resulted in a huge loss of African lives. And this manifests that Fanon's view regarding decolonization is right.

As per Fanon's observation, colonizers interpret the colonized as savage and primitive. Gurnah, too, presents German colonizers' pride for their brutal colonial regime as *"a fitting token of their missions to bring order and civilization to these parts"* (9). They regard locals as primitive and savage which is why German officers kept their distance with soldiers and constantly reminding them that *"it is not allowed to follow their savage ways here"* (49). Every mistake was punished by violence or hard labor to make them obedient (54). Fields man oeuvres, too, punished villagers to terrify them or make them obey government instructions without questioning them (56). Gurnah personifies "so-called civilization" of Africa by German colonizers through a German officer the Oberleutnant who was in command of the military forces in order to occupy the region completely. He deals Hamza, his African batman, with strange mix of disdain and kindness. He ridicules Hamza for being savage called him savage dog and slow-witted baboon (75) and kept on reminding him that *"you have no civilization"* and *"we have come here to civilize you and bring you mathematics and many other clever things that you would not have without us. This is our Zivilisierung mission"* (58) and to accomplish this mission, Schutztruppe is their instrument. He describes the simple rule of might is right, *"I am here to take possession of what rightfully belong to us because we are stronger"* as they are dealing with backward and savage people and the only way to rule them is to strike terror into them and pummel all of them into obedience (76). Gurnah makes this character a symbol of cruel colonial system who *"likes people to be frightened of him-that makes him strong"* (77). Gurnah's another character Feldwebel, too, hated and had contempt for local people on being savage. He frequently hit askari and porters with whatever was at hand and spoke about them with greater ferocity than he showed towards the British enemy (83). For Germans, *"it is a place of no significance whatsoever in the history of human achievement or endeavor. Tear this page of human history and it would not make a difference to anything"* (113) even the colonists wanted to remove all African from Kenya and made it a White Man's Country or keep the African as laborers and servants (194).

Gurnah conforms Fanon in his opinion that for colonists the world is divided into two-the one for the white and the other for black. German colonizers seized good land for new German settlers after their colonial administration was strengthening its hold on the land (16). They built roads, avenues, gardens, churches, fortresses and colonnaded offices to provide a means for civilized life to German settlers while on the other hand, the German askari left the land devastated, its people starving and dying in the hundreds of thousands (81). The carriers died in huge numbers from malaria and dysentery and exhaustion and no one bothered to count them as for those who lived through it, this was a time when their land was soaked in blood and littered with corpses (82). During war, the German officers made sure to maintain European prestige as they made their camp in separate lines from the askari, sleep on their camp beds under mosquito nets and when they stopped by a stream, they were always upstream and the askari were always downstream and the carriers and animals yet further down. They never do any of the physical work associated with askari or carriers. They kept their distance, eating separately, demanding deference wherever they could (82).

Aside from these factors, Gurnah is in accordance with Fanon that Colonists try different strategies to contain colonized when violence get directed towards the colonists from the colonized. They turn to education or technology. Thus, we witness in *Afterlives*, the latest uprising made German Colonists consider the situation differently. It was obvious that only violence was not sufficiently enough to contain the rebels and hold the colony under their control. So, they adopted a new strategy by providing health facilities, improving ways of agriculture and giving education to local Africans. *"Clinics were proposed and campaigns against malaria and cholera initiated, opened new schools and offer elementary education to the subject people"* (17). Later British colonial reign, too, gave

priorities to education, public health, agriculture and public works (193). They endeavored to educate people about health issues, to train medical assistant and open dispensaries in far-flung parts of the country. They distributed information leaflets and conducted tours by medical teams to instruct people on malaria prevention and good childcare (209). In 1950s, they started a radio service, having news, music programs and features on improvements in health, agriculture and education (235). The administration took an initiative of publishing a Kiswahili monthly magazine Mambo Leo to impart information about good practices in farming, medical hygiene and provide sports news (194).

