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Violence and Trauma in Colonial East Africa:

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* as a Case Study

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this work firstly, to my parents, without whom I would not be in this position.

To my siblings: Kenza, Antar, AbdElaziz and Racheda.

To my family, especially my mother's side, and more specifically, to my uncle BahaEddine and my aunt Djanet.

And finally, to all the people I love.

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To my mother ... My sisters, and brothers, especially Salah... And all the people I love.

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Abstract

Colonialism has always been discussed in the field of literature as a paramount historical set of events and cultural facts. Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives*, a recently published work of fiction, provides a story of colonialism that has been neglected in Anglo-postcolonial studies, which is the German colonization of East Africa. It represents the different strategies of colonialism in controlling Africans; it also uncovers the different effects of colonialism on them physically and mentally, in addition to the different social problems among African subjects themselves. For that reason, this dissertation aims to investigate the different kinds of violence in the novel, which vary between colonial and social. It also attempts to foreground the multiple traumas brought about by violence in the context of the novel. This study adopts postcolonial and psychoanalytic literary theories and related concepts in order to explore how Gurnah represents the manifestations and repercussions of colonialism in Tanzania. This research is divided into three main chapters: the first provides a historical, theoretical, and conceptual framework; the second discusses the theme of violence in the novel; while the third examines the theme of trauma in it. The dissertation aims to demonstrate how Gurnah's *Afterlives*, as a literary work, reveals the complex and multi-dimensional experience of violence and trauma in colonial East Africa, hoping to shed light on an overlooked but significant chapter in the history of colonialism.

Keywords: Colonialism; imperialism; war; resistance; violence; trauma; psychology.

Résumé

Le colonialisme a toujours été discuté dans le domaine de la littérature comme un ensemble historique primordial d'événements et de faits culturels. *Afterlives* d'Abdulrazak Gurnah, une œuvre de fiction récemment publiée, raconte l'histoire du colonialisme qui a été négligée dans les études anglo-postcoloniales, à savoir la colonisation allemande de l'Afrique de l'Est. Il représente les différentes stratégies du colonialisme dans le contrôle des Africains ; il révèle également les différents effets du colonialisme sur eux physiquement et mentalement, en plus des différents problèmes sociaux parmi les sujets africains eux-mêmes. Pour cette raison, cette thèse vise à enquêter sur les différents types de violence dans le roman, qui varient entre colonial et social. Il tente également de mettre en avant les multiples traumatismes induits par la violence dans le contexte du roman. Cette étude adopte des théories littéraires postcoloniales et psychanalytiques et des concepts connexes afin d'explorer comment Gurnah représente les manifestations et les répercussions du colonialisme en Tanzanie. Cette recherche est divisée en trois chapitres principaux : le premier fournit un cadre historique, théorique et conceptuel ; le second aborde le thème de la violence dans le roman ; tandis que le troisième examine le thème du traumatisme en elle. La thèse vise à démontrer comment Gurnah's *Afterlives*, en tant qu'œuvre littéraire, révèle l'expérience complexe et multidimensionnelle de la violence et des traumatismes en Afrique de l'Est coloniale, dans l'espoir de faire la lumière sur un chapitre négligé mais significatif de l'histoire du colonialisme.

Mots-clés : Colonialisme ; impérialisme; guerre; résistance; violence; traumatisme; psychologie.

الملخص

لطالما كان الاستعمار باعتباره جملة من الأحداث التاريخية والحقائق الثقافية محط نقاش واهتمام في مجال الأدب. بناء على ذلك، تزودنا رواية عبد الرزاق قرنج التي تم نشرها مؤخرا تحت عنوان *Afterlives* بقصة استعمار تم تجاهلها في الدراسات الأدبية ما بعد الاستعمارية ألا وهو الاستعمار الألماني في شرق إفريقيا -تanzania حاليا-. في عمق سياقها، تصور الرواية السياسات الاستعمارية المختلفة للسيطرة على الأفارقة، كما تبين الآثار المترتبة عن الاستعمار ومقاومته نفسيا وجسديا، بالإضافة إلى المشاكل الاجتماعية التي يعيشها الرعايا الأفارقة بين بعضهم البعض. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل أشكال العنف المختلفة بين العنف الاستعماري والاجتماعي، كما يسعى لاكتشاف وتحليل مختلف الصدمات النفسية المترتبة عن العنف في سياق هذه الرواية. يعتمد هذا البحث على نظريتين أساسيتين ألا وهما: النظرية ما بعد الاستعمارية ونظرية التحليل النفسي، والمفاهيم المتعلقة بهما لاكتشاف الآثار المترتبة عن الاستعمار في الرواية. ينقسم هذا البحث إلى ثلاث فصول أساسية: الفصل الأول يعطي إطارا تاريخيا، نظريا، ومفاهيميا للموضوع، أما الفصل الثاني فيقدم تحليلا وشرحا للمتغير الأول ألا وهو "العنف" كأول جزء تطبيقي في العمل، بينما يتبنى الفصل الثالث تحليلا مفصلا للمتغير الثاني "الصدمة النفسية" كجزء تطبيقي ثانٍ. تهدف الأطروحة إلى إظهار كيف تكشف رواية قرنج *Afterlives*، كعمل أدبي، عن تجربة معقدة ومتعددة الأبعاد للعنف والصدمات في شرق إفريقيا الاستعمارية، على أمل إلقاء الضوء على فصل مهم في تاريخ الاستعمار.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستعمار، الإمبريالية، الحرب، المقاومة، العنف، الصدمة النفسية، علم النفس.

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Introduction

Colonialism has always been a large topic of discussion in a wide range of domains, beginning with history and literature. In a fundamental sense, literature reflects true historical events and uncovers cultural facts. Literary works of fiction provide a reflection of and on colonialism as a central historical set of events and cultural realities. Literature also mirrors and reveals the tremendous effects of colonialism and its related theories on the colonial subjects and their lands. Among the colonial strategies of dominance and oppression is violence in its multiple forms. Violence has terrible and wide-ranging damages on the human psyches, among which are several kinds of traumas.

Abdulrazak Gurnah (1948–) is a Tanzanian-born British author and Nobel laureate known for his novels about the effects of colonialism, the refugee experience, and displacement in the world. This talented author has written and published several novels that highlight the effects of colonialism on Tanzanian subjects, which include *Memory of Departure* (1987), *Paradise* (1994), *By the Sea* (2001), *Desertion* (2005), and *Afterlives* (2020). Gurnah's novels are set in (post)colonial contexts, tackling issues related to colonialism and its processes of imposing hegemony, along with its physical and psychological effects. In *Afterlives*, his latest novel, violence and trauma emerge as two of the main themes. Throughout the novel, we see an attempt to reflect, in a complex and compelling manner, a true story of colonialism in East Africa and the aftermath of witnessing historical events related to colonialism and its terrible atrocities.

The author has written his novel *Afterlives* to highlight German colonial strategies of controlling Tanzanians, and the terrible consequences of resisting those strategies. Gurnah's masterpiece offers a mirror of what he experienced during the

colonial era of his homeland. This novel also covers the different kinds of violence that were used and inflicted on the native Africans and their devastating impact on their psyches. This dissertation, therefore, sets out to examine and discuss Gurnah's *Afterlives* in the light of postcolonial theory and related psychoanalytic theories. In so doing, it aims to provide a hopefully illuminating perspective into the overwhelming experiences of violence on the characters, its traumatic consequences on their hearts and minds, and their strategies to overcome those devastating consequences. More generally, it aims to shed a new light on both violence and trauma as manifested in Gurnah's novel, that is, as complex issues that are not just colonial, but local as well.

Afterlives basically shows the brutality of German colonialism against Tanzanian subjects. It explores the conflict of European powers over the African coast, which made East-Africans struggle with harsh colonial strategies including racism and violence. This novel gives a much-needed view about German colonialism in East Africa – Tanzania nowadays – from the author's perspective. Gurnah offers a profound and gripping story of the oppression and struggles of Tanzanians against Germans. It shows the different colonial techniques of Germans in controlling Tanzanian subjects, chief among which are different forms of violence. Moreover, it does not only deal with colonial oppression, but it also highlights different social problems and struggles among African subjects themselves. Additionally, this novel represents and explores the different psychological damages of violence on both psyches of the colonizer and the colonized; it also reveals the different kinds of traumas that occur as result of the characters' damaging experiences of violence.

The story begins with peaceful setting; it starts with a flashback about Khalifa's father's life in his homeland. However, after the German colonization set on that land, everything turns into horrific stories about colonial violence against Africans and, in an

advanced section, into social stories that take place between the native characters of the novel. It tells the story of related people during the period of German colonization in East-Africa, which are Asha, Ilyas, Afya, and Hamza. The novel is a tale of violence against two orphan girls, Asha and Afya, who were living under the patriarchal rules of their society; it is also the tale of a conscription of a native African, Hamza, by the German army. The novel explores different interactions between the colonizer and the colonized through the stories of Ilyas and Hamza and local social interactions through the stories of Asha, Khalifa, and Asya. It also tells the story of the repression and torture that ensued after resisting the Germans and their rules, which had a devastating impact on the Africans' hearts and minds, revealing how German colonialism affected Africans physically and mentally. In general, the novel is an exploration of colonialism, imperialism, colonial war, resistance, violence, and trauma.

This study relies on postcolonial theory and related psychoanalytic concepts and theories to discuss a postcolonial issue that has been neglected in Anglophone postcolonial studies, which is German colonization of East Africa. As a theoretical approach, postcolonial theory is utilized in this research to analyze and discuss issues such as colonialism, imperialism, war, resistance, oppression, and all postcolonial themes in Gurnah's novel. Another theory that this study relies upon is psychoanalytic theory, which is adopted to study and analyze the psychological disorders brought about by colonialism and its various mechanisms of imposing hegemony on native Africans. As a psychological and literary approach, psychoanalytic theory is utilized to understand the different psychological damages of colonialism, violence, and oppression, among which is psychological trauma. Conceptually, this project draws on a set of concepts that are related to postcolonialism and psychoanalysis, which are: colonialism, post-colonialism, resistance, violence, epistemic violence, orientalism, and

trauma. These concepts are meant to clarify the context of the novel, in that they elucidate some of the most important colonial and social issues and their impacts on an individual and social level.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is designed to be theoretical and contextual. It is divided into three sections, the first of which is meant to provide a historical background based on some historical facts about German colonialism in East Africa and the German British conflict in the African coast. The second section offers a conceptual framework and a theoretical background related to postcolonialism and psychoanalysis; it provides and explains a set of terms such as colonialism, imperialism, resistance, postcolonial discourse, neocolonialism, violence, and trauma. It also gives a brief overview of postcolonial literature and the major figures in this field of writing. The next section of this chapter furnishes a theoretical discussion of the research variables, namely violence and trauma. It defines and elaborates on the different kinds of both violence and trauma in order to understand their multiple manifestations and implications given their centrality to this project.

The second chapter of this dissertation is designed to be the first practical part of the research. It provides a detailed analysis of the theme of violence in *Afterlives*; this part is based on postcolonial theory and its related concepts and theories, discussing violence as an important matter in the field of postcolonial literature. Moreover, this chapter aims to provide a clear image about violence as a central theme in Gurnah's novel; it is divided into two sections, the first of which is a general analysis of this theme in the novel, while the second one is a detailed discussion of the latter through the experiences of the characters.

The third chapter offers the second practical part of this research. It tackles an important psychological disorder that results from the different kinds of violence discussed in the second chapter, namely trauma. This chapter begins with a general overview regarding the relationship between violence and trauma as the main variables of the research, then it goes on to discuss the relationship between them in the context of the novel. Trauma and violence are deeply intertwined in *Afterlives*, and the author shows that through the characters' experiences of violence that left different traumatic situations on them. The next section of this chapter provides more details about the traumatic situations of the characters, demonstrating and probing the different kinds of traumas that violence left in the psyches of the characters. The final section of this chapter discusses a set of possible solutions for the psychological issues of the characters; it explains the ways through which the characters try to recover from their traumatic situations and attitudes.

To conclude this introduction, this dissertation, with a strong basis in postcolonial and psychoanalytical theories, aims to offer an engaging and perceptive interpretation of the themes of violence and trauma as intertwined themes in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives*. The main focus of this research is placed on the themes of violence and trauma as they are inseparable; violence is a main cause of trauma and many cases of trauma reproduce that violence. And this novel by Gurnah shows this close relationship of violence and trauma through the experiences of the characters. The aim behind this focus is to clarify this relationship, and to demonstrate how violence can create deep traumatic suffering, which could be nonetheless overcome or recovered from. As Fanon reminds us in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

The native discovers that his life, his breath, his beating heart are the same as those of the settler. He finds out that the settler's skin is not of any more value

than a native's skin; and it must be said that this discovery shakes the world in a very necessary manner...for if, in fact, my life is worth as much as the settler's, his glance no longer shrivels me up nor freezes me, and his voice no longer turns me into stone. (45)

Chapter One: Historical Context, Theoretical Background, and Conceptual Framework.

The colonial presence in Africa witnessed great expansion, and that made colonial issues a main interest of several historians and writers from different generations over years. They have been over discussed in literary studies as an important historical matter that affects the present of humans.

This chapter is designed to be historical, theoretical, and conceptual framework. It brings light on colonial presence in Africa, and specifically the German presence in East-Africa (Tanzania). Moreover, it sheds light on postcolonial studies and the main related concepts and theories to this field. Also, this chapter aims to investigate the concepts of violence, trauma, their relationship to each other, and how they link to colonization and postcolonial studies.

