



ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intersection of African literature and history, with a focus on Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's *Dust* and Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* within the context of Kenyan and Tanzanian histories. The study explores the role of contemporary novels in portraying the complexities of Africa's past, emphasizing literature as a lens for understanding and preserving history. The literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of African history, the evolution of African novels, and diverse theoretical frameworks. The conclusion discusses how Owuor and

AFRICAN HISTORIES IN NOVELS: THE DEPICTION OF KENYAN AND TANZANIAN HISTORIES IN YVONNE ADHIAMBO'S *DUST* & ABDULRASAQ GURNAH'S *AFTERLIVES*

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Introduction

The reality of African societal norms and values, both past and present, serve as the inspiration for most of the writing from that continent. In African society, writers are acute critics and change-makers since all writing, in a sense, is a critique of the human condition as it exists in the society it represents. The writer frequently feels compelled to highlight the negative aspects of society and of man. Thus, a lot of African literature explores the harsh and inhumane conditions that the majority of Africans experience, such as poverty, misery, political oppression, economic exploitation, excesses of the affluent, the eradication of humane African traditional values, and all types of injustices that seem to be the lot of a large portion of the continent's population. The interaction between the author and his physical and human surroundings in a play, novel, poem, or short story manifest as a mirror through which his people and society may see how they seem. Every picture a skilled artist creates is articulated, placed into writing or print, becomes a piece of public property, and is left available to interpretation by those who can read and comprehend the language and expression.

The portrayal of African history in literature, particularly in novels, has been a subject of growing academic interest in recent years. Africa's rich and diverse historical tapestry has often been marginalized or misrepresented in mainstream narratives. In recent decades, African authors have been instrumental in reshaping the narrative by



Gurnah's works contribute rich depictions of African history, challenging stereotypes and offering nuanced perspectives. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of Africa's complex and diverse history through the lens of literature.

Key words: African, History, Humanities, Transnational, Kenyan, Tanzanian.

producing a wealth of novels that explore the continent's history from pre-colonial times to the post-colonial era. Literature has always been one of the most important vehicles for reflecting past and contemporary social events, both in its oral and written forms. The portrayal of human endeavors in literature continues to be a persistent tool; the representation of African history in African literature demonstrates a complex interplay between historical facts, cultural narratives, and literary imagination. It is clear from an examination of a number of literary works that authors frequently use historical incidents and situations to create their narratives, so influencing both the stories they tell and the messages they deliver.

Literature Review

History is the analysis and interpretation of the human past enabling us to study continuity and changes that are taking place over time. It is an act of both investigation and imagination that seeks to explain how people have changed over time. Historians use all forms of evidence to examine, interpret, revisit, and reinterpret the past. These include not just written documents, but also oral communication and objects such as buildings, artifacts, photographs, and paintings. Historians are trained in the methods of discovering and evaluating these sources and the challenging task of making historical sense out of them. History is a means to understand the past and present. The different interpretations of the past allow us to see the present differently and therefore imagine and work towards different futures. It is often said to be the “queen” or “mother” of the social sciences (Pallavi et.al, 2022).

Prehistoric Africa is a captivating subtopic within African history that offers valuable insights into the continent's ancient past. It gives a framework for comprehending the various cultures, ecosystems, and human advancements that influenced Africa over a large time span spanning millions of years. The importance of prehistoric Africa to the study of human evolution is well known. The Great Rift Valley has produced significant fossil evidence, especially at locations like Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge. Famous books like Richard Leakey's "The Origin of Humankind" shed light on the origins and migration of early hominins (Mokhtar, 1981). African countries are home to some of the oldest rock drawings in the world, including those found in the South African Drakensberg Mountains and Algeria's Tassili n'Ajjer caves (Smith, 2009). The spiritual and cultural ideas of ancient African tribes are revealed in these works of art. Significant civilizations like the Kingdom of Kush in Nubia (present-day Sudan), famous for its pyramids and trading networks, rose to prominence in prehistoric Africa.