Psychological Impacts of Colonialism, War and Aftermath

Fanon uphold the thesis that colonialism and violence can cause great variety of psychological disorder on the colonized as well as on the colonists. Likewise, Abdulrazak Gurnah's novel *Afterlives* paints a psychological portrait where historical events are described through ordinary human experiences of trauma and loss. *Afterlives* is coming of age novel depicting Ilyas, Hamza and Afiya's unanchored adolescent lives. Gurnah explores how experiences of vicious colonial oppression influenced the child's innocence and leave a drastic effect on one's adolescence as well as early adulthood as in case of Ilyas, Afiya and Hamza who were physically tortured and abused in their childhood as well as in adolescence age. Gurnah tries to convey the inner feelings of almost all of his major characters along with what was happening around them in the region. Aftermaths likewise afterlives of colonialism, WWI with its destruction and losses are depicted through Gurnah's characters who tried to survive, reassemble their lives to move forward and find happiness and satisfaction in the ordinariness of life. Hamza is one among other characters of the novel who perfectly portrays the colonial and postcolonial experiences whether it is about war effects on East-African soldiers fighting for their colonial oppressors or a young man rebuilding his trust and life through love, marriage and work. As a principal protagonist of the novel, Hamza found himself in a state of terror since his childhood, but the humiliation he suffered by his German officers and ruination of land he witnessed during war, made him unafraid of his uncertain future which occasionally led him into despair. *"The war crushed those niceties out of him and showed him staggering visions of brutality that taught him humility. These thoughts filled him with sorrow, which he thought was the inescapable fate of man."* (136) The psychological effects of war on Hamza's personality were so profound that he started having nightmares in which he sobbed (107) and his doze was unsettled by disturbing dreams (132) in which he saw *"torn and mutilated bodies and loud and hate-filled voices and glared at by transparent gelatinous eyes"* (149). Even after his love marriage with Afiya, he had nightmares of war-always. He told his wife about what he saw in one of his dreams, *"They terrify me. Like what is coming at me will crush me with great pain, will make me suffer torments and I will drown in my blood. I can feel it filling my throat."* (195) Although Hamza is a kind of man who tries his best to resist his tendency to gloom as grief reduces resistance (124). He came back to the town once fled from as a child but now returned much older, half-broken and empty-handed (125). The War cruelties bruised his body and soul badly. Though his return after war has brought a little calm to his life, it had made him live through many regrets and sorrows and were perhaps never to be reconciled (151). The war has crushed his spirit and turned him into a ghost (165). Once he told Afiya how they all askari felt at the very end of the fighting, *"we were all exhausted and half-mad from the bloodletting and cruelty we had been steeped in for years"* (177). But it was his luck which saved him in war and brought him into Afiya's life as *"the world always moves on despite the chaos and waste in its midst"* (189). Through his relationship with Afiya and Khalifa, Gurnah endeavors to convey the hardships an ordinary person counters in order to earn, and spend a stable life in spite of brutal colonial regime, violence, revolts and war and conforms Fanon's observation regarding psychological effects of war and colonialism on oppressed people.

Ilyas is another very important character of Gurnah's *Afterlives* through whom he sheds light on intricate motives for fighting and defending the colonizers by the colonized. Ilyas was kidnapped in his childhood by a Schutztruppe askari (22), worked at the coffee farm of a German who later sent him to a mission school and converted to Christianity. *"He didn't know how to pray, didn't know the words, had never been inside mosque"* (p.25). He then returned back to the town to work in a factory owned by a German. His sympathies were with Germany when WWI started and he heartily joined Schutztruppe (German East-African army). He was always in support of German colonizers and defended their cruelty, *"they had to be harsh in retaliation because that's the only way savage people can be made to understand order and obedience"* (p.40). In Gurnah's opinion, people like Ilyas, were