I- History of Colonization in Africa.

1- European Presence in the African Continent.

Discussing colonization in Africa necessitates mentioning the phenomenon which occurred in 1800-1960s. This phenomenon is derived from a strategic aspect that is called imperialism. Notably, colonialism began in the Africa in the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century when Europe was in the midst of the industrial revolution, which was the most important transformation in human history. The need for raw materials for continuing the industrial progress was increasing during that era, which forced European powers to go outside their countries to search for their needs, and this led to the colonization of Africa by Europeans.

Africa was home to many ancient civilizations, but the European invasion brought about political and war strategies based on violence and racism, bringing about a radical change in the lifestyle of Africans. In the light of that, in their book *African History: A very Short Introduction*, John Parker and Richard Rathbone stated that African civilizations were resilient enough to endure colonial subjugation, but it often resulted in violence, exploitation, and trauma. The extent of its effects varied greatly over time, across regions and across colonies, between men and women, young and old, and in accordance with a wide range of social, political, and economic factors. Colonial control posed a threat to certain Africans while offering opportunity to others, making it difficult to reconstruct these intricate patterns (91-92). However, colonial history was not yet important when historians began to study African history, as most of their interest was the study of ancient African civilizations before the European invasion, and to show that Africa was a thriving continent with a rich and multicultural history. To prove this, Parker and Rathbone also emphasized that the study of the African past began in the 1960s, with historians looking back to pre-colonial Africa to demonstrate that the continent had an authentic history before the imposition of European rule. However, the last 20 years have seen an extraordinary expansion of interest in the colonial period, due to the passage of time and the range of sources available. (92-93)

There were many reasons for the European invasion of Africa, beginning with economic reasons and the need for support for the continuation of the industrial revolution, but that did not prevent political domination from being one of the main reasons for colonialism. In the light of that, Parker and Rathbone claimed in addition that the European "Scramble" for land in the 19th century was a series of regional scrambles for various reasons, with economic considerations being the primary driver. Historians have focused on the conflicting voices that emerged as a result of colonial

invasion (Parker and Rathbone 93-94). Thus, it can be said that the African continent in that era belonged to Europeans and consisted mostly of European colonies.

2- Colonial Era in East Africa:

“The speculative nature of conquest is clear, with the desire to exclude rivals from potentially lucrative regions often being more important than the protection of established interests” (Parker and Rathbone 96).

The colonial distribution in Africa was different according to need, as most of North Africa was subjected to French domination, while the East was divided between Britain, Germany, Portugal, and Italy. The colonial competition over those lands was clear, along with the real purpose of the conquest in those areas. The competition between the European powers for the dominance over the eastern colonies was ongoing, especially between Germany and Britain. In support of that, it has been mentioned that Britain and Germany, the two main adversaries in that area, reached agreements on the border lines in East Africa. The Anglo-German treaty of 1890 divided Tanganyika and Zanzibar. In exchange for giving up the strategically important North Sea island of Heligoland (Helgoland) and forbidding Germany from interfering with its purchases of Tanganyika, Rwanda, and Urundi, Britain received the future nation of Uganda to fulfill its paramount interest in Zanzibar and Pemba. In order to control the region where the railroad was to be built, Britain established the East African Protectorate, afterwards known as Kenya.¹

2.1- German Colonization in East Africa (Tanzania).

¹ "The Race of Colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa", Western Colonialism, History of Eastern Africa, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Western-colonialism/The-race-for-colonies-in-sub-Saharan-Africa#ref311559>

In light of the colonial expansion in Africa, the German empire was stationed on the eastern and western coasts of Africa. Among its colonies was German East Africa or what is known as Deutsch-Ostafrika. Among those studies of the colonial era in Africa, the history of German colonization has been largely overlooked. However, Germany played an important role in the European powers' scramble in Africa. Moreover, the aim of German colonial policy in Africa was to impose political and economic control over the region, as was the case with all colonial policies. German colonialism was brutal based on violence and oppression against Africans. To show that, George O. Ndege claimed that the colonial governor was the most important link between metropolitan Germany and the colonies, steering the colony according to the official policy emanating from Berlin. European civilian officials and the commanders of the armed forces were answerable to the governor, and the military performed the vital function of maintaining a superiority of arms. African chiefs were appointed and made subject to the authority of the local German officials, and their loyalty was primarily to the appointing colonial authority. Race was a critical determinant of one's status and level in the service of the German colonial state. The German policy in South West Africa was to create an image of "Deutschum" among the colonists, a hardworking, parsimonious, Protestant agrarian class filled with staunch nationalist values and devotion to the Kaiser. This created a new Germany with a culture, language, institutions, and structures that mirrored the homeland, but was incompatible with the interests of Africans. German colonists were projected as members of a superior and enlightened race, while the native Herero and Nama communities were depicted as inferior, indolent, and destined to be permanent subjects of the Kaiser. The rationale was to legitimize the supremacy of the colonists, while the indigenous populations were forced to conform to the new power hierarchy brought on by colonialism. This included

colonial taxation and land alienation, forced labor, and outright brutality. In addition to that, O. Ndege also provided more details about this matter by presenting an overview of violence and brutality committed by German colonialism against Africans and especially against resistances. He pointed out that the Herero uprising of 1904 provoked a sharp reaction from the German colonial order, resulting in the deaths of nearly 60,000 out of 80,000. The Nama faced the same fate, and the Maji Maji uprising (1905-1907) was defeated when the Germans resorted to a scorched earth policy. The Duala (1914) and Dagomba (1896) uprisings were similarly crushed. The German use of brute force was based on the notion that might is right, and on the belief that their skin color entitled them to subjugate the Africans. Their methods of choice varied from overt military and scorched earth campaigns to economic coercion and land seizure.² He showed the terrible consequences of resistance against German powers, despite neglecting the study of German colonization in Africa. There are a few literary works that shed light on this issue, chief among which are the novels of the British-Tanzanian novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah, who highlighted the terrible colonial rules of Germany and the brutal consequences of the resistance against them.

II- Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Background.

1- Postcolonial Theory and Related Theories.

The study of colonialism and its variables did not depend only on history and historians, but it rather extended to become a field of interest for many writers. Moreover, discussing postcolonial issues in a literary context requires a theoretical framework in order to analyze the dimensions that are related to colonialism and war. Also, when it comes to studying a postcolonial context, it is necessary to highlight the

² O. Ndege, Gorge, "Africa: German Colonies", Social Sciences Encyclopedias, Almanacs Transcripts and Maps, Encyclopedia.com, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/africa-german-colonies>

relevant theories related to this field to show a useful discussion of that context. The most relevant theories related to postcolonial literature and its different contexts will be underscored in this section, among them are postcolonial theory, postcolonial feminism, and theories related to violence.

The term theory refers to the set of rules and concepts that are used to study, analyze, investigate, and interpret a piece of writing. As for the postcolonial theory, it refers to a critical approach that purports to study national identity, gender race, colonialism, power relations, decolonization, representation, otherness, and any other kind of representation that can be read concerning colonization. In other words, postcolonial theory offers a set of concepts and tools that are used to study, discuss, investigate or analyze postcolonial writings (literature) as well as colonial discourses. Robert McLaughlan and Neelam Srivastava claimed that “postcolonial theory and criticism, for the most part, has been largely restricted to an Anglophone tradition, the broad implication being that there has been no postcolonial condition to speak of beyond the Anglophone world” (240). They stated that postcolonial theory and criticism began as Anglophone studies, and no culture in the world had interest in postcolonial issues as much as the Anglophones. Also, the postcolonial approach is used to analyze and discuss the issues between East and West, in that it is the mainstay of many theorists and critics who are interested in studying the relationship between East and West, or in other words, the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Among those theorists are Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, and Franz Fanon. Each of those theorists produced a set of ideas and concepts regarding colonialism and postcolonialism.

There are several sub-theories or different related theories and concepts that pertain to postcolonial theory; each of those sub-theories is used to analyze or discuss an

issue related to the postcolonial field. Among those theories is Orientalism, which is produced by Edward Said. Leela Gandhi claimed that Orientalism represents the first phase of postcolonial theory that directs attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings and, concomitantly, to the consolidation of colonial hegemony. While 'colonial discourse analysis' is now only one aspect of postcolonialism, few postcolonial critics dispute its enabling effect upon subsequent theoretical improvisations (Gandhi, 64-65). Moreover, orientalism as a concept can be seen as a way of representation that basically deals with two main opposite parts "the orient" and "the occident", the relationship between them, and how they are represented in literary contexts. Edward Said introduced orientalism as "the corporate institution for dealing with the orient ... a western style for dominating, restricting, and having authority over the orient" (03); in other words, orientalism is an ideology that discussed and, in a way, created a representation of the relationship between the East and the West.

In addition to Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Franz Fanon in his studies produced critical thoughts linked with post-colonialism; for instance, his main theories focused on the decolonization of colonial societies and the psychological effects of colonialism on individuals. Fanon also focused on the importance of language and culture for expressing national identity, asserting that "each generation must out of relative obscurity, discover the mission, fulfill it, or betray it" (206). In this context, Fanon announced that each generation must search for its true identity and decolonize its thought, which is the national duty of every individual. In addition, Fanon's anti-colonial critical thoughts have been collected under the term 'Fanonism', which is used as a tool to analyze the issues of racism, colonialism, and their psychology in a literary context.

Another well-known postcolonial theorist is Homi K. Bhabha, who introduced another framework of the concept of colonial discourse in terms of power, identity and culture. Bhabha introduced the idea that the colonial experiences in the past continue to shape the present of the postcolonial world, whose culture is a mixture between the traditional and the modern. This point can be summed up in the fact that language and culture have an influential power on the past and the present of the colonized. Going beyond the male contributions in creating postcolonial theories, there is also postcolonial feminism, which deals with women's writings from the former colonized countries, examining the representation of women in a colonized world, as well as local patriarchy. Postcolonial feminist writings uncover and question the stereotypes of women in the colonized countries, who were subjugated to domination by both the colonizer and their own societies.

2- Psychoanalytic Theory:

The psyche of humans and their behaviors have been a focus of interest of many scholars and philosophers who studied the conscious and unconscious parts of the human mind and spirit such as Sigmund Freud and his students, who tried to describe and understand human nature and personality from a scientific point of view. Moreover, human complexity from the conscious and unconscious minds has been an interest for many writers and authors to the extent that they get deeper with Freudian perspectives from psychological issues and traumas and applying it in their literary works. To discuss psychological issues in a literary work requires a theoretical framework through which the psychoanalytic theory and the different perspectives of philosophers about it are explained; the aim is to analyze a given literary work that is related to psychology.

Founded by the Austrian neurologist and physician Sigmund Freud, psychoanalytic theory offers a framework for understanding the impact of the

unconscious on thoughts, feelings and behavior. Freud posited that most of what motivates individuals lies outside of their immediate awareness. Psychoanalytic theory describes both normal and abnormal human experience and emphasizes the lasting impact of early childhood events on adult personality and psychological development .

Sigmund Freud believed that behavior and personality are derived from the constant and unique interaction of conflicting psychological forces that operate at three different levels of awareness; the preconscious, conscious and unconscious minds. He believed that each of these parts of the mind plays an important role in influencing behavior. The conscious mind contains all of the thoughts, memories, feelings and wishes of which people are aware of at any given moment. This is the aspect of mental processing that people can think and talk about rationally. This also includes our memory, which is not always part of consciousness but can be retrieved easily and thought into awareness. Then, preconscious mind consists of anything that could potentially be brought into the conscious mind. Moreover, the unconscious mind is a reservoir of feelings, urges and memories that are outside of our conscious awareness, such as early childhood memories, secret desires and hidden drives. According to Freud, the unconscious contains things that might be considered unpleasant or even socially unacceptable. Thoughts in the unconscious mind are buried because they might bring pain and conflict.³

Psychoanalytic theory explains human behavior in terms of the interaction of three significant components; the id, ego and super-ego. The id acts according to the pleasure principle, demanding immediate gratification of its needs regardless of external environment; the ego then must emerge in order to realistically meet the wishes and demands of the id in accordance with the outside world, adhering to the reality

³ For more details see: Kendra Cherry, "The Unconscious Mind, Preconscious Mind and Conscious Mind," Upd February, 27 2023, *Verywellmind*, <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-conscious-and-unconscious-mind-2795946>.

principle. Finally, the superego (conscience) inculcates moral judgment and societal rules upon the ego, thus forcing the demands of the id to be met not only realistically but morally. The superego is the last function of the personality to develop and is the embodiment of parental/social ideals established during childhood. According to Freud, personality is based on the dynamic interactions of these three components.⁴

Sigmund Freud likened his psychoanalytic theory to an iceberg, where the majority of our thoughts lie hidden. The tip of the iceberg represents conscious thought. Just underneath the water-line, the preconscious is visible. At a deeper level, hidden from view, is the unconscious mind. The id is part of the unconscious and we are hardly aware of the effect these thoughts have on our behavior. The ego stretches between the iceberg tip and just under its surface – conscious and preconscious thought. The superego spans the entire iceberg and is composed of all three types of awareness.⁵

3- Postcolonial Literature and African Writings:

Postcolonial literature is a large field in literary studies that includes several aspects and a large conceptual framework. Postcolonial literature is the body of writings emerging from formerly colonized spaces/nations from Africa, Asia, and South America. Postcolonial literature negotiates with, contests, and subverts Euro-American ideologies and representations. This literature seeks to understand, negotiate, and critique specific historical events and their representations by the colonial/ imperial powers. It is a literature of resistance, anger, protest, and hope. It seeks to understand history so as to plan for the future. Moreover, Postcolonial literature critically engages with a history of oppression and colonialism, racism, and injustice. It is a literature of

⁴ For more details see: T. Konvalina-Simas, in Behavioral Evidence Analysis, 2016 "Psychodynamic theory", *Psychoanalytic Theory*, ScienceDirect, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/psychoanalytic-theory>.