Medieval Africa refers to the period in African history roughly spanning from the decline of the Roman Empire (around the 5th century) to the onset of European colonialism (around the late 19th century). During this time, there were important political, cultural, and economic advancements on this huge and diverse continent. Powerful kingdoms and empires rose to prominence during the middle ages in Africa. The Kingdom of Ghana, the Mali Empire, the Songhai Empire, and the Kingdom of Axum in East Africa are notable instances. These governments ruled over huge areas and conducted trade with other countries. In the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean commerce networks, Africa was a key player. A particularly major trade was the exchange of gold for salt across the Sahara Desert (Osborne, 1996). Mali's Timbuktu rose to prominence as a hub of study and trade. There were notable cultural accomplishments in mediaeval Africa. For instance, there were various libraries and educational institutions in the city of Timbuktu. The Swahili city-states along the coast of East Africa served as major crossroads for commerce and culture.

In the mid-20th century, Africa experienced a wave of decolonization as nations fought for their independence. Ghana, led by Kwame Nkrumah, became the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from colonial rule in 1957 (Davidson, 1991). This inspired other African nations to follow suit, leading to a period of rapid decolonization. Post-independence Africa faced numerous challenges, including political instability, ethnic conflicts, and economic struggles. However, there have been positive developments as well. African countries have made progress in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, and some have experienced economic growth (Acemoglu et al., 2001).

The history of Africa is woven together by prehistoric civilizations, colonialism, the fight for freedom, and continuous initiatives to overcome obstacles. Although there has been great progress, the continent's history is still complicated and multidimensional, and there are both chances and difficulties in its future.

Theoretical Framework

New Historicism Theory

New Historicism is a literary theory and critical approach that emerged in the late 20th century, primarily in the field of literary studies. It seeks to understand and interpret literary texts within the context of the historical and cultural milieu in which they were produced. This theory challenges traditional literary criticism, which often focused solely on the text itself, by emphasizing the interconnectedness of literature and history. Proponents of New Historicism argue that a literary work cannot be divorced from the social, political, and cultural factors of the time in which it was written. They believe that literature is a product of its historical moment and reflects the ideologies and power dynamics of that period. In essence, it's a way of reading and analyzing literature that places it firmly within its historical context. One of the key principles of New Historicism is its interdisciplinary nature. New Historicist critics draw from a wide range of disciplines, including history, anthropology, sociology, and political science, to analyze and contextualize literary texts. This interdisciplinary approach enriches their understanding of the text's historical significance and allows for a more nuanced interpretation. This approach reflects the diversity of historical experiences and viewpoints and highlights the complex and fragmented



nature of history itself. Stephen Greenblatt is one of the most influential proponents of New Historicism.

Methods/Materials

This study employs a qualitative approach using New Historicism Theory. This theory aids the understanding and interpretation of literary texts within the context of the historical and cultural milieu in which they were produced. This theory challenges traditional literary criticism, which often focused solely on the text itself, by emphasizing the interconnectedness of literature and history. The two African texts are purposively selected; Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor's *Dust* and Abdulrasaq Gurnah's *Afterlives*. for they are seen to exhibit a clear relative connection to the context of this study and point of view which enhance the study.

Discussions

Dust by Yvonne Owuor is a compelling novel set in post-election violence in 2007 Kenya. The story unfolds in a non-linear and fragmented manner, starting with the death of Odidi Oganda, a brilliant engineer turned leader of a criminal gang. His sister, Ajany, returns from Brazil, and together with their father, Nyipir, they embark on a journey to bury Odidi. The narrative weaves through various characters, each haunted by their past, including Akai, Odidi's mother, and the mysterious affair with British colonial official Hugh Bolton. Amidst love and violence, the novel explores themes of guilt, regret, and forgiveness.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives* is a historical fiction set in German colonial-era East Africa. The narrative spans from the turn of the century to the mid-1960s, tracing the lives of multiple families in an unknown Tanzanian town. Khalifa, who works for merchant Amur Biashara, experiences loss and regret after neglecting his family. The story intertwines with characters like Ilyas, Afiya, and Hamza, exploring their relationships and struggles during WWI and WWII. Themes of family, loss, and the impact of historical events shape the generational tale, revealing the intricate connections between the colonizers and the colonized.