actually impressed by the colonial power and the prestige which is associated to it. They get status, stability and well-being in exchange of their loyalty and services. Ilyas's character is significant as his tragic way fare reminds the readers Bayume Mohamed Husen-Former Schutztruppe askari fought in WWI for Germany. Husen like Ilyas migrated to Germany after war and married a German woman. Afterlives, too, unfold Ilyas's life, his settlement in Berlin and harsh treatment by Nazi Germany post WW2 when Afiya's son Ilyas visited Germany to find out what had actually happened to him as he never returned back to his town and to his sister Afiya. Hamza and Afiya are "extraordinary people" in the sense that their "ordinary lives" come into direct conflict with history as their region was affected by brutal colonialism and war. The love of Hamza and Afiya prospers in adverse circumstances. Hamza learns to love and trust despite facing so much pain (both physical and mental) and disgust during WWI. Afiya, too, experienced physical torture and misogyny, but later got protection and respect from three men in her life, i.e., Ilyas, Khalifa and Hamza. Ilyas-Hamza and Afiya's son-too born with the burden of both his parents. His silence is, in Hamza's opinion, his refuge while for Afiya it is her sorrow which is impossible to avoid (210). They had named their son after Afiya's lost brother Ilyas-caused their son endure the tragedy of Afiya's loss, share in her guilt that their efforts to locate her brother or discover his fate had failed (224). Afiya's lost brother was always in her thoughts and to name her son after her brother seems like a huge mistake as "*made the absent one ever-present and refreshed the anguish of his loss*" (213) while on the other hand, Hamza had his own guilt that it was his trauma which was the cause of what was tormenting his son, an aftermath of something he had done during the war (224). Ironically, Gurnah discloses in the end through Ilyas (Afiya's son) that while Afiya was grieving for her brother in Africa, her brother was dancing and singing in German cities and waving the Schutztruppe flag in marches demanding the return of the colonies (243).

Khalifa, too, has gone through pain and agony after sudden deaths of his parents on being an ungrateful and worthless son, "*he was living a useless life in a town that was not his home, in a country that seemed to be constantly at war, with reports of yet another uprising in the south and west*" (12). But he is the connecting force of all three major characters-Ilyas, Hamza and Afiya-who gave protection and showed kindness to them in their hard times. It was he who insisted Ilyas to go and find his lost family, rescue and later gave protection to Afiya while she had no one to look after when Ilyas disappeared and finally showed kindness and compassion towards Hamza in healing the deep-rooted wounds both on his body and soul. "*Hamza had begun to think of Khalifa as a sentimental bearer of crimes, someone who took a share of responsibility for other people's troubles and for wrongs done in his time: Bi Asha, Ilyas, Afiya and now Hamza, people he quietly cared about*" (176).

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* is undoubtedly an eye-opening postcolonial fiction to acquire the brutal realities of German colonization and WWI in East-Africa though the natives had no connection with the global conflict. As Fanon disproves colonial gaze, Gurnah is also widely known for decentering European history and *Afterlives* is a novel in which he attentively looks at the generational after comes of colonialism and war which demands its readers to ponder over the issue of identity of oppressed or colonized. Gurnah asked, "what can be salvaged when one of the consequences of colonialism is the deliberate exclusion of an African perspective from the archives? He is of the opinion that Eurocentric gaze will never give real identity to Africans because the colonists consider themselves history makers." Gurnah conforms Fanon's observation that colonized aren't primitive and savage as projected by the colonists as we notice in *Afterlives*, colonialization and war devastated the land, but life moves forward through love, trust, work and prayers. Men and women chose to find solace in togetherness- in birth or death, religious ceremonies or traditional beliefs, courtship or marriage, in giving protection or showing kindness. Gurnah waves a story of big history against the little ordinary histories of his four characters-Khalifa, Ilyas, Hamza and Afiya-to show two sides of a coin. On one side, cruel German army with savage colonial rule of plunder while on the other ordinary African recruit fighting against his own people and trying to survive aftermath of it. Gurnah's characters have survived through the brutalities of war, they did experience harsh and grievous damage both physically and psychologically, but never give up instead find ways to heal their wounds, build their lives again. They long to live and seek satisfaction and happiness in simple ordinary things. Gurnah's novel also comply with Fanon's notion of colonists' use of education and

technology in order to curb the violent resistance. In *Afterlives*, too, we witness this weird contradiction; violence on one side and resolve to bring improvement in health, education and agriculture on the other. All in all, *Afterlives* is an irresistibly a powerful postcolonial novel that evokes attention towards those who were destined to be forgotten, but decline their deletion.

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