⁵ For More Details see: "Psychoanalytic Theory", Sarah Knapp, Reviewed by: BD Editors, Last Updated: December 10, 2020, *Biology Dictionary*, <https://biologydictionary.net/psychoanalytic-theory/>

emancipation, critique, revision, and transformation. Postcolonial writing attempts to restore local, native, and national histories and to free it from Euro-American culture and representations. In addition, in contemporary critical discourse, ‘postcolonial’ is used to mean countries from former European empires. However, postcolonial attitudes emerge in writing even before political independence, and hence anti-colonial writings from the colonized phase of a nation also constitute the ‘postcolonial’. The term refers to approaches to and methodologies of writing rather than a temporal frame. The term ‘postcolonial’ includes ethnic studies, minority studies, African American, Caribbean (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic etc), and South American, Third World studies. It also includes “indigenes,” migrants, and non-European races/ethnicities in Euro-American cultures and nations because they share a structure of subordination with colonized cultures in Asia, Africa, and South America. They are considered ‘other’ by and within dominant Euro-American discourses. Also, postcolonial literature includes writings of and by people who have been dominated by white, Euro-American cultures and which explores the various issues of power relations, identity, and subjectivity as informed by race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Postcolonial Literature includes works written originally in English, in native languages, and available in translations.⁶

As mentioned before, postcolonial literary studies contain a rich conceptual framework; there are several terms that are related to postcolonial literature, among those terms are:

Colonialism: the process of imposing control over the non-European countries by European powers. As Fanon stated, colonialism is a violent and racist practice of oppression and control.

⁶ Concluded from the courses of Dr. Hiyem Cheurfa concerning Postcolonial Literature.

Colonialism has two forms: colonies of occupation (occupied by military and political powers for economic reasons, such as India) and colonies of settlement (spaces where the white race settled down inc. eg. Palestine, Algeria)

Imperialism: the ideology that recommends, advances, and justifies colonial rule. It proposes the conquest of newer regions for economic exploitation. Imperialism is the theory and colonialism is the practice.

Neocolonialism: a modern, contemporary, and new form of colonialism, which seeks cultural, economic, and political oppression. It can be said that neocolonialism is the process of settlement that targets the colonized minds and cultural identity.

Colonial Discourse: the body of writings produced by the imperial power (the colonizer).

Postcolonial discourse: it is also known as counter discourse. It is the body of writings produced by the colonized.⁷

Decolonization seeks freedom from colonial rule and from colonial forms of thinking.

Orientalism: an ideology that deals with the relationship between East "the orient" and West "the occident" and their representation in a literary context.⁸

In the light of postcolonial studies, African postcolonial writings must be mentioned. African writers from different generations focused on addressing postcolonial issues, and the matters related to European presence in Africa. Among those writers, Chinua Achebe produced a counter discursive novel under the title *Things Fall Apart* in response to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Another well-known

⁷ Concluded from the courses of Dr. Hiyem Cheurfa concerning Postcolonial Literature.

⁸ Concluded from the courses of Dr. Hiyem Cheurfa concerning Postcolonial Literature.

African writer in the postcolonial field is Tayeb Saleh, who produced a postcolonial discourse concerning migration and life in the imperial world. The writings produced in Africa are mostly responses to the European representations of Africans, "The Museum" by Leila Abulela, for example, uncovers a colonial view of Africans, showing the way the imperialism sees the colonized –especially Africans.

III- Violence and Psychological Trauma in Colonial East Africa.

1- Concerning Violence:

Discussing the term colonialism gives the opportunity for historians, writers, psychologists, and scholars to study this phenomenon from different angles and explore its variables and branches. To begin with, colonialism can be defined as the method of taking political, economic, and military control over the non-European countries by European powers, this process of domination is based on multiple strategies and processes; among those processes of colonization is violence with its multiple forms. Violence is a multi-branched term with variable concepts, it is considered as a human behavior (action and reaction). It can be said that violence is a central term in the study of colonization and its policies, since it is well-known that colonialism's strategies of invasion are full of repeated violence and racism against the colonized. In the light of that, this section aims to discuss the concept of violence, its multiple forms, and how it is related to colonialism.

1.1- The Concept of Violence:

Undoubtedly, violence is a concept with different forms. When it comes to discussing this concept, it is necessary to mention its different forms and aspects.

Certainly, the term violence cannot be confined to one concept or under one definition, because of its multiple images; however, it can be said that it is a human attitude that is applied by one party to another party physically or psychologically for some purpose. To support that, Vittorio Bufacchi presented a study on the theoretical issues related to violence; he put forward an idea that there are two ways of thinking about violence: in terms of an act of force, or in terms of a violation. He argued that those who define violence as an intentional act of excessive or destructive force endorse a narrow conception of violence (the Minimalist Conception of Violence or MCV), while those who see violence in terms of a violation of rights champion a broader conception of violence (the Comprehensive Conception of Violence or CCV) (193). This proposition explains that there are different views and opinions about the concept of violence, according to its type or the image in and through which this word is embodied. There are those, on one side, who see violence from a parochial perspective as a destructive force and, on the other side, those who consider violence as an infringement of rights and a breach of more general norms. Additionally, J.J Degenaar provided a definition of violence as extreme force willfully carried against a specific person or group of people, which is said to violate them because it does not show respect for the value intrinsic to them. However, there is still no simple definition for the term violence, since its complex nature is hard to reduce to one single meaning. J.J Degenaar also claimed that:

Etymologically, the word "violence" is derived from vis (force) and latus, the past participle of the word fero (to carry). Taken in combination the two words mean: to carry force (toward something). On this elementary level violence then can be described as the movement of carrying force (toward something). If we

define force as "the measurable influence inclining a body to motion" the physical nature of this movement is emphasized. (14)

Degenaar has expanded the study of the concept of violence and presented several possible explanations to simplify the complexity of this term. He contends that violence is the intentional application of extreme force against an individual or a group of people in such a way that it is destructive of objects and physically injurious to animals and persons (15). In addition, violence has always been considered a social scourge through which human beings are assaulted with all kinds of harm. And to support that, Mark Vorobej asserted:

The concept of violence bears some kind of deep and intimate relationship to the notions of harm, destruction and human suffering. And this truism goes a long way towards explaining why violence is generally regarded as an extremely serious social problem, and something about which any sane society must be gravely concerned. Violence hurts. (1)

From the foregoing, we can conclude that violence is a changing concept related to human behaviors that an individual or group of individuals applies to another party for a specific purpose, and that violence has several forms and forms.

1.2- Physical and Mental Violence:

Considering that the term violence is not limited to a specific definition, but rather its changing nature goes beyond limiting it to one conception, leads to imagine the different forms and the multiple embodiments of violence. To begin with, knowing the multiple forms of violence that differ according to its purpose helps to classify this phenomenon according to the image in which it appears. In the light of that, violence

can be basically classified into two general forms including other detailed images; those general forms are considered to be physical or psychological. It can be said that physical violence is the direct application of force against an individual or a group of people and hurt them for some reason. Also, physical violence can take several forms. First of all, one well known type of physical harm is using human power to beat someone; this type includes several ways to apply force, among those ways are beating, kicking, punching, biting, maiming or killing. The other form of physical violence consists in hurting someone using weapons or any kind of means. In addition, physical violence can be defined as an act attempting to cause, or resulting in, pain and/or physical injury. As with all forms of violence, the main aim of the perpetrator is not only – or may not always be – to cause physical pain, but also to limit the other's self-determination.

Moreover, among the images of violence that could be the focus of interest of many there finds domestic violence and child abuse. Domestic violence is one form of both physical and psychological violence. This type occurs between family members and has psychological and physical harm, especially to children. Moreover, this form of violence usually applied on both women and children. In one study, it has been mentioned that:

Domestic violence has many names: wife abuse, marital assault, woman battery, spouse abuse, wife beating, conjugal violence, intimate violence, battering, and partner abuse, for example. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably to refer to the problem, while at other times a particular term is used to reflect a specific meaning (e.g., “woman abuse” to highlight the fact that most victims are women). In addition to these multiple terms, there are different behavioral and legal definitions for domestic violence. With so many varying terms and

definitions, there can be a lack of clarity about what is meant by domestic violence. (Ganley 16)

Based on this, no specific definition of domestic violence has been provided, given the latter's different forms and different designations. However, it can be said that domestic violence is using force against a family member with the aim of controlling him, whether physically or psychologically. Domestic violence can be caused by a toxic relationship between two intimate, which produces several difficulties in living peacefully; therefore, domestic violence in this case, also known as intimate partner violence, affects individuals who are intimately involved. It can take many forms, including verbal, physical, and sexual abuse, and is most often committed against women. Regardless of the type of partnership, there is often an imbalance of power and control in abusive relationships. An abuser exerts control over a relationship by using scary, cruel words and actions.

In addition to domestic violence, there is another image of physical violence which is named child abuse. First, child abuse can be defined as harming children by abusing them in various ways and means; Punching, kicking, shaking, biting, burning, or tossing a kid are all examples of physical abuse. Whether or not it was meant to damage the kid, physical abuse can also arise from excessive or inappropriate discipline or violence within the family. A single episode or a string of episodes might lead to physical abuse. Children's injuries can range in severity from mild bruises, burns, welts, or bite marks to severe fractures of the long bones or skull, or in the most extreme case, a child's death. To conclude with, it can be stated that domestic violence and child abuse are among the basic issues of violence in society that various studies focus on.

The other side of violence that can be interested to many scholars and researchers is the psychological or the mental violence. First, mental violence can be defined as the practice of psychological pressure from one side to another that makes him suffer with different psychological crises and disorders. Psychological violence has been defined as any intentional conduct that seriously impairs another person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats, any act which causes psychological harm to an individual. Psychological violence can take the form of, for example, coercion, defamation, verbal insult or harassment.⁹ In addition, violence in general has a psychological aspect, since its main purpose is to hurt someone's emotions and psychology through abusing him. Psychological violence then has different forms since it targets humans mentally; it can happen to anyone in any relationship. One good example of mental violence is the use of harsh language –whether written or spoken– to hurt someone, this kind can be named verbal abuse which devalues an individual and make him feel worthless. Another example is emotional violence which targets someone's emotions by using verbal expressions to make him feel stupid or worthless; this type can be fall under verbal violence. In addition, cultural violence is another aspect of psychological violence, it is the imposition of control over a person in the name of the customs and traditions followed by the society, and this type of violence is very widespread in Islamic societies nowadays, especially Arab ones. The spiritual violence is another kind of psychological violence, it occurs when someone uses the religious beliefs of an individual to manipulate, dominate, and control him, this type of violence can be considered also as cultural violence.

To sum up, violence is a large concept that contains several aspects; physical violence is the use of power to hurt an individual in different ways, and psychological

⁹ For more details see: "Psychological Violence", *Glossary & Thesaurus*, 2016, Eige, <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1334>

violence is the use of language and culture to hurt someone's psychology in different ways.

1.3- Colonial Violence:

When studying the colonial context, the related conceptions and embodiments of colonization and the colonial policies that are adopted to impose control over the colonized must be addressed. First, there are multiple colonial policies in imposing hegemony over the colonized, varying between strategy and power. Among the colonial strategies is imperialism and racism. As for colonial power, it is closely related to violence, and this association of the term violence with colonialism is a common fact. Moreover, there are several aspects of colonial violence against the colonized, those aspects vary between physical and mental violence.

The French psychiatrist and political philosopher Franz Fanon had interest in colonialism and the ways it historically sought to oppress much of the Third World through racism and repeated violence. There are many forms of colonial violence, both physical and psychological, since colonialism takes violence as the first means of control and conquest. Starting with psychological violence, there are also several forms; among those forms is verbal violence, which represents the colonizer's first violent tool used against the colonized. A good example of verbal violence is the repeated racism against the colonized, looking at them as inferior, and considering them as savages that must be tamed through violating them. In the context of racism that was adopted by colonialism as a means of division and classism, Frantz Fanon stated that colonialism divides the world into light and dark, or in this context into black and white; this basic

conflict between light and dark is the basis racist practice of colonialism.¹⁰ This division placed the colonized in the dark side of the world as savages who used to live as monsters, uncivilized people who know nothing about civilization, while it placed the colonizer in the light side of the world as civilized and enlightened people who must spread civilization into that dark world. According to Fanon, colonial countries are further divided into two separate “sectors”: the “colonist’s sector” and the “native” quarters.” The colonist’s sector is clean and well maintained; but the “native” quarters, which are crowded and neglected, are “disreputable place[s] inhabited by disreputable people.” At the very foundation of colonialism, Fanon thus argues, is a basic principle that seeks to separate and oppress people based on the color of their skin.¹¹

In addition to this act that is considered a kind of verbal violence, another kind of psychological violence must be mentioned, which is epistemic violence. Epistemic violence is a process of colonial hegemony by which the colonizer controls the minds and thoughts of the colonized; and this mode of oppression is called Western hegemony, or neo-colonialism as is the case now, which targets minds and thoughts, marginalize the colonized traditional thinking, and replaces it with a Western one. The idea of cognitive violence was addressed by Gayatri Spivak when she referred to the story of Indian women who were orphaned and burned alive with the pyre of their dead husbands. This tradition was eliminated by the British colonialists, who showed themselves well as the saviors of black women from black men. The main purpose of epistemic violence is to impose hegemony over natives' thoughts and show a good

¹⁰ For more details see: Rosewall, Kim. "The Wretched of the Earth Themes: Colonialism, Racism, and Violence." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 31 Oct 2019. Web. 22 Mar 2023. <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-wretched-of-the-earth/themes/colonialism-racism-and-violence>

¹¹ For more details see: Rosewall, Kim. "The Wretched of the Earth Themes: Colonialism, Racism, and Violence." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 31 Oct 2019. Web. 22 Mar 2023. <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-wretched-of-the-earth/themes/colonialism-racism-and-violence>

image of the colonizer as a force that came only to spread civilization and suppress barbarism and ignorance. Moreover, Spivak claimed that:

The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subjectivity. It is well known that Foucault locates epistemic violence, a complete overhaul of the episteme, in the redefinition of sanity at the end of the European eighteenth century. But what if that particular redefinition was only a part of the narrative of history in Europe as well as in the colonies? What if the two projects of epistemic overhaul worked as dislocated and unacknowledged parts of a vast two-handed engine? (24-25)

Epistemic Violence, thus, is the mode through which the colonizer erases the cultural and spiritual identity of the colonized and infuses it with more “civilized” thoughts as they claim.

