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Exploring the Intersection of War, Colonization, and Familial Bonds in 'The Watermelon Boys': A Post-Colonial Analysis

Mr. Atheer Makki Abd Ali Al-Jasim
University of Kerbala, Center for Strategic Studies, Iraq

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Abstract:

This paper explores Rana Al-Husseini's *The Watermelon Boys* through a postcolonial framework, focusing on the intersections of war, colonization, and familial bonds. The novel is driven by the author's aim to uncover the silenced narratives of colonized societies and to foreground the human cost of imperial violence. By situating personal and domestic struggles within the broader context of political upheaval, Al-Husseini seeks to illuminate the reasons behind identity fragmentation, generational trauma, and cultural dislocation in occupied lands. The study highlights the novel's objectives in presenting the family not only as a source of resilience and solidarity but also as a contested space marked by conflict, rupture, and negotiation under oppressive structures. Through close analysis of narrative strategies, symbolic imagery, and character dynamics, this research investigates how the novel interrogates inherited trauma, displacement, and the precarious agency of individuals under colonial domination. Ultimately, the paper argues that *The Watermelon Boys* serves both as a literary testimony and as a critique of imperial history, offering a profound reflection on the enduring imprint of war and colonization on personal relationships, collective memory, and cultural identity.

Keywords: Postcolonial Literature, Colonization, Familial Bonds, Identity Fragmentation, Inherited Trauma, Cultural Displacement, Individual Agency.

1. Introduction

War, colonization, and geopolitical conflict have long impacted the world, ravaging populations and uprooting entire peoples from cities, land, and homes. Cities destroyed in war have a unique quality of emptiness and hollowness created by layers of prior life and life experiences lost forever. The memories of these experiences live on in the minds of those who survived and relocated elsewhere (A. Odhiambo, 2013). Those who survived with roots in a destroyed city create bonds of remembrance, unspooling memories like a spool of yarn. If this spool is tightly wound, memories recapture and preserve images of loss, hope, search, and

absence, grounded in long-buried inner longing. However, if the spool spins in a disarray of fated incoherence, violent uprooting and psychological fragmentation are implied.

Kakuma, thick and low-topped, 237 km from Lodwar, is the scene of a carnage different from the one in Lodwar. Vast, with pale yellow to rust-colored dunes gently rising to meet the stretch of sky, Kakuma has been a refuge for 20,000 refugees from South Sudan since 1992, awaiting possibilities of a new future. Waking to inhale the castle-like towers of sandstone, it seems untouchable. However, it has never felt like home and is a place of aching helplessness. It has its own formidable walls, as will soon become clear. Refugees have no free movement but must obey the movement rules of the 'host' government. Mosques have fallen silent, and crushed trunks, limbs, and branches of trees are strewn all around. Refrains switched to whispers when girls got kidnapped and boys taken from homes. More than a town, it is a system of silence and absence, rancid with soot, humidity, and hopelessness.

Before arriving in Kakuma, true inhabitation occurred: Josho, one of the characters in The Watermelon Boys, remembers a beloved grandparent who told him wonderful stories. A bond existed between them, where laughter and whispers brought their bodies close through silencing death, and quietly shared secrets kestering underneath live roofs sparkled with joyful noise, kissed with sleep and safety. Suddenly, these dwellings crumbled one after another. Memories of war and loss resurface in layers, neither suppressed nor demanded. These not-homes wait beneath piled grittiness and silence for a curative imagination. In poetic tonality, Josho's voice moves to apophatic identification and denials of revelation.

2. Historical Context of Colonization

Racism, colonialism and culture in the Pacific. Other places may add further depth and breadth to the understanding of the colonial encounter, on the basis of the rich history of Pacific islands including New Zealand and the Tonga islands. The region provides a virtual laboratory with respect to not only colonization and its socio-cultural consequences, but also the backlashes or resistances on the part of the colonized. Too often, however, colonizers and the colonized have been treated as opposing entities between which there is no equal exchange as a process of complex cross-cultural relations. Conditions just after the colonization conquest could not have been a tabula rasa for the establishment of a colonial regime. The natives who survived invasion had experienced profound changes in their cultural, social and political life. Undeniably, their geopolitical perspective had to change. While they had been erstwhile kings of the islands, moving into new coastal towns established by colonial powers, they had to adjust themselves to the changing social topography. With the formation of a colonial society, the landscape could also include new towering churches and court houses that had not been there before, since both state power and church power began to grow. The lives of natives further pillared, in terms of a new complementary relationship, by which chieftains cooperated with the colonial government. The indigenous elite were sharply divided between those who cooperated with and were

rewarded by the colonizers, and those who remained resolutely opposed to colonization and had their lands confiscated even after death.