The Depiction of Kenyan History in Yvonne Owuor's *Dust*

Kenyan history is at the backdrop of the fictional stories in *Dust*. In the novel, the author makes a conscious effort to let her characters like Nyipir, Odidi, Ajany, Akai, Ali, Isaiah, and the Trader, all on the margin of society's mainstream, narrate their stories, thus giving their versions of history, which in many ways contest the idea of a homogenous nation-state as displayed by the official historical accounts. Despite the interconnectedness of the fictional stories and historical events in *Dust*, the novel not only evokes Kenyan history but also reveals socio-political realities for more than fifty years from the perspective of alienated Kenyans.

The novel comprises underlying messages focusing on the intersection of the personal histories of different characters with various ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds and historical events. The narrator narrates the characters and circumstances that have dogged Kenya since Uhuru, like violence, corruption, assassination, and disillusionment. This is because the characters are on the margin of the nation-state, and through them, the readers can peer into their lives and feel how they undergo these realities.

In describing the origin of Kenya in "The Intervention of Kenya," Odhiambo (1996) says that from 1985 to 1905, the land called Kenya today was changed from a footpath six hundred miles long between Mombasa and Kisumu into a sternly politicized colonial state. Regarding *Dust*, during World War II (1939-1945), the British colonial administration recruited Africans to fight in countries like Burma in Asia. Nyipir's father and older brother enlisted in their village, Nyanza, to fight in Burma. After his uncle maltreated him and he retaliated, he ran to Baba Jimmy, who took him to



Catholic School for schooling. The Mau Mau war was at its peak, and the British were cracking down on the Mau Mau supporters when Nyipir joined Warui, the gravedigger, in exhuming the dead and burying secretly to raise enough money to go to Burma. Later, Nyipir was transferred from the Station to the colonial security camp and then to Athi River, where Mau Mau members were detained.

While in Athi River, Hugh Bolton came to inspect the detainees and enlisted Nyipir as his servant. They both moved to the Northern Frontiers District (NFD) and settled in Wuoth Ogik, Turkana. Colonial authorities transferred Bolton to NFD to manage the security situation as a disciplinary measure because of disappointing the authorities. The authorities thought Bolton would resign for sending him to NFD. However, Bolton and his wife, Selene, arrived in Kenya in the 1950s and settled in Naivasha. Selene feared for her life because the Mau Mau insurgency prevailed then, but Bolton was bent that the British should maintain its Kenya colony. When Bolton was transferred to the north, Selene refused to follow him. In addition, the narrator reveals that in 1960, Ali Dida Hada arrived in Kenya from Eritrea and later joined the Kenya Police Service.

Kenya became a republic with Kenyatta as its first president and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga as the vice president in 1964. Moreover, because of intraparty violence bedeviling KANU, Odinga stepped down in 1966 to form a leftist opposition party, the Kenya People's Union (KPU). Shortly after its creation, KPU was restricted, and Odinga was arrested in 1969. As such, Kenya became a single-party state. In the same year, Tm Mboya, the minister for economic planning, was assassinated, sparking anger from members of the Luo community and accelerating tension within the nation. Nyipir joined the police force and participated in Kenya's independence celebrations in 1963. Afterward, he was promoted to lead the Anti-Stock Theft Unit but was later tortured and discharged dishonorably after Tom Mboya's assassination in 1969. He retreated to Wuoth Ogik, where he discovered solace and began engaging in cattle rustling and trading in contraband goods. Dust pinpoints political assassinations politics of the succession of Jomo Kenyetta between 1970 and 2007. It also reveals the 1982-attempted coup, multi-party politics, ethnic conflicts, terror attacks in 1998, and other events like corruption. During Kenyatta's regime in 1975, J. M. Kariuki was killed. Kenyetta died in August 1978, and his Vice President, Daniel arap Moi, succeeded him as Kenya's second president, ruling the nation till 2002. During his twenty-fourth tenure, the National Assembly declared Kenya a single-party state in June 1982. The Kenya Army suppressed a coup attempt by members of the Kenya Air Force in August 1982. In addition, the political opposition parties were suppressed until December 1992, when KANU, the ruling party and only political party, consented to a multi-party political system, and elections were conducted in December 1992. Although Moi was re-elected in the multi-party elections in 1992 and 1997, the elections were sabotaged by ethnic clashes.