It is worth noting that the most important manifestation of colonialism’s violence in the colonized countries is physical violence, which took many forms and images. Colonialism adopted this practice in brutal ways. It is necessary, therefore, to talk about physical violence that is applied on the colonized by colonizers. As Frantz Fanon argued in his study of the psychology of colonization, colonialism is a whole system of violence which attempts to oppress and subjugate the colonized by violent means, and the colonial situation was all introduced by violence. He also argued that colonial control was only taken by violence, and that there is no end of the violence of

colonialism, it does not stop once power is established.¹² He argued also that the only way to end the violence of colonialism is for the colonized to inflict that violence back on the colonizer. Only this way can the colonized regain his sense of humanity and self-esteem.

In the light of this, colonialism imposed power through oppression, beating, criminality, burning, and various types of physical and mental torture that do not differentiate between young and old, nor men and women.

2- Concerning Psychological Trauma:

2.1- The Concept of Trauma:

As a modern phenomenon, Trauma plays an interdisciplinary role. It starts out as a movement to highlight an episode of transformation in the history of suffering and pain. Trauma comprises stressful events such as an event(s) or an experience(s). Trauma has a close connection with fields including psychology, sociology, history, war, politics and literature. It incorporates both feelings and ideas. Traumas from the past and traumatic experiences affect greatly characters' minds. Trauma is one of the contentious concepts commonly used in today's postcolonial literature. It can be found in a variety of contents and cultural circumstances that vary in the European context from Freud's original theories to Fanon's postcolonial studies. Although the term trauma offers a basis for comparison across geographical, religious, ethnic and linguistic

¹² For more details see: Rosewall, Kim. "The Wretched of the Earth Themes: Colonialism, Racism, and Violence." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 31 Oct 2019. Web. 22 Mar 2023. <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/the-wretched-of-the-earth/themes/colonialism-racism-and-violence>

boundaries, the complexity of these experiences cannot be reduced to a single cohesive form.¹³

2.2- Psychological Trauma:

Over the past few decades, psychologists and philosophers have come to a deeper understanding of what trauma is and how it impacts mental, physical and relational health. Broadly speaking, psychological trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless in a dangerous world. Psychological trauma can leave you struggling with upsetting emotions, memories, and anxiety that will not go away. It can also leave you feeling numb, disconnected, and unable to trust other people.¹⁴

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Freud introduces trauma through the notion of a nightmare. The dream reproduces the catastrophe and the shock experience stands for the dissociation of memory from consciousness; the actual event is separated from its understanding. The traumatized individual is possessed by the event and does not gain any control over it. He cannot possess his history. At the core of the nightmares there is a collapse of meaning and a deep uncertainty as to its very truth. The crisis of truth poses the greatest challenge to trauma theory today.¹⁵

Besides the non-symbolic character of the dreams and flashbacks, Freud was also struck by the belatedness with which the traumatic event haunted the one who had suffered from it, possibly a long time ago. In *Moses and Monotheism* he refers to this

¹³ For more details see: Naouel Grine's MA Thesis: "The Tragedy of a Self-Abused Man in Kiran Desai's Novel *The Inheritance of Loss*", University of Biskra, Department of English Language, Literature and Civilization. 2019-2020. (P; 27).

¹⁴ For more details see: Lawrence Robinson, Melinda Smith, M.A. and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D. "Emotional and Psychological Trauma", HelpGuid.org, <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/coping-with-emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm>.

¹⁵ For more details see: Bettina Rabelhofer (Graz), *Inhabiting a Time before Time. "Freud's Concept of Trauma as a Psychoanalytical Figure of Thought"*, <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/StudiaTheodisca/article/view/12279/11603>

gap of knowing as a period of latency that constitutes a time that lacks the registration of the traumatic event in memory:

It may happen that a man who has experienced some frightful accident – a railway collision, for instance – leaves the scene of the event apparently uninjured. In the course of the next few weeks, however, he develops a number of severe psychical and motor symptoms which can only be traced to his shock, the concussion or whatever else it was. He now has a “traumatic neurosis”. The time that has passed between the accident and the first appearance is described as the “incubation period”, in a clear allusion to the pathology of infectious diseases. That might be described as “latency”.

According to Freud, the death drive, which means the drive toward death and destruction, is expressed through behaviors such as aggression, repetition compulsion and self-destructiveness. It can be established when a psychological trauma has corrupted essential drives. Freud seems unsatisfied with his own answer, for Freud was never comfortable with the idea of an independent instinct or drive for mastery or control (*Beyond* 54). Not mastery but the death drive is Freud’s explanation of life beyond the pleasure principle.

Trauma incites the death drive (Todestrieb), the urge of the organism to return to an original inorganic state. One sees this in Freud’s speculation about the nirvana principle, which he interprets as the desire for the cessation of stimulation and tension. If the stimulation and tension is too great, too painful, then nirvana becomes inseparable from death (*Beyond* 95). Nirvana represents the peace of the womb, or the grave.

Life, says Freud, is but a detour on the trip from birth to death, and trauma may make life so unbearable that a short-cut is tempting (61, 95). One no longer wants to continue on the long detour through life to death. The repetition compulsion is a way of

acting-out this desire to return to the most primitive state because it is a desire to return, and return, and return, ultimately to a state of non-being.¹⁶

Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety, but any situation that leaves you feeling overwhelmed and isolated can result in trauma, even if it does not involve physical harm. It is not the objective circumstances that determine whether an event is traumatic, but your subjective emotional experience of the event. The more frightened and helpless you feel, the more likely you are to be traumatized. Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* stated that:

Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning [...] Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life. Unlike commonplace misfortunes, traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe. (33)

Experiencing trauma in childhood can result in a severe and long-lasting effect. When childhood trauma is not resolved, a sense of fear and helplessness carries over into adulthood, setting the stage for further trauma. However, even if your trauma happened many years ago, there are steps you can take to overcome the pain, learn to trust and connect to others again, and regain your sense of emotional balance.¹⁷

¹⁶ For more detailed information see: "Trauma and the pleasure principle", calford@umd.edu, March, 25th, 2016, About Trauma, <https://traumatheory.com/trauma-and-the-pleasure-principle/>

¹⁷ For more details see: Lawrence Robinson, Melinda Smith, M.A. and Jeanne Segal, Ph.D. "Emotional and Psychological Trauma", HelpGuid.org, <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/ptsd-trauma/coping-with-emotional-and-psychological-trauma.htm>.

Traumatic experience creates psychological trauma when it overwhelms one's ability to cope with the situation and one's own emotions, and leaves that person fearing death, annihilation, mutilation. The cause of traumatic experience most often includes abuse of power, betrayal of trust, entrapment, helplessness, pain, confusion, and loss of something or someone very important in one's life. This consideration is very broad and it might include responses to specific violent events, accidents, and natural disasters, which are nowadays very common. Psychological trauma is also related to chronic and repetitive experiences, such as child abuse, neglect, combat, and constant deprivation. The term and situation that refers to it must be considered objectively, as it is up to each survivor to determine if it traumatic, as it can be manifested clinically by various psychiatric disorders. That means that two different individuals can experience the same provoking factor or situation which is mostly related as trauma, and one can be intensively traumatized and the other remain unscathed. It is really not possible to make one pattern or blanket generalizations. It can be different and highly specific from one individual to the next. Trauma comes in many forms, and there are differences among people who experience trauma, as not each brain is the same, its anatomy and physiology.¹⁸

2.3- Colonial Trauma:

The idea of trauma has been explored since the 19th century in Western disciplines, and the event, experience and process that signify it refer to immemorial human conditions, such as horror and violence. Freudian psychoanalysis developed and formulated the concept of trauma, which aimed to explain and treat neurotic and hysterical cases in psychiatry and psychology. Its application in treating soldiers and

¹⁸ Ana Starcevic, "Introductory Chapter: Psychological Trauma", CHAPTER METRICS OVERVIEW, November 13th 2019, <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/69569>.

victims of World War I and II contributed to the consolidation of the study of traumatic events.

It has been mentioned that “Colonial Trauma is described as a complex, continuous, collective, cumulative and compounding interaction of impacts related to the imposition of colonial policies and practices which continue to separate Indigenous Peoples from their land, languages, cultural practices, and one another” (Mitchel et al, 75). The conceptualization of the category of traumatic brings the memory of physical, cultural, and epistemological silencing and erasure of colonialism and its effects. At the same time, non-Western knowledge and ways of life are excluded by the very violence that the concept of trauma universally attempts to explain. This process is a constituent of colonial and imperial projects, both in the epistemological sense of the destruction of other forms of thought and in that of an explanatory means and a “solution” for the madness, hysteria, and neurosis considered intrinsic to the primitive indigenous. In *Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism*, Grada Kilomba presents her notion of trauma as putting people (in her analysis, black) in a state of otherness, dehumanized, alien, and turned incompatible with the western white male self through an unspeakable experience of embodied pain for her:

Everyday racism is not a single violent event in one’s individual biography, as it is commonly believed – something that “might have happened once or twice” – but rather an accumulation of violent events that at the same time reveal a historical pattern of racial abuse involving not only the horrors of racist violence, but also the collective memories of colonial trauma. (133)

Kilomba advocates a trauma perspective that frames colonialism and its racialization processes as traumatic, putting in place a decolonization project to make those who were and are objectified and dehumanized, either by racism or other forms of

colonial and imperial oppression, “become subject.” By pointing out the overlapping of Western disciplines, knowledge, and epistemologies with the colonization of non-Western societies and cultures, it becomes possible to think of a decolonizing option for trauma and its development in international relations (IR). Without entering theoretical-conceptual discussions.¹⁹ The point of becoming subject, the project of decolonization gives the colonized the way to become itself without being a colonial object, it means to know the real cultural and spiritual identity of the colonized and overcome the alienation from the colonial identity that was imposed on them epistemically.

2.4- Trauma's Link to Violence:

Most people who experience traumatic events do not commit future acts of violence. Research strongly suggests, however, that for some people traumatic experiences are directly related to future perpetration of violence. As should be evident by the preceding discussion, traumatic experiences also might contribute to the development of several risk factors associated with violence (e.g., substance use, personality disorder, emotional deregulation). Based on available research, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that trauma might directly and indirectly contribute to violent acts. Several theorists propose explanations for the apparent relationship between trauma and violence. Among the theories currently available, social learning theory has obvious merit. Popularized and empirically supported by the widely recognized 'Bobo doll' experiments in the early 1960s, social learning theory proposes that violence and aggression are learned by observing abusive models. By observing abusive parents, for

¹⁹ For more details see: Mateus S. Borges, "Multiple Worlds of Trauma: Methodology, Eurocentrism, and the Colonial Traumatic", *E-INTERNATIONAL RELTIONS*, November 2, 2022, <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/11/02/multiple-worlds-of-trauma-methodology-eurocentrism-and-the-colonial-traumatic/>

example, children might learn that violence towards others is justifiable, permissible, and rewarding. (J. Neller and Fabian 7).

The psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, best known for his works *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), is a theorist famous for his impassioned writings on revolution and the psychological impacts of racial inequality and colonization. His writings have been supported by intellectuals from Jean Paul Sartre to Malcolm X and have inspired activists in the National Liberation Front, Black Panthers, and, more recently, the Black Lives Matter movement. Fanon's depictions of imperialist power are echoed by recent police killings of Black Americans, which have prompted public evaluation of privilege and culpability in perpetuating systemic racism. Within the field of psychiatry, there is renewed effort to explore how systemic racism affects our patients' lives and to confront the national racial injustices that permeate our institutional practice. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon critiques the alienating imperialist power of colonization and lays out the dialectical progression for the colonized to achieve liberation. The book is also Fanon's most controversial work, because in the first chapter he argues that total decolonization cannot be attained without violence (7). Fanon saw violence as the only language colonizers truly understand. Through violence, imperialists instilled a sense of inferiority in the colonized, and it was therefore through violence that the colonized could regain a sense of self, a sense of culture, and the physical reality of statehood. From the privilege of ethical idealism, it is easy to criticize Fanon for his support of violence, much like Malcolm X was criticized; however, violence often seems less necessary to those not subjugated by it.²⁰

²⁰ For more details see: Will Novey, M.D. " Revisiting Frantz Fanon: His Life and Legacy on Race, Colonization, and Psychiatry". June, 11 2021. Psychiatry Online, <https://psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp-rj.2021.160406>

Chapter Two: The Representation of Violence in Abdulkrazak

Gurnah's *Afterlives*.