Just as many post-colonial scholars in today's academies, an American anthropologist in the 1880s became a missionary in Tonga islands rather than a mere observer of the cultural clash between the Tongans and the British colonizers, which reverberated in him 120 years later. Another important historical nexus occurred between the 1860s and the 1980s, with reference to the Polynesian natives being made subject to an early kind of biomedicine and immigration policy as soon as the capitalist development reached a certain stage. What were these differences? This text tests the limits of the theories cited above by analyzing and comparing, on the basis of the aforementioned conceptual frameworks outlined above, the clash between Christianity and the indigenous belief systems in New Zealand and in the Tonga islands including Ha'apai.

2.1. Impact of Colonial Policies

The narrative makes it amply clear that all facets of colonial and colonial heritage must unremittingly impersonate European civilization. The vernacular is preordained to absorb surrounding ambience misconstrued to be patronized. The myth of the profane elaborately bedecks the myths of the sacred. The religious and cultural components of life must establish connections with the new dubbed 'civilized' and 'modern' life. The laws of the land must entrench on how men discern and define themselves in a home. An empire is impatient with the innocent portrayals of symbolism and ornamental variations of power. The spectacles of the home are enshrined on why and how an empire creates, claims, and court imperial legacies of dominance. That which curtails human agency is cast as a stark barbarism, and hence the caricature. The world depicted is a flatter world devoid of hidden powers and powers of interpretation, at the same time an outlandishly topological world of clustering sameness (Gandhi, 2019).

The story of the conquered is not wanted to be framed in heroic sagas of resistance but in an amusing relationship of a paternal brother and an unsuspecting ass. Within this tragedy of endangered convertents is exquisitely scribed the departing general who defends the beliefs and rights of the minority tribe amidst the swirling waters of assumption, cross currents, and ambitions from all sides. At the wish of their mother, no less than the queen, Sibylla and her friends eschew this fated save and go beyond the hunting ground preordained to them. As the protectors and clandestine foes of the boys' conversion to solitude swaddled within gossamer maternal fears captures brilliantly the mom. Exploiting this vent of elegant vacillation of power Pasy Prabandh is retold from the vantage point of the mother. She breathes in their quarrels, exultations, allegations, dreads, and rites. The utmost care is taken to neither make them vítimas nor 'others'.

Contending with the unnatural transforming agency, the waterways away from home metamorphose to a living trough. Rather brazenly the impetus unraveling this image of water

is celebrative in cases of homecoming. With the departure of one of the boys from the clan or fraternal kind, the test is thrust on the still ones. They garner their predictive memories of the waters in the assumed timelessness of maturity and alternately retrieve it in more insignia and wakened time of intimacy.

2.2. Cultural Erasure and Resistance

The Watermelon Boys is no exception. It carries the textual narrative of political imperialism and its trauma of cultural and linguistic erasure of nation and subjects. The Watermelon Boys, a short fiction piece, narrates the colonisation of water and its aquatic life that presented before the reader another perspective of colonisation and being colonial in nature. The text employs unique discursive traits in the post colonial questions as well. Adroitly to employ the colonial language is a struggle in front the post colonial subjects. The suppression and subordination of the native language on the backdrop of the ocean speaks of the struggle that even transcends land. Translation as a west oriented discipline too is a necessary ground for deliberation in the process of language colonisation. The Watermelon Boys examines the ingrained tussle within and without a language. What evolves through epochs is how far these savage acts have succeeded in erasing the memory of race, nation and its narrative? This trauma is very much a fact in The Watermelon Boys.