In 2002, Mwai Kibaki won the presidential election by a landslide majority, ending Daniel arap Moi's tenure. Meanwhile, Kibaki emerged the office with a promise to end corruption and poor governance that had characterized Kenyatta's and Moi's tenures. However, his tenure was dogged by the same issues. Kibaki had promised Kenyans a new constitution, but after Parliament approved a draft constitution in 2005, voters refuted the document in a referendum as it proposed an imperial presidency. In December 2007, a disputed presidential election led to violence and resulted in a massacre, according to official records. The government and opposition signed a power-sharing agreement in February 2008. After the agreement, a tribunal was established to investigate the perpetrators of the violence. In October 2008, a report on the post-election clashes was released, recommending prosecuting those implicated in the violence.

As an instance of the representation of selected historical events in Kenya, the author reveals that in 1978, a lean cattleman, an inarticulate teacher, took charge as Kenyan president. This refers to Daniel arap Moi (275). Furthermore, the novel talks about the 1998 bomb blast in Nairobi. Akai



feared that Odidi could have died in the blast (33). The narrative then shifts to december 2007, during the elections, when police murdered Odidi for theft. Ajany returns to Kenya after Nyipir tells her about Odidi's death. As Nyipir's family tries to come to collect Odidi's body, the narrator notes the incidents surrounding the post-election in which many Kenyans lost their lives and many lives displaced.

Hence, *Dust* focuses on the complex interconnection between fiction and history. The novel comprises a series of subplots dealing with the intersection between family, individual, and nation-state histories from Colonial Kenya to 2008. Intentionally shunning the linearity preferred by official history, the author uses flashbacks to take the readers back and forth within the nation-state to areas like Nyanza, Fort Hall, Athi River, Turkana, and Nairobi. However, the author provides only a little information about time, leaving many gaps in the narrative to be filled later.

Through fiction, Yvonne counters the country's history as a construct by an elite. Hence, the novel emerges as a creative way of reconstructing or deconstructing the official history. The novel's fictional characters visualize the past as it is drawn from their memory and imagination. Instead of making the characters out of Kenya's history, Yvonne creates fictional characters like Nyipir, Akai Hugh Bolton, and Ali, who narrate their stories. The readers see the stories of Nyipir, Akai, Bolton, and Selene during colonialism and later the lives of Nyipir, Akai, Odidi, Isaiah, Ali, and others in post-colonial Kenya. Through Nyipir, the author highlights colonial atrocities against Africans in Fort Hall and after Independence, as those who spoke out were silenced. At the same time, corruption and outlawed activities like cattle rustling, poaching, and trade in guns were the order of the day.

The Depiction of Tanzanian History in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Afterlives*

The landmark event in East Africa's history was Oman's expulsion of the Portuguese colonists from East Africa in 1698. The expansion of the powers did not stop there, and in the 19th century, Britain became the colonizer of Zanzibar. It was not until 1964 that Tanganyika joined the People's Republic of Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Gurnah left Tanzania in 1966. After a stay in Kenya, he arrived in Britain as a refugee in 1968. Gurnah's diasporic life and refugee status have led to his erratic existence in time and space. It has influenced his novel to develop a dispersed narrative style. Secondly, it comes from Gurnah's reflection on post-colonialism.

The post-colonial theory began in the 1980s, and its formation was marked by the publication of Edward Waefie Said's *Orientalism*. While post-colonialism is relative to colonialism, which oppresses a country or nation utilizing power politics and violence, post-colonialism colonizes dependent countries through culture, ideology, and language. The dispersed narrative style of Gurnah's novel is influenced by post-colonialism.

Tanzania's unfortunate history and Gurnah's tortuous life experiences have led to the development of Gurnah's novelistic dispersion style in the post-colonial context. Gurnah's refugee status and experience of exile lead to a non-linear continuum of time, which in turn influences the narrative style of his novel, in which fragmented stories that travel through time and space replace the traditional linear narrative, and this fracture appropriately represents the lives of characters in a dislocated, dispersed state.