Literature and violence intersect clearly in *Afterlives*. This chapter is designed to highlight and discuss the theme of violence in *Afterlives* along with the experiences of the characters that illustrate a clear embodiment of this concept. Witnessing the brutality

of colonial presence and suffering from colonial war was occasioned by a set of policies, processes, and behaviors that the colonizer used against the colonized; these policies often adopted violence, use of power, and cultural dominance. Gurnah's *Afterlives* provides a detailed representation of these attitudes, which will be discussed in this chapter.

I- The Manifestations of Violence against Africans.

Violence has always been a central theme in many literary works, as this variable has been the subject of discussion of many critics and a mainstay in many novels, especially postcolonial ones. However, violence has not been related only to colonialism in postcolonial contexts; it has also been an important social issue.

The novel *Afterlives* is a modern postcolonial piece of writing that tells the story of colonization, war, imperialism, resistance and decolonization. It tackles the phenomenon of violence against Africans from different angles through analyzing the manifestations of violence in East-Africa during the period of German colonization in the region. In this novel, Abdulrazak Gurnah sheds light on the sufferance of Native Africans from violence which is both colonial and social in nature.

1- Colonial Violence:

Gurnah's *Afterlives* covers the issue of violence from different views. From one side, it highlights the violent policies of German colonization against Africans as a central matter. Also, it deals with the different aspects of violence inflicted by Germans on Africans; it covers physical and psychological harm against them as well as the terrible consequences of any kind of resistance against Germans.

The novel starts with the Germans' first presence in East-Africa –Nowadays Tanzania–, the period in which native Africans were fighting against the German claim

that the land is their own. The uprisings against Germans as mentioned in the novel were widespread over the land; the natives were mostly against the German colonial rules and even generally against the German presence in their lands. However, they were not all fighting openly; on one hand, there were people who made this issue a central subject in their discussions without initiating fighting or resistance, despite rejecting the German policies applied against them; on the other hand, this was not the choice of many others who chose to fight against the Germans and resist their policies and rules in their lands.

The narrator in this novel shows that German colonial power came to the land with a clear message of control, violence, and intimidation from the beginning and this position necessitates power and violence in response. And this is the main concern of resistance and the groups of uprisings; Fanon famously claims that colonialism is a racist and violent activity that can only be overcome by using violence in return. In the beginning of the novel, Gurnah mentions different kinds of insurrections against the colonizer, starting with Al-Bushiri uprisings of a group of Arabs and Waswahili natives against Germans, and the Wahehe rebellion which was the first mentioned acts of resistance in the novel. They stood to resist the German claim that they are the rulers of the land; they were stubborn and reluctant to accept the German rule, but their resistance was suppressed brutally in the hand of the German colonel Wissman and his *schutztruppe* – a German army of African soldiers– who responded to the revolts with great determination and ruthlessness. Frantz Fanon says that “zombies are more terrifying than the settlers” (56), and in this work, Gurnah shows the clear image of Germans as the terrifying, oppressive, and brutal colonizer who applies his colonial rules severely. The Germans suppressed all resistances with brutality, the minimum sentence applied against the resistance fighters was execution by hanging, or cutting off

their heads and hanging them to serve as a lesson to anyone who dared to resist the German rule.

In the novel, Gurnah reveals that colonial violence did not stop at suppressing the uprisings only; that was not enough as they were violent with the civilians as well.

The narrator writes:

The resistance to German rule sank in, so the response of the colonial administration became more relentless and brutal. The German command saw that the revolt could not be defeated by military means alone [...] 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.
(28)

The brutality of German colonialism against the resistance forces left thousands dead from starvation and others from battlefield wounds and others from execution, as acknowledged in the words of one of the novel's characters that: "the Germans have killed so many people that the country is littered with skulls and bones and the earth is soggy with blood" (63). Moreover, colonial violence was not only confined to terrifying brutality against Africans, but rather it continued in other ways. German colonization besides using physical harm, adopted other forms of violence that targeted the psyches of the oppressed Africans; among those forms is what is now known as epistemic violence. As the novel shows, violence was not enough to subdue natives, the Germans started proposing some companies and facilities to affect the minds of Africans and beautify the image of colonialism in their view as the force that came to spread civilization and progress in their lands. This idea is clearly presented in Gurnah's *Afterlives* with Ilyas, one of the main characters who was aptly converted from a native

East-African to a German in the hands of Germans. As will be discussed in the next section, Ilyas was epistemically violated; he lived most of his life with Germans and he was obliged to follow their traditions and customs until he became one of them. The purpose of this form of violence is to impose total mental control in every possible way to subdue Africans.

In addition to epistemic violence, racism is presented in the novel as the main practice of colonialism that inflicts psychological harm on the colonized; this type of mental violence is another aspect of colonial violence in this piece of literature. The colonizer and the colonized are portrayed in different positions, with the colonizer as the superior and the colonized as inferior. This colonial hierarchy justified the imposition of cultural and psychological hegemony on the colonizers. This idea is embodied clearly in *Afterlives* where the German process of settlement was markedly racist and took all the clean and good parts of the land for their settlers while the bad and non-clean lands were left for Africans, since they considered them as uncivilized, backward savages that need to be civilized. In the novel, a German soldier thus asserts: “I was born into a military tradition and this is my duty, that’s why I am here — to take possession of what rightfully belongs to us [...] We are dealing with backward and savage people and the only way to rule them is to strike terror into them” (117-118). In this context, the German colonizer considered the colonized black savages that must be civilized through power and dominance.

Although the Germans resorted to less bloody methods of violence, their brutality towards Africans did not stop there. The novel reflects the painful reality of Africans under German rule, where the Germans did not just exercise their persecution and oppression, but rather went beyond that to forcibly recruit Africans, into the ranks of the German army against Great Britain in World War I. The novel shows the cruel,

violent, racist, and abusive policy of German conscription of Africans; this policy is illustrated in the novel with the Schutztruppe or what is known as the army of Askari. The Schutztruppe was a German army of African volunteers (whether voluntarily or unwillingly) which was trained and prepared by German leaders as an extra force for the war against Great Britain over who should be more worthy of ruling the African coast. This Army's soldiers were prepared and trained forcibly to become monsters ready to kill, torture, and use all kinds of violence and brutality; the army was meant to terrorize African civilians with all kinds of violence and brutality. The war between Germany and Great Britain in the midst of colonialism left many human and material losses; many African were brutally killed, their buildings destroyed, and their lands filled with blood and corpses.

According to what is mentioned in the novel, German colonialism came with an explicit message of violence and brutality. These practices left much material and human losses to Africans, which generated panic to them and successive psychological disorders.

2- Social Violence:

On the surface, *Afterlives* provides a postcolonial context that deals with colonial issues, but on a deeper level the novel is an examination of various social problems that Africans faced amongst each other – that is, apart from colonialism. To begin with, violence has always been a central enigma in every society, and Gurnah covers this issue clearly in the social context of his novel in which he introduces violence as a main social problem in different images. He sheds light on human dealings with each other and tackles another aspect of violence, which is social violence.

The novel examines the violent abuse against women mentally and physically. Starting with mental violence against women, the novel represents the African society as a Muslim patriarchal society who follows Islamic values but applies them mostly on women. Women in *Afterlives* mostly live under the strict patriarchal rules of their families; they have no rights to decide on their destinies, and they have no chance to express their thoughts and opinions, neither do they have the right to education. Gurnah's *Afterlives* also shows women in the lower class of society, defined as a commodity to serve men, having no mission in life other than serving their husbands and raising their children. As for women who break this custom, they are severely abused. Moreover, another kind of mental abuse against women in the novel is imposing spiritual hegemony on their minds. This type of violence is embodied through the two main female characters in the novel: Asha and Afiya. Asha uses spiritual violence, which is the use of spiritual and religious customs and beliefs to manipulate the psyche of someone, to control the little girl Afiya and make her the copy of the woman she –Asha– was before and to live exactly as she lived before. As in the book, Asha ordered Afiya to act like a Muslim woman and adhere to their social and religious customs. She also made her learn the Quran and learn about companions, particularly female ones.

In an advanced section of this master-piece by Gurnah, physical violence manifests itself as domestic violence in the form of abuse against both women and children. As mentioned before, women have no right to education, they only grow up to serve their families and raise children. In the social context of this novel, a woman is chastised for being a woman first, and second for her desire to learn and be educated and break out of ignorance and enslavement. The novel also reflects how children are crudely exploited and enslaved, and painfully abused as will be explained in the second

section, through the story of Afya the little girl who was enslaved by her uncle and aunt; she was required to do chores since a very young age and if she did not so, she was painfully punished.

Women are not the only violated subjects in the novel. There are men who are abused verbally; and this is the other aspect of violence: verbal violence. Among the dealings between the African subjects are verbal violence and verbal wounding. This type of violence is embodied through the character of Asha who is aggressive to her husband Khalifa and Afya, the little girl that they take care of. Asha, who lived under the patriarchal rules of her uncle, turned into a nervous, aggressive person who expresses herself with cruelty and verbal violence.

The theme of violence then has been highlighted deeply in this novel, and the writer embodies it from different angles and with different views; it is covered as both a social and colonial issue. *Afterlives* offers a vision of the complex African society that was not just dominated by colonialism, a society in which manifestations of violence in all its forms are evident. These multiple and complex manifestations of violence had profound impact on African subjects in several forms, such as loss of memory, loss of identity, and aggressiveness. They will be mentioned in detail in the next section.

II- Violent Experiences of the Characters:

Since *Afterlives* is written in a postcolonial context, it is obviously an examination of many issues related to colonialism, imperialism, power, and dominance. Those implications are deeply connected to violence. Violence has been clearly embodied in *Afterlives*, it has been represented through the characters of this piece of literature, and each character has experienced a different form of torture. This section aims to discuss the violent experiences of four of the main characters in the novel.

1- Mental Violence:

In the novel, violence manifests itself, in addition to harming a person physically, as the way of numbing his psyche and modify it in direct and indirect ways. Indeed, mental violence is a main variable of the theme of violence in this novel; it is mostly associated with the characters of Asha and Ilyas. Those characters experienced different kinds of psychological torture; Ilyas through the hands of the colonizer, and Asha through the hands of her society, more specifically her uncle. Among the different ways of mental violence in the novel that are provided in this section are the patriarchal norms and rules in which Asha was struggling with in silence, and the other way is epistemic violence that Ilyas experienced in his childhood with the colonizer.

1.1- Patriarchal Rule:

In the 19th century, the African society was a strict society with rigid and inflexible rules, especially with women. Women have been a main interest in African historical and literary studies. For instance, in a collection of African women studies that attempts to study all what concerns women, especially Africans, Fatima Sadiqi

situates women in North Africa within the intersection of Islam and the state from the pre-modern era to the postmodern era, with Islam specifically defined as *fiqh*, or “legal Islam” or “Islamic jurisprudence,” in contradistinction to “*shari’a*,” which is spiritual Islam, the totality of moral and ethical values that derive from Islam’s sacred texts. The intersection of Islam and the state imposed a system of belief that encompassed political, socioeconomic, moral, spiritual, and intellectual life, thereby institutionalizing a set of patriarchal rules such as gender segregation, veiling, and polygamy that placed women in a subordinate status in society. (Yacob-Haliso, Falola 33)

In African society during that period, women were seen as created only for three missions: to serve their husbands, to raise their children, and to do chores. Moreover, African society imposed this lifestyle on women and did not allow them to go beyond that space in which they were confined. They were not allowed to read and write; rather, they were allowed only to learn Qur'an and Islamic values and follow them since they are Muslims; they were obliged to wear Hijab after the age of thirteen claiming that they have become women and they should cover up; they were also subjected to arranged marriages without having the right to refuse or accept. They were forced to marry at an early age, claiming that they were adults, and they must be married before they did any act that brought shame to their parents, even if that act exposed them to harassment, or the hungry looks that men give them on the streets.

In the midst of the colonial context, and the suffering of Africans from the brutality and persecution of Germans, the main story of colonization, imperialism, war, and resistance contains unknown stories of the main characters of this novel. Among all this is the story of Asha, whose father was exploited by her greedy uncle, the merchant Amur Biashara. Asha and her mother first suffered for not having the right to defend their rights, they had to follow her father's rule which made them lose everything they once owned. After that, Asha lost her parents –with a short interval separating the death of one from the other– then she became under her uncle's custody. She was determined to claim her right, and get back what her father once owned, so she had to put up with her uncle's greed and strict rules to take what was hers. Asha's uncle was known for his greed and great love for money. He regarded Asha as a heavy burden that must be removed as soon as possible, assigning her duty to another man, who must be her spouse. As he claimed, he wanted to marry her and get rid of her sponsorship before she does anything that will cause him dishonor. He planned to marry her to Khalifa his

bookkeeper, and used his circumstance of losing his parents and being alone in this world in order to bear Asha's load and get rid of her and her claim to her father's right. Asha had no choice but to accept and no right to refuse this proposal. She had to resign herself to her fate and marry Khalifa. According to society's customs, Asha's life belonged to her husband, Khalifa, and she must dedicate herself to serving him. She told her husband about her story and how her uncle exploited her father and how she ended up married to him: "Amur Biashara as a senior male relative gave consent in her name" (24). She told him also that her uncle Amur Biashara is her mother's and her guardian as the senior male relative in their family. He could decide what happens to them, they don't even have their own lives (26). Asha now became and a nervous, aggressive and sharp-tempered person because she did not have any rights to decide her own fate, she did not have the right to make her life the way she wished.

In *Afterlives*, the patriarchal rules do not just appear through the story of Asha, but there is another girl who is living under a patriarchal violence. Afya is a little orphan girl whose mother died of the epidemic following her birth, and whose father also died shortly after that. She is another victim of the patriarchal mental violence. She lived a life full of suffering with her uncle and aunt until her lost brother Ilyas turned back to take her with him. However, she got back to them after she learned how to read and write in German and in Swahili, and this ability made her vulnerable to beatings and violence by her uncle, who said: "Why does a girl need to write? So she can write to a pimp?" (68). After that, Khalifa took Afya to live with him and Asha until her brother came back from war. Afya was now living with them peacefully, she continued learning, and she had to memorize the Qur'an with Asha and listen to her Islamic lessons and the stories of prophets and companions until she reached the age of 15. Thus, it was Asha's turn to control her with the patriarchal rules that society imposed on

every girl of her age. She asked her to cover up herself and wear Hijab which is seen as obligatory for every girl in her age. Moreover, Asha took advantage of the religious lessons Afya had once with her to impose spiritual dominance over her; Afya did not refuse any of her acts, she was silently accepting everything and waiting for the moment of her salvation –the return of her brother from the battlefield.

In this novel, African civilization in Tanzania is depicted as being rigidly patriarchal, with rigorous rules and strong supervision. Both Asha and Afya experienced this patriarchy, but in very different ways. Afya became meek and silent while Asha turned hostile and short-tempered.

1.2- Epistemic Violence:

The imperial strategies vary between imposing control through power and bloodshed, and cultural hegemony by adopting methods that do not require force and persecution, but rather methods that target the minds of the subjects and impose colonial thinking and traditions on them under the pretext that the colonizer's primary goal of conquest is to spread civilization and development. This process of imposing colonial ways of thinking is defined as epistemic violence. *Afterlives* shows this concept in the beginning of the novel where the Germans came to the land with the purpose of civilizing Africans as the narrator tells us:

It was clear to them that violence alone was not enough to subdue the colony and make it productive, so clinics were proposed and campaigns against malaria and cholera initiated [...] schools were opened intended to offer an elementary education to more of the subject people. (29)

The main purpose, which was to provide a comfortable lifestyle for them and their settlers, was hidden behind. Furthermore, the closest manifestation of this notion of

civilizing the native is embodied through the tale of Ilyas, who experienced German cultural and epistemic abuse. The story of Ilyas appears in the novel as a flash back, when the latter started telling his little sister Afya about his escaping from the town and his life with the colonizer. Ilyas was a little African child who lived in a poor countryside where he struggled with cold, hunger, diseases, and deprivation. He tried to find a solution for the plight he was struggling with, but he found no way but to escape from his homeland in search of a better life. Ilyas made the decision to leave poverty behind, but he did not anticipate how things would play out. He was kidnapped by a German soldier who took him to become his servant and slave. The soldier took Ilyas to a German farm, whose owner was a German merchant. He was doing daily work such as feeding the animals and cleaning the barns there, but the farm owner preferred to let a child of his age receive a good education and work to develop himself rather than do these works. Ilyas thus, got educated in a German Christian school; he had to learn their language, convert to their religion, and completely change his cultural identity just to stay within that school. He got raised on the hands of Germans and had to learn about their traditions and values, which meant that he had to behave like them and live in exactly the same “developed” way as them and become a “civilized” and “cultured” person and not an “uncivilized” “barbarian” African. German cultural and epistemic abuse damaged Ilyas's heart and mind in that he turned into a total German, always defending them against his friends' claims that they were monsters and killing and torture were their habits. This psychological damage that Ilyas experienced made him a target of criticism for his native African friends; one of them told him: “My friend, they have eaten you” (64). Epistemic violence thus attempts to harm the psyche of Africans and change their minds to think the same way as the colonizer and to defend them as the

civilizing people who came to their lands to enlighten the natives and make them developed and productive.

2- Physical Violence:

Besides mental abuse, *Afterlives* includes many episodes of and illusions to physical violence; it shows different kinds of abusive behaviors against the characters. Physical violence is another main aspect of the theme of violence in this novel; it is shown through the experiences of two main characters, Afya and Hamza. Afya experienced physical abuse in the hands of her fellow Africans and Hamza by the colonizer. This section provides a detailed description and examination of how physical violence is experienced in this work of fiction.

2.1- Domestic Violence and Child Abuse:

Domestic violence is an offence and is one of the major causes for increase of crime index of the state. Domestic violence is destructive behavior in an intimate relationship where one person tries to dominate and control the other in a dating or marital relationship or in cohabitation, which causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in that relationship. (Naik 02)

Gurnah underscores domestic violence as a significant social issue; he offers a detailed look at this subject and highlights it in the story of Afya, one of the central characters in his work. Afya is a little orphan girl whose parents died when she was a newborn; she later moved in with her harsh African sponsors. She had known that her parents died and now she became all alone in this world. She lived, after that, a struggling life with the family that took care of her. She was sleeping on the floor, inside the entrance way to the house, struggling with cold and the dry floor that bears a child like her. Moreover, Afya was forced to perform chores alongside her aunt, who

constantly pushed her to stand for anything that needed it. She was required to get up early in the morning to do her tasks at the same time as her aunt, who would frequently hit her for not doing so; she had to clean the water for the bath and tea of her uncle, who would bear her till death if she did not so. Afya was required to do chores from a very young age that she could not remember when she had started doing that, as all of the household works, with the exception of cooking, had to be done by her, and she had to put up with her aunt's harsh and condescending treatment since she had nowhere else to turn. In addition to that, Afya's aunt was treating her harshly, but sometimes she tried to be nice with her and she was telling her stories, even though those stories were scary and pernicious for her psyche. In this respect, the narrator writes:

Her aunt spoke to her sharply at times, but more often she was kind and told her stories. Some of these stories were terrifying, like the one about a ragged bloated man with long dirty fingernails who walked on the road at night, dragging an iron chain behind him, looking to capture a little girl and take her to his burrow underground. You can always hear him coming because of the chain dragging on the ground. Many of her aunt's stories were about dirty old people who stole little girls. (48)

Those stories were only meant to keep out of her mind the idea of escaping from their house. In addition to being exploited by her aunt who was taking advantage of her and depending on her for all of her duties, Afya was mistreated by her aunt's children Zawadi and Issa. They treated her as if she were their puppet, intimidated her, occasionally beat her viciously just for fun, and coerced her into doing everything they wanted and violently beat her if she did not do so.

In an advanced section of the novel, and after spending nine years with the Germans, Ilyas returned to his hometown and informed his friend Khalifa about his experience. Khalifa advised him to go find his family, but Ilyas was hesitant. After a lengthy debate with Khalifa, he eventually made up his mind to travel back to his hometown. Ilyas reached his house to inquire about his parents after a lengthy journey, only to be informed that they had long since passed away. Ilyas had known about his little sister, Afya, who did not know about him, and then he went to find her and take her with him. After Ilyas reached the house that Afya lived in, the encounter with her brother made her feel a little safer, and eventually went with him to the city, even though the uncle did not like to let his servant go. He claimed that he had raised her with love and affection since he saw Ilyas' clothing, which showed that he was wealthy and laid-back; possibly, he wanted to get some money from him to satisfy his greed. Ilyas took Afya with him to the city and introduced her to his friends, but she was fearful of them and scared of being treated badly in his absence because she never dealt with people other than the harsh family that raised her. However, all of them were kind to her and treated her well, and some of them also became her friends. Afya thus learned how to read and write in Swahili and in German, she also learned some embroidery and sewing from her friends, the daughters of the man with whom she and her brother lived.

After the good time with her new people, Afya had to return to living with that dysfunctional household after her brother informed that he was joining the *schutztruppe* army. She was, of course, scared of going back to that house, but she had no choice. However, Khalifa, her brother's friend, told her to send him a note if she faced any troubles. Afya went back to her miserable life, but this time she was terrified of being mistreated even more violently than before, because she chose to escape and this is exactly what happened. Her aunt had expected her to get back to her chores and her

children had returned to tease her and mistreat her; after a little while of her returning Zawadi said that their slave was back (Gurnah 66). Everything was even worse than before, her aunt grumbled at her even more and forced her to do chores more than before. Issa became sixteen, and he had not missed a chance to molest her since she had returned to their home, especially when nobody else was home and she was unable to fight him off. After that, her aunt knew about her ability to read and write in both Swahili and German, so she told her husband, who beat her until he broke her arm to prevent her from writing. Yet, she wrote a note to Khalifa who quickly went and took her to live with him and Asha, who imposed on her some rules to allow her living with them; those rules were mostly patriarchal as mentioned before, but Asha also taught her about Qur'an and stories of Messengers and Caliphs and the beneficial lessons of Islam.

The domestic violence that Afya struggled with made her afraid of dealing with people. If she was met with a good treatment, she would be afraid that that was a dream she would wake up from one day. This physical and psychological harm hurt Afya in a detrimental manner and changed her into a silent person who does not like to deal with people except the ones she closely knows.

2.2- Colonial Violence:

“The settler only ends his work of breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man’s values” (Fanon 43).

On the African coast, German colonialism created its military outposts, armed troops, and towns; this action required a set of regulations to enforce supremacy over the region. The story of Hamza, one of *Afterlives'* main characters, who experienced German colonial violence during his years with the *schutztruppe* army, in which he struggled with all forms of violence whether physically or mentally, bespeaks that the

German colonial and imperial rules were primarily brutal and fundamentally violent. Hamza volunteered to be one of schutztruppe soldiers but he was later struggling in silence about what he had gotten himself into. Schutztruppe is a German army of African soldiers called askari who were voluntarily or forcibly recruited. This army was known by its brutality and the askari volunteers were prepared and trained to be monsters even with their own people. Hamza is a mysterious character who appears in an advanced chapter of the novel. His story was not mentioned before, beginning only with his volunteering in the German askari army. Hamza was ignorant about what he had gotten himself into and what would be required for him to do, but he was absolutely aware of what company he was recruited in; he and everyone with him knew about their stone-hearted ferocity officers. They were sure of the torment that awaits them with those officers. The initial days of Hamza and his fellow soldiers with the German schutztruppe did not appear to be simple, as they had to deal with a lot of rude and harsh words, verbal abuse, and exposure to racist expressions on a daily basis; they were called savages, they were treating like animals. They did not even have rooms with beds, but they were all in one room sleeping on the floor. This is in addition to the demanding training that, if not completed correctly, would result in beatings, torture, and starvation. Their whole day was a grueling exercise from dawn till noon with no rest and no right to eat or drink. Everything was required to be done correctly by them and every error was punished by violence and hard labor. Hamza was part of these harsh experiences, he was systematically exposed to racism and hurtful expressions such as “savage”, “uncivilized”, and similar insulting expressions, but he also had additional hardships that only he and his commander, were aware of. Hamza was attractive due his beautiful face, which made him the target of his the German officer. He was therefore exposed to sexual harassment by his commander who would harass him every time he

had the chance to. This was not comfortable to Hamza, but he had no choice but to not resist him and this was because the officer used only violence and he was dealing only with his stick. Hamza had to learn how to read and write in German during his time with the officer, and he was called by crude terms like "savage dog" and "uncivilized," as well as other harsh and racial terms. He had to bear that with no response to his officers because they were always capable to violence against which he was unarmed. Hamza struggled in silence with his commander, as well as with his fellow soldiers, who teased him and described him as the officer's toy since he was always at his side and they were all aware of the officer's sexual allure to him. Additionally, Hamza had to deal with all of these in addition to beating, violence, and the unrelenting racism; he once told by his officer that since Europeans had a military tradition, it was their right to invade undeveloped nations, civilize them, and spread progress throughout their lands, and the only ways to do so are through violence and torture (Gurnah, 140). Moreover, Hamza was all the time regretting the decision to volunteer in the army; he was overthinking about his fate and what would happen to him and his fellow Africans in the hands of those human monsters.

The war with the British started over control of the African coast and all the schutztruppe members were fully prepared for it. Hamza in his time after the battles was told about the terrifying stories of subduing the rebellions against Germans, which made him afraid about what would happen to him. The conflict between the two European powers resulted in numerous casualties and material and human losses; many Africans were cruelly murdered, their farms torched, and their buildings destroyed. Hamza found this image to be horrifying because he had not anticipated seeing such dreadful things. In this context, the narrator writes:

The askari left the land devastated, its people starving and dying in hundreds of thousands, while they struggled on in their blind and murderous embrace of a cause whose origins they did not know and whose ambitions were vain and ultimately intended for their domination. (150)

The officer reached the peak of his rage and insanity as a result of all these incidents and the Germans' defeat over the British. He was more aggressive than previously, speaking to the African soldiers with a fiercer savagery than the British did. He saw them as barbarians. He was very harsh with Hamza, hated him deeply and tortured him for the slightest reason, just to satisfy his anger and stubbornness. Sometimes he got him into an enforced intimacy, otherwise he would beat him to death. Furthermore, the officer was not only brutal with Hamza, his anger inflicted suffering on all the officers and soldiers and even on the villagers; he was impatient with them till the point that he once shot an old man in the head, and Hamza had to deal with all of those terrifying attitudes of the Feldwebel who was always in a state of terror, because he was accompanying him like his shadow. The terrifying stories of the schutztruppe army with African villagers continued to be more brutal and violent, they left many wounded soldiers and many scorched villages. Hamza was one of the wounded soldiers, he was one of the victims of the German officer's wrath, who tore his hip with a piece of wood and left him with a disabling wound that led him to stay for a long time in hospital.