The narrative opens in 1900, when one of the focalisers, twenty-six-year-old Khalifa, son of an Indian bookkeeper and an African mother, becomes the merchant Biashara's clerk and, in 1907, marries his wife. Failing to pursue the socio-economical ambitions of his Indian ancestors, Khalifa stays in his role through to his death in 1942, becoming the novel's increasingly disgruntled critic of the socio-political developments in East Africa while at the same time embodying an ethics of empathy and practical support in life's tragedies. On the eve of World War I, when their friend, the older Ilyas, volunteers to join the German 'Schutztruppe' in his misguided enthusiasm for all things German, the childless couple take in Ilyas's much younger orphaned sister, Afiya, to rescue her



from traumatic slavery-like abuse in her home village, which leaves her left hand crippled for life. After the war, Khalifa facilitates the marriage between the lovers Afiya and Hamza, who then named their only son after Afiya's missing uncle, Ilyas. This motif exemplifies transgenerational connections at the private level of Gurnah's narrative, which interact in multiple ways with the memory and post-memory of violent and traumatic history.

While Afiya introduces a female perspective into the representation of lived historical experience, her older brother, Ilyas, who disappears completely from the narrative at the start of the war, is used to complement the 'afterlives' of German colonialism in the East African setting of the novel with the fate of colonial Africans, notably former askari soldiers, who went to Germany after World War I in the vain hope of support in and by the former imperial centre. As the younger Ilyas, Hamza and Afiya's son, finds out in the post-memory section of the novel when he searches for traces of his missing uncle in German colonial, government, church and media archives in West Germany in 1963–4, the volunteer askari Ilyas was wounded in battle in 1917, detained by the British, then embarked on a career as a sailor and came to Germany in 1929, where he applied unsuccessfully for a German pension and war medal. He changes his name to Elias Essen, 'making a living as a singer in Hamburg', marrying a German in 1933, having three children, 'marching with the Reichskolonialbund, a Nazi Party organisation' in their campaign to reclaim Germany's colonies – a particularly striking example of post-imperial despair –, moving to Berlin in 1938 and dying, together with his son, in 'Sachsenhausen in 1942', i.e. symbolically in the same year as his friend Khalifa.

Opening with flashbacks to African resistance against German imperialism, *Afterlives* thus ends with Africans' and Afro-Germans' struggle for survival in the face of racist discrimination and persecution in the Weimar and Nazi periods in line with similar accounts in the life-writing of Afro-Germans such as Massaquoi, Stramm and Michael, or Bechhaus-Gerst's biography of the former East African askari Mahjub. In terms of the novel's poetics and politics of memory, this also means that in *Afterlives*, Gurnah creates a similar link between the memory of colonialism and the memory of National Socialism and the Holocaust suggested immediately after World War II by Hannah Arendt and Aimé Césaire and seen very widely in post-war and contemporary German literature remembering and critiquing colonialism. Where Ilyas's tragic fate represents the radical disillusionment of African hopes invested in German colonial rule and culture, Hamza's path through World War I and beyond is a more contradictory survival against the odds in the face of traumatic violence (both physical and psychological), leading to recovery and a full-scale reinvention of his life in post-war Swahili society during subsequent British colonial rule. While the two characters never meet, Hamza's cautious attitude towards the Germans contrasts with Ilyas's enthusiasm, as does Ilyas's emigration to post-imperial Germany with Hamza's return to his point of departure and his largely successful attempts to move on from his traumatic experiences (which nevertheless continue to haunt him).

While Ilyas applies for a German military pension, Hamza explicitly rules this out when he and his friends read in the newspapers about the former German military commander Lettow Vorbeck's colonialist lobbying in the Weimar Republic as someone who 'is still working hard for his troops in Berlin [...] The settlers here love the General'. The two characters represent opposite and complementary sides of African engagement with German colonial rule, different war experiences (Ilyas joins the signalling department, from which Hamza is barred) and contrasting attitudes to the German past after the war.