German colonial strategy thus came with a clear message of violence and relentless racism and brutality. They killed Africans without hesitating, they burned their farms and villages, and they destroyed their buildings. Hamza was part of all those incidents, which made him regret his volunteering in the German army and psychologically destroyed him. To conclude, *Afterlives* offers us a close window on the

violence the natives were systematically subjected to, covering it from different sides and with varied close visions through the experiences of the novel's characters. Violence, thus, was one of the most dominant tools through which people interacted in the novel. It played a significant and determining role in colonial East Africa whether it is between colonial authorities and the natives or between colonized people themselves. Furthermore, the intimate association between the colonizer and violence resulted from colonialism's use of violence as its primary tool for occupying new territory and establishing complete dominance over it. As violence becomes ingrained in the colonizer's identity, it affects the native identity and psychology of the colonized. The novel, then, presents these implications closely according to the writer's experience and knowledge of the colonial era of his homeland, providing a complex and rounded image of the colonial and social relations that were dominated by violence.

Chapter Three: Trauma in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives*

In *Afterlives*, Abdulrazak Gurnah tells a story of various individuals during the German occupation of East African "Tanzania." The characters of the novel struggle from different types of violence during that Era, which leads to a future of multiple traumas that affect their lives, behaviors and psyches, but they do decide to survive under this suffering. This chapter examines how violence and trauma are related in the novel by tracing the traumatic effects of violence on the characters. It aims to demonstrate that trauma, in the novel, manifests itself in different ways, which lay bare the complexity of postcolonial trauma. This chapter also discusses whether and how trauma, in the context of the novel and beyond, could be overcome.

I- The Relationship between Violence and Trauma in *Afterlives*

Traumatic attitudes have always been a result of some intricate and complex social situations that leave different psychological damages. Among the social issues that cause traumas is violence, which is the use of physical, verbal, and cultural power to harm someone physically and mentally; this latter affects the psyche of the individual in question with different mental and emotional disorders, chief among which are different psychological traumas.

In *Afterlives*, the author provides an idea about the relationship between violence and trauma throughout the experiences of violence, which were discussed in the previous chapter, and their results, which will be highlighted in this chapter. The different experiences of social and colonial violence include epistemic and physical violence, which were used by the colonizer, and patriarchal dominance and social violence, two kinds of violence used domestically. Those forms of violence have left different traumatic damages in the psyches of the characters. Gurnah sheds light on the traumas that the characters had to experience and endure. These characters include Asha, Afya, Ilyas and Hamza. They were at first a result of the mistreatment, ruthless

and different types of violent behaviors meted out by both Germans and natives. Violence (colonial, social, mental and physical) caused deep wounds in characters' psychological well-being, identity and personality, which were symptomized by anger, antisocial attitudes and repression –more details will be mentioned in the second section– as a result of the traumatic events.

II- Traumatic Situations of the Characters:

Trauma has always been a major and recurrent theme in literary works because of its importance and its reflections on the life of the individual, which lead writers and authors to represent it in their writings by embodying it in novels and books that reveal its impacts on the character's mind and behavior after going through a traumatic event. Trauma in literature is defined as texts that are influenced by trauma studies and in which a traumatic experience is presented. Trauma fiction and Trauma studies are closely related; Trauma fiction authors explore a wide range of issues such as race, feminism, violence, and post-colonialism. Gurnah's *Afterlives* explores the traumatic events of psychological illnesses, colonialism, loss and love. It is set in colonial east Africa, which was occupied by Germany in the early 20th century. Gurnah writes about the experiences of individuals that were affected by the German's violent strategies and local oppressive forces that later caused different Traumas for each character.

1- Cultural Trauma:

In *Afterlives*, Gurnah illustrated many types of traumas that happened to each individual, one of which is cultural trauma. The latter occurs when a person feels subjected to a horrendous event that leaves inerasable marks upon his /her consciousness, marking memories, and changing future identity in irrevocable ways. And that is exactly what happened to Ilyas, who suffered from living with the colonizer for a long time without knowing who he really is. He was kidnapped by a German

soldier when he was a child and was exploited as a servant in a farm. He entered a private school, received an education, and faced difficulty in learning their culture but at the end he mastered their language as a native; the narrator tells us that “he speaks German like it is his native language” (43). He became convinced of the German colonial occupation of Tanzania for the sake of the Africans to develop it from ignorance, poverty and backwardness to civilization and advancement, to such an extent that Ilyas lost his native memory, identity, and customs, becoming a German colonizer without being one. Ilyas stated in the novel: “the Germans are gifted and clever people, they know how to organize, they know how to fight, they think of everything, and on the top of that, they are much kinder than the British” (75). He was totally sure that Germans came for the sake and interest of Africans; he said also to a friend:

You have not heard half of what those people did to the Germans. They had to be harsh in retaliation because that's the only way savage people can be made to understand order and obedience. The Germans are honorable and civilized people and have done much good since they have been here. (76)

But when he grew up, he discovered that he had been subjected to a trauma in which his thoughts were washed away about colonialism and that it is to exploit, abuse and destroy the colonized people.

Ilyas was mentally dominated by Germans; his native identity was stripped from him and replaced with purely colonial thinking since he was kidnapped by them in a very young age. He grew up with Germans, learning their customs and social behaviors and religious beliefs; he used to follow their lifestyle. And that time was pleasing to him after he was indignant about his poor life in his native village. And when he was back to his hometown after nine years with Germans, he somehow felt himself stranger to his fellow Africans. His clothes, his speeches, his way of defending Germans made him a

full stranger among his fellow Africans. The system of knowledge that Ilyas received in his time with the colonizer made him culturally split; his native identity and way of thinking were marginalized and excluded by the colonizer's lifestyle and the epistemic violence he was subjected to, leaving him culturally alienated. Therein lies his cultural trauma. In the end, Ilyas continued to live with his German desires and way of thinking, choosing to volunteer in the schutztruppe army and believing that it was an army of German forces that is meant to protect the land.

1- Chronic Trauma:

Experiencing a threatening event in childhood makes a person struggle with a specific trauma as a result of domestic violence or sexual violence, colonialism and the domestic oppressiveness of society. The trauma remains with the victim throughout his entire life and affects his behaviors and mind; it is therefore called chronic trauma. Chronic trauma occurs when a person is subjected to multiple and repetitive traumatic situations. When it comes to war, colonized people may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorders, loss of identity and living under pressure. Gurnah lays bare the multiple manifestations of chronic trauma that occur as a result of childhood events of violence. He takes a detailed look at this type of trauma by embodying it in two main female characters in the novel, Asha and Afya, specifically in regard to how the oppressive forces of their society affected their lives negatively and caused deep wounds that are hard to heal.

1.1- The Experience of Asha:

Women under colonialism were affected by the colonizer and by their society. They were abused and exploited by their families; they were under pressure suffering from ignorance; and they neglected their rights – all of which made women suffer more

than men. Some of them were sexually and socially abused in their childhood and hurt from many types of violence that later led to chronic traumas. Gurnah, in this novel, shows the different kinds of traumas that happened to characters, one of which is chronic trauma in the case of Asha.

Asha was violated mentally under her uncle's patriarchal rule, which made her an aggressive and nervous woman – see the previous chapter for more details. Asha's traumatic situation manifested itself in her becoming an anxious and ambitious person because of the constant pressure and patriarchal dominance of her uncle Amur Biashara. She was compelled to adopt anger as a response to those unfair and devastating actions. She felt that her uncle mistreated her by his greed for her father's money and forcing her to be silent about her rights as an inheritor. This suffering from her childhood made her affected mentally and psychologically: she, unconsciously, had too much agitation and violently reacted to silly things, and therein lies her trauma.

Moreover, Amur Biashara forced Asha to marry Khalifa –see more in the previous chapter, the section of patriarchal rules– and she had no right to decide her own fate because of the wrong ideas of society that women should only follow men's decisions even in women's personal lives and destiny. So she married Khalifa and still had uptight behaviors toward him that resulted in unstable marriage.

Anger in Asha's story came as a result of trauma, which turned chronic. Asha told her husband Khalifa about her previous life. She turned now into an offensive, spooky, and restless woman. These behaviors had a pernicious impact, later in the novel, on another little orphan girl called Afia. Asha did not heal from her past, from the over-control, neglect, and pain that her father inflicted on her. Thus, unconsciously, she renewed and took back her trauma to pass it on to another person, and this is an unconscious behavior that derives from one's past traumatic experiences to defend or

assert oneself. Also, the unresolved traumas can even become more devastating than the original one when re-experienced it in flashbacks and dreams to such an extent that the traumatized person craves and delights in making people experience the same trauma. This is exactly what happened to Asha, whose troubled attitudes towards Afya were the result of her traumatic experiences.

Asha obliged Afya to behave as a Muslim girl and abide by their Muslim beliefs, rules, and religious foundations. She told her to read the Qur'an and wear hijab even though Afya was a teenager of 15 years old and did these behaviors unconsciously. Asha did this toward Afya unintentionally as a consequence of her childhood wounds. She did not discover her internal psychological illness in a way that would allow her to be healed from the trauma. Unfortunately, Asha re-enacts her uncle's same damaging attitudes on Afya.

1.2- The Experience of Afya:

Afterlives sheds light on the suffering of children under colonization, especially females. They were ignorant and had no right to be educated. They just remained at home, served men, and did the bound chores and errands. Additionally, some women were abused by their families which caused stress, worried thinking, and concerned actions that affect women's psyches, leading to the appearance of a shaky personality at an advanced age, symptomized of a lack of self-confidence, fear of dealing with people and repressed feelings. The pressure of psychological stress led to chronic trauma, which is exemplified in the case of one of the main characters, Afya.

Afya was a little orphan girl whose parents had died when she was a newborn. She lived with her uncle and aunt, and they treated her as a maid servant who just did the cooking and cleaning. And if she did not do so, she would be beaten harshly. She suffered a lot with that family; she used to sleep on a dry floor that hurt her as a child.

Her aunt, as mentioned in the previous chapter, used to tell her dirty and horror stories in order to thwart her escaping from their house. At an advanced level of the novel, Afya's brother Ilyas came back from the German town he was living in. He took her to the city and introduced her to his friends, but she was afraid of dealing and talking with new people. Then, Afya learned how to read and write in both Swahili and German. Thenceforth, she had to return to live with that cruel family after her brother informed her that he had to join the *schutztruppe* army, but this time things became worse than before for her. She turned back to the village with that family that hit and punished her because she is educated now. So Khalifa took her to live with him and Asha under their strict and rigid control and waiting to get her deliverance and have a hope that her brother will revert from warfare one day.

Afya's traumatic situation is embodied in her dread of dealing with people as a result of her terrible childhood. She experienced violence and abuse from a very young age and lived with that family in constant stress and pressure. She was isolated from society. Thus, that fear turned into a part of her personality; people with this issue feel intense fear or anxiety at the thought of being around other people. They avoid crowds, fear eye contact, or worry that they are being judged. This is what happened to Afya when she met Ilyas and his friends: she remained in fright and panic from talking to them by reason of staying all her childhood only at home, as she did not play with other children, and her uncle's kids Issa and Zawadi were making mockery of her and sometimes beat her in a tough and severe way. So, Afya became a lonely, quiet, and reclusive girl at a young age. Moreover, she was a little orphan and had no family or a close person to whom she could explain her feelings and thoughts or the way she felt in harmful situations. She experienced – as mentioned before – violence and maltreatment, which put massive psychological pressure on her. The latter brought repression in her

life, which is one of the subconscious mental processes, a trick that a person resorts to, because of the massive narrowing that occurred as a result of those feelings and ideas accumulated internally. Although the repressed feelings are far from the realm of emotions, but rather work actively inside the traumatic person and appear in a symbolic form, they express themselves in many of the conscious behaviors of the individual, but in a confusing and codified way.

Repression can be a good behavior when we resort to it as self-preservation, but it can be harmful when it turns into repetitive compulsive behavior. Repression is imposed by society or family on people by establishing customs and traditions that assess a certain type of behavior on the individual and put him under pressure if he violates these ideas. Thus, repression does not mean absence or oblivion, but rather a person refuge to it to relieve himself from the blame of society. At some point, repressed desires destroy the block of repression and prevention to explode in a bad way that harms a person. In this context, Sigmund Freud stated that repressed feelings and thoughts are hidden in the unconscious mind and will appear, sooner or later.

In his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud dissected what is called repressed memories and their influence on one's decisions in life. He stated:

The patient cannot remember the whole of what is repressed in him, and what he cannot remember may be precisely the essential part of it. He is obliged to repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience instead of remembering it as something in the past. (18)

This is what occurred to Afya; she repressed all her feelings of sadness, loneliness and physical and psychological pain from her childhood days, and that was too much for a child to recognize and to bear. Afya used the psychological trick that is "repression" unconsciously as a way to preserve herself from being a burden on people

and being judged as a result of a brutal childhood. Thus, these behaviors of fear of dealing with people and repressed feelings, tragically, developed into chronic trauma.

In this novel, Gurnah focused on how women were treated badly during the German colonization by their families and relatives, and on the ways in which the loss of parents impacted women's lives. He depicted how they suffered from their society and how they were abused in their childhood through mistreatment, arrogance and violence. Which is the reason why they became chronically traumatized.