Afterlives effectively continues its author's earlier account of life during German colonial times in East Africa by revisiting the period before World War I with a range of new characters with whom Hamza later becomes associated (part I), then representing World War I in East Africa through Hamza's experience in the German colonial army (part II), using his return to the trading town on



the Swahili coast where he previously worked for Aziz to give a lively portrait of the post-war period under British rule, focused on 1921/22 (part III), before tracing the characters' further lives through to 1963/64, when Hamza's son Ilyas travels to West Germany to research the fate of his uncle who went missing in World War I and, as it turns out, lived through the Weimar Republic and the Nazi period, ending in the Konzentrationslager (KZ) Sachsenhausen (part IV). As indicated in the novel's title, *Afterlives*, parts III and IV add a memory and post-memory perspective to this historical novel about the impact and aftermath of German colonial rule in East Africa, which symbolically bridges the gap between the colonial past and the post-colonial present at a time when post memory has become a vital element of the memory discourses about violent and traumatic history such as the Holocaust and European colonialism. While the first two parts of the novel resonate in theme and post-colonial perspective with German historical novels about German colonial rule in East Africa and World War I, the fact that all the main characters are part of an extended network of interlinked (patchwork) families and friends echoes the frequent use of the transgenerational family novel as a popular genre in German fiction since the 1990s concerned with historical memory and post-memory.

However, Gurnah reverses a recurrent narrative trope used in quite a few German transgenerational family novels on the colonial theme: the trope of sending descendants of German colonial settlers and soldiers to the sites of their grandparents' or great-grandparents' colonial engagement in today's Namibia or Tanzania for a critical, at times also nostalgic rereading of colonial history.

Indeed, *Afterlives* is unique in introducing an African descendant researching the 'afterlives' of East African-German colonial entanglements in post-World War II Germany – not as a migrant but as a visitor whose professional work (as a journalist) combines historical inquiry with the resolution of personal family trauma. In doing so, retracing an askari soldier's attempts to cope in the post-imperial Germany of the Weimar Republic and Third Reich and having him and his Afro-German son die in a Nazi concentration camp, *Afterlives* also resonates with the life-writing of older-generation Afro-Germans such as Hanns J. Massaquoi (1999), Gert Schramm (2011) and Theodor Michael (2013), and more recent post-colonial historiography retracing the fates of colonial Africans in post-World War I Germany, such as Marianne Bechhaus-Gerst's *Treibisin den Tod* (2007), whose subject, the former askari soldier Mahjubbin Adam Mohamed from East Africa, also dies in the KZ Sachsenhausen.

Spanning nearly a century from the beginning of the German Reich's colonial rule in East Africa in the mid-1880s through to the mid-1960s, *Afterlives* combines extensive historical information with the fictional account of an interlinked group of East African characters who take turns acting as the narrative's focalisers, representing the lived experience of German colonial rule and its aftermath from bottom-up African perspectives. While Gurnah's earlier novels keep German characters at the very margins of the narrative and cast Germans as almost stereotypically violent and brutal, *Afterlives* also sets out a richer panorama of East African modes of engagement with Germans and the German language, leading to an arguably again highly critical but also more nuanced depiction of different attitudes and behaviours on the part of the German officers, settlers, administrators and pastors who represent German colonial rule. All of these Germans display the colonial sense of European and German racial and cultural superiority and the condescending attitude towards the multiethnic local population, which Gurnah's novels criticise throughout; in other words, just as Gurnah's narrative registers and reflects upon the internal frictions of Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, it also refrains from the tendency in the more popular German novels about East Africa to project twenty-first-century normative concepts of cross-cultural dialogue and exchange back into the early 1900s.



The German characters' behaviour towards Africans in *Afterlives* ranges from hateful violence (e.g. the 'Feldwebel' who almost kills Hamza at the end of the war) through ambivalent paternalism (e.g. the 'Oberleutnant' whose personal servant Hamza becomes) to developmental support (e.g. the German settler who offers Ilyas's uncle, the original Ilyas, professional training on his coffee farm and also sends him to the local German school, acting '*like a father*' (p. 39) and enabling the young run-away to embark on a promising career in the infrastructure of the German trade with colonial goods). As a result, more of the African characters in this novel engage with German colonial rule for their advancement, learning to speak and write German, volunteering for the German colonial army, such as Hamza and the older Ilyas, going to German mission schools and becoming teachers, or simply taking a continued interest in the German language, such as the carpenter with whom Hamza trains during the 1920s.

However, Gurnah leaves no doubt about African resistance to German imperialism and makes extensive reference to the al Bushiri, Wahehe, Maji Maji and other uprisings, noting that '*[t]he steadfastness of the refusal of these people to become subjects of the Deutsch-Ostafrika empire had come as a surprise to the Germans*' (15–16). This hostility is reflected in the fiction by those characters who stay clear of involvement with the Germans; the older Ilyas's trust in the benefits of German colonial rule is very much an exception. *Afterlives* thus map out a similar balance of opposition to and engagement with German colonial rule in East Africa as The conflicted cosmopolitanism of the Indian Ocean universe again acts as a backdrop to the East African story-world, represented most clearly here by the Indian merchant Amur Biashara and his son Nassor, whose changing fortunes and shifting business ventures reflect the impact of German and later British colonial rule on local trade and society – through to the introduction of modern machinery and corporate business structures from the 1920s onwards when older Indian Ocean connectivities make way for colonial globalisation in the context of the British Empire.

Conclusion

The study found that the text, *Dust* falls under Kenya's postcolonial literature. The author attempted to create a literature with a Kenyan identity. She used appropriate English Language to achieve this. Furthermore, the study discovered that Swahili words and phrases authenticate the novel's setting as purely African/Kenyan since Swahili is a national language in Kenya. Likewise, the study found that the novel presents the reader with a narrative that tries to reconstruct and recreate Kenyan history. The author claims a historical validity for the ordinary by situating her literary work alongside and overlapping with conventional narratives of national and public history. Her novel digs into the characters' memories to recreate the personal and collective histories of families, communities, and a nation.

Also, the study discovered that the novel is an allegory of postcolonial Kenya. The author depicts that history can be erratic, and constructing it from memory is even more problematic since memory can be elusive. Through ellipsis and related literary forms like repetition, omission, repression, and truncation, the literary text emphatically suggests that history is not homogenous. The narrative and the character display that making a nation is not a simple process, and neither does it follow a linear plot. Rather, the process is a painstaking one that needs meticulous digging into the past and citizens' lives to unearth the untold stories, the silenced sections of the nation's existence. Just like other historical novels, *Dust* mixes imagined situations with historical events like the Mau Mau rebellion against the British Colonial government, independence celebrations, the assassination of Tom Mboya in 1969, the rise of Moi to the presidency in 1978, the 1998 bomb blast and the bloody post-election violence of 2007-2008. While creating these big scenes, Yvonne takes the reader through riotous Kenyan histories.



This study found that Gurnah's writing 'traces a complex history of transregional and transnational movements and connections' in 'stories that imagine "Africa" and indeed "Britain"' (and Germany, we could add) 'as inter-cultural and inter-linguistic spaces' of 'alternative social encounters' that are 'always under threat by exploitative economic relations masked by violent identity politics' premised on 'cultural nationalism and ethnic autochthony' – or, historically, colonial discourse and racism. While Gurnah rejects the political fiction of 'pre-colonial African societies as homogeneous and harmonious', he also complicates established postcolonial narratives on the impact and aftermath of colonialism, in our case, German colonialism in East Africa. His poetics of postcolonial memory echo many concerns in contemporary German literature, much of which is not available in English.

The theme of colonialism and identity is at the forefront of the novel, examining the impact of colonialism on individuals' perception of themselves and their place in society. However, Gurnah frequently incorporates Swahili words and phrases in his novels, which also feature prominently in 'Afterlives'. Through his writing, he subtly prompts readers to recognize the impact of colonization on language use and its effects on literature. However, he also incorporates German words in military settings to underscore the colonial presence.

The novel illustrates how colonialism has caused deep wounds that continue to affect generations, not just the colonized but their families and communities. Gurnah's incorporation of Swahili and German language and his use of historical events add an authentic touch to the novel. Additionally, the emphasis on trust, love, and compassion as restorative forces provides a hopeful outlook amidst a bleak narrative. The novel serves as a powerful reminder to listen to and amplify the voices of those marginalized and silenced by history.

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