2- Colonial Trauma: The Experience of Hamza:

Afterlives shows how German colonization of East Africa destroyed people's lives and future with the same lies that the colonizer always used to occupy any country; that the aim of the war is to get the colonized out of poverty, ignorance and epidemics and to allegedly make them civilized, develop their society, and exploit the country's wealth for the interest of the colonized. But the truth is that colonial power was committed to looting the colonized country's richness and increasing their strength through the bounties of the occupied country. As a result, the colonized paid a heavy price of what was happening in terms of killing, destruction, sabotage, and violation of human rights. Moreover, hundreds of colonized men were recruited into the ranks of the German army to fight against Britain, under threat of being annexed by them. These techniques of Germans brought about deep mental and psychological illnesses for the colonized, which are hard to be healed to the extent that they harassed them sexually, causing a sexual trauma for some. The trauma of rape or sexual assault leaves a person scared, ashamed, and alone; it usually manifests itself in having horrible nightmares, flashbacks, and other unpleasant memories. It is painful, menacing, and heart-breaking. The perpetrator takes away the victim's sense of safety, self-worth, and the ability to

create and maintain healthy relationships, harming the brain and damaging the human psyche. And that is exactly what happened in Hamza's story. Hamza is one of the most important characters in the novel, who went through colonial, physical, and mental violence. He volunteered to be one of the *schutztruppe* soldiers, which is the most regretted decision that he brought himself into. He experienced brutal and atrocious treatment from verbal words, physical, and psychological hurt, as discussed in Chapter Two.

Hamza was sexually harassed by his commander and had no way to defend himself except to bear and suppress his feelings from shame, stress and depression, lest he be physically abused and imprisoned. Hamza's traumatic situation is embodied in his feelings and thoughts of shyness, shame, and guilt. He always had those negative beliefs about himself: how that kind of harassment happened to a man like him. His friends always called him the officer's toy and this used to hurt Hamza deeply, reinforcing his feeling of shame and his regret for joining the German army and creating turbulent feelings for him; the narrator, in this respect, writes: "Hamza was in the latter category, silently wretched about what he had done" (86). He was exposed to all forms of violence on the one hand and subjected to harassment on the other hand. This caused defects in his personality and relationships with people; he became afraid of dealing with his friends and making new connections. He lost some of his memory and turned to a wasted person. The narrator tells us:

He wandered the streets for a while looking for places he knew, but he recognized very little and often did not know where he was [...] perhaps he had lost part of his memory along the way, overwhelmed by the cruelties he had lived through in the meantime. He was so tired and maybe that added to his impression that everything here was strange. (241- 242)

Moreover, Hamza had to bear that mental and physical pain from the harassment and had no right to resist and protect himself against inhuman actions. He was, furthermore, visited by disturbing dreams:

When he dozed he was unsettled by dreams: falling through dark emptiness, crawling over fallen bodies, hectored by a face twisted with implacable hatred. There were shouts, blows and distant hills overflowing with translucently red viscera. (243)

These dreams reveal Hamza's buried desires and feelings about his tough situation and life, on account of which he turned into a silent, worried, and repressed man. He hid the horrible sentiment he got from that disturbance as a way to preserve himself from sarcasm, from ironic and pernicious words, and from being treated as a forsaken and insignificant man. All the above caused a deep-seated mental and psychological disorder for Hamza, who incarnates – on an individual level – the experience colonial trauma.

In his book *The Wretched of The Earth*, Frantz Fanon talks about the effects of colonial trauma on people's psyches. He concludes with a chapter in which he represents a number of clinical case studies that demonstrate and analyze the psychological effects of colonialism and Algerian revolutionary war on Algerians. For Fanon, soldiers and people involved in the war suffered from "reactional disorders"; their symptoms arise as a reaction to events and experiences that occurred in the specific context of colonial war; their mental disorders were formed by psychological structures of racism and colonialism; and they suffered from losing their identities and personalities in war. For that reason, Fanon writes: "Colonialism forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: 'in reality, who am I?'" (200). This existential crisis is intensely reflected in the experience of Hamza.

III- Healing and Recovery

When a person is exposed to a threatening behavior, any kind of violence, and sexual harassment, especially in childhood, that turns to any type of trauma. It is challenging and tough to get over and transcend that damage inflicted on the personality, behaviors and psyche of the hurt person, which creates a weakened and introverted soul.

There are two types of people who were victims of traumas and are healable. On one hand, people who decide to get better and survive from their past traumas and are determined to overcome what already happened by taking gradual steps to healing. These people get rid of destructive unconscious thoughts and free themselves to reach a certain consciousness that may lead to satisfying results. On the other hand, people who surrender to the prison of their thoughts and remain trapped and afflicted to what passed to them from traumas, thereby remaining unhealed from that gush for the rest of their lives. In this context, German colonialism left many unforgettable wounds behind for the colonized, which constituted a huge disruption in, and a massive destruction of, people's beliefs, perspectives, and lives – theirs and that of the subsequent generations. Gurnah, in this masterwork, sheds light on the extent to which colonization brought about mental and physical disorders, which turned the life of the colonized upside down and caused a deep wound on the psyche of the native that cannot – or perhaps is very hard to – be healed even after independence.

Afterlives reveals how the characters were subjected to various types of traumas. Some of them decided to heal themselves and live the present without being

overwhelmed by feelings of the past. Others remained afflicted by bad experiences and memories.

1- Accepting the Past, Changing the Present:

People who undergo a traumatic situation from mental disorders, isolation or anxiety for many reasons, and especially those mentioned in the second section, are susceptible to reach a point when they choose either to go through the path of healing or to remain captive to their feelings. For those who opt to be healed, they must go through the process of accepting the past and letting any terrible event simply exist in life without trying to alter, avoid, or deny it and therefore free themselves from it. Psychologists posit that acceptance of the past leads to better mental health, personal improvement, and psychological strength. In *Afterlives*, Gurnah stated that German colonization was the first contributor to the psychological lesions of the colonized, then the oppressive and regressive ideas of their society. He also showed how some of the characters in his novel are determined to move on from struggles and issues of their past and allow the present moment to exist by accepting their past events. This is especially the case with Afya and Hamza.

Starting with Afya, she lived for many years with that sick family and suffered mentally, psychologically and physically, which caused a chronic trauma that was hard to be healed. When her brother Ilyas took her away from that harmful environment, she learned how to write and read. This helped her to be conscious of her violated rights and she began to realize the importance of healing and getting out of her repressed thoughts and feelings, but she unfortunately remained affected by her trauma in this part of the novel as a result of childhood mistreatment. Yet she tried to go through the road of healing. She did not deny or reject her tough passed events and was aware of the causes and results of her trauma. Then, after leaving that family and living with Asha and

Khalifa, her life improved. But she never fully recovered from the past and remained under the controlling rules of Asha.

Turning to another complicated character, who is Hamza. After volunteering to join the German Army, his story of physical and psychological suffering began, from violence, beating, and sexual harassment, which caused later several internal psychological disorders in his personality and behavior that was hard to overcome. This is because he enlisted himself in the army without being forced to do so. Thus, he became constantly remorseful towards it, when Hamza decided to escape from these hardships and forgive himself about what happened and accept that he had been subjected to all kinds of violence and harassment. Hamza strove hard to change his fate and did not remain a prisoner of that miserable situation with Germans. He ran away to his village where he met Khalifa and became friends. From here, Hamza's story of healing began by knowing Afya and falling in love with her.

In Gurnah's novel, we notice that there are other characters who did not heal from their traumas; they remained attached and affected by horrible events that happened in their past. This is especially the case with Asha and Ilyas.

Asha became a nervous, irritable, and uneasy woman as a consequence of the psychological disorders caused by her uncle; she did not recover from her trauma and did not even try to change her reality and destiny by accepting her painful past and pursuit for better life. She was locked into her ignorant ideas because she did not discover herself yet, nor were she able to dive into the self-knowledge and awareness of psychological troubles and the wounds of her inner child. Therefore, it was nearly impossible for Asha to go through the path of healing or even to try to change her fate under the conditions in which she lived. She remained in surrender to a past that completely overwhelmed her present.

Turning to Ilyas, he did not heal from his cultural trauma and was still convinced that Germans are civilized and kind people and that they came to generate development in Tanzania. When he returned to his homeland in a mission; he met his friends, among whom is Khalifa, who was chocked at Ilyas's behaviors, talking, acting, and wearing like the Germans. His African identity and origin were almost obliterated; he was acknowledging Germans and talking about them as if they are angels to such an extent that one of his African friends told him: “My friend, they have eaten you” (Gurnah 76). He was completely overtaken by German colonial ideology.

Finally, Gurnah made this masterpiece to show the world that Africans fought and strove hardly to gain their freedom as a way to be healed, evict and get rid of a colonization that lasted for decades, which attempted to destroy local features of culture and civilization and exploited the wealth of the country and people's rights in the worst way ever. That caused most of the psychological and physical illnesses of the colonized. Thus, the novel shows us that acceptance and tolerance of the past's disorders and issues and having hope to change the present are the most successful ways to healing and getting rid of the illusions of the mind, repressed feelings, and psychological boosts.

2- Love and Care:

When someone experiences traumatic events and psychological dilemmas in the past, people around him who really care about his feelings will try to surround him with love as a way to healing. Love and care can indeed be a powerful way to heal from past traumas. Trauma can have a lasting impact on a person's mental and emotional well-being; it can be extremely difficult to overcome without the help of others. Feeling loved and valued by others helps to create healthier choices, good self-esteem, less stress and better life-long mental and physical health. And that was embodied in some of the characters' path of healing. To begin with, Ilyas loved and took care of his little

sister Afya; he made her feel emotionally saved and that helped her to work through the unresolved thoughts and emotions and being healed. As for Afya's relation with Khalifa and Asha, the couple took her from that miserable family after her brother joined the army. She lived peacefully with them and they took care of her. After that, and finally, the most effective and important story of love and care is the one of the two lovers, Hamza and Afya. After escaping from the German Army, Hamza went back to his village and met Khalifa then they became friends. Afya in that time was living with Khalifa and Asha. Hamza and Afya got to know each other deeply and became close to each other; Hamza fell in love with her and so was she. Thus, they got engaged and finally married. Months later, Afya gave birth to a child and named him after her brother. Hamza and Afya's relationship made both of them free and healed from their past traumas, overcoming some of the symptoms of psychological disorder like fear of dealing with people, isolation, and repression.

Love and care helped them to build trust in others, which is often damaged by traumatic experiences. Hamza and Afya gave each other a sense of worth and value; they created a strong, positive relationship to communicate effectively and to feel safe and valued. They established a nurturing and supportive environment. To conclude, love and care led some characters to be fully healed from past traumatic memories and changed their present lives to peaceful, comfort, and healthy mind and heart.

On the whole, the traumatic experiences of the characters, ranging from cultural, chronic, and colonial traumas and mental, physical, and psychological disorders in this literary work were firstly caused by the multiple kinds of violence and harassment, and secondly, as a result of the regressive thoughts and perspectives of society and family. All the above demonstrates the awful outcomes of the German colonization of East Africa, which were exacerbated by domestic forms of violence. Nevertheless, despite

the multiple forms of trauma that this complex violent environment had created, the novel shows that some traumas are hard to overcome – especially the cultural one caused by colonization – while others could be healed from through acceptance of the past and, most importantly, through love and care.

Conclusion

It has been the intention of this dissertation to highlight the representation of violence and trauma in Gurnah's novel *Afterlives* through analyzing the violent and traumatic experiences of the characters. This dissertation has shown that violence, in the

context of the novel, is both colonial and social, underscoring the mistreatment of Germans toward the colonized and the natives among themselves. This double violence caused multiple types of traumas, which are cultural, chronic and colonial, affecting the characters' lives and resulting in psychological, mental and physical wounds.

The first chapter provided the historical context, conceptual framework, and theoretical background. It discussed colonial presence in Africa generally, and specifically the German colonization in East-Africa –nowadays' Tanzania–, which is the main focus of this research. In the conceptual framework, this chapter offered a host of concepts that are related postcolonialism and psychoanalysis, which helped to explore the themes of violence and trauma in *Afterlives*.

The second chapter examined the violent experiences that the characters of *Afterlives* were subjected to. Throughout the novel, the characters experienced multiple forms of violence through the mistreatment of the Germans and their own society. The chapter provided, first, a general view of the manifestations of violence in *Afterlives*, and second, it gave detailed explanations of the forms of violence in the novel according to the characters' experiences. This chapter relied on postcolonial theory and its related concepts to analyze and discuss the theme of violence in Gurnah's novel.

The third chapter of this dissertation discussed the theme of trauma in *Afterlives*. It highlighted the aftermath of colonial and social violence in the novel as embodied in the traumas caused by the different forms of violence that the characters were subjected to. Furthermore, this chapter examined the different traumatic experiences of the novel's characters, Asha, Afya, Hamza and Ilyes, whose psyches, we have shown, were terribly damaged. It also covered how those characters worked to

recover their psyches by highlighting the ways they got healed and recovered from their traumas and how they reconnected to everyday life.

Finally, based on postcolonial and psychoanalytic theories and their related concepts, this research has – we hope – achieved a set of objectives. It showed that *Afterlives* is a complex postcolonial novel that provided a detailed view of the colonial experience of violence and its psychological damages, namely, different and lasting kinds of traumas. It highlighted the aftermath of the colonial and social oppression of the characters' psyches, which reflects the postcolonial condition as a whole. We hope to have shown that overcoming that trauma is possible, however difficult that may be.

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