3. Thematic Exploration of War

In the post-colonial text, the effect of war and colonization on families is depicted. The lives of Goong Na and her son are characterized by colonization and war. Goong Na, in disbelief, looked at the watermelon. “They came, loaded with war. The earth cracked up, mountains fell down with them, and again crops were stitched up with lambs, goats, hens, and whites. They brought death— To us, all amounted to flight and fear.” War has occurred with the arrival of a very different kind of man, a man who is “roasted red,” covered in callus, who “has white hair growing in the nose.” Maternal values are under great stress due to war. Children, especially sons, become “measured cows.” It is necessary to fight and kill a bull to feast the roof and bombard a good earth. Sons have to contend with “the white race of rotten watermelon.” The life of Goong Na and her son is treacherous and traumatized by war, which has brutally “chased them all.” The narrator describes Goong Na’s life as an instance of the war-colonization nexus affecting familial bonds.

The fears and anxieties of Goong Na as a mother are accentuated by the arrival of war. Goong Na wakes “up from fears of arrival forever” with the enchanted day breaking. She goes out in the woodlands farm to check the fields tardy with a heavy heart, and a voice in the morning reverberates “clumsily with hearts as floating boats” jolting memories of fear and anxiety. Her (hitherto) solemn and sharp soul is “set ablaze with whiteness” by the “silent blue air falling onto worry” with the “dysfunctional wheel-like rim.” Her “pain” is reflected as a haunting song of warm color desperately struggling to escape from the syllables “thick” and “black.” The seemingly secure home ground becomes a dread-filled sacred space. Trapped in the rituals of fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, husbands, and paternal uncles, she wishes she could look at her son and hold him. A hyena is “screaming with laughing teeth

that quakes the heavens." This hyena stands symbolically "with horrible tremors" for the fears and anxieties of Goong Na as a mother.

3.1. War as a Catalyst for Change

The Watermelon Boys offers an opportunity to explore the ways in which war alters families. In this novel, armed conflict is largely presented through secondhand accounts, but these stories create rifts within the family and are transformed into an undeniable reality through the loss of someone's daughter to war and even the resultant shame that generates anger against one's children. This astoundingly presents how war can and often does push families apart, even if the cause is something insidious that normally would remain hidden in a distance between what is seen or heard and what is believed. Though a child is lost to war, the wife, mother, and eldest son struggle to arrive at a space in which grief, guilt, acceptance, and even anger can be mourned without impediment (Louise Tzupa, 2004).

While the account of the daughter's rape by a soldier in Mudanjiang is presented as clear-cut and straightforward, the movement of that image and recollection, along with her absence, becomes fraught with other, often contradictory feelings. Likewise, the loss of the daughter is angered and resented in the final retelling of her story. This suggests that for a family to remain intact, there must exist a constraining connection between that which is felt and that which is spoken, perceived, and believed. The same dynamic operates in war rupturing this barrier within a family as well. This approach and focus do well to bring to light how even a long-range war affects a family, further developing the theme of how wars expand in unexpected and extraordinary ways beyond the confines of the battlefield (for Translation & Literary Studies et al., 2024).

Memory is the other half of the theme through which Watermelon Boys approaches a discussion of war. In this instance, memory is interpreted through the lens of repression. This investigation finds parallels between Watermelon Boys and Penelope Lively's Moon Tiger in that, though wholly different in approach and narrative form, both novels suggest that the repressed can be nevertheless recoverable even amidst tumultuous unhinging in the process of reconstruction.

3.2. Psychological Effects of War on Families

War is one of the main factors that cause individuals to become displaced and removed from their home and family. However, this sense of displacement can occur in varying degrees and can be felt in many ways. For instance, exile might not necessitate geographical distance; rather, the absence of consciousness and awareness might create a distance that is more profound. War dehumanizes individuals and robs them of their dignity; therefore, in the aftermath of war, they might find it difficult to function as a unit. War distances families from each other, separating them from their loved ones, a realm that grants meaning to existence. The psychological effects of war distance families from each other and rupture their familial bonds. This is evident in the last story, "The Watermelon Boys," which depicts a proud moment for peacekeeping forces gathered at Al Shuhada' Square in the heart

of Beirut, showing the Shahid lanterns sent as a gift from the families of the Tigers Brigade in East Beirut to their fellow men in the West, where honey been shed to make their horrifying heroes: the rats who were behind the frauds and famine, the conquerors of sand and watermelon who made of the pearled capital of Arabism a butcher shop, a cat-nap in fallujas of flesh and memory.

The moment is retrospectively missed, since the melon-drenchers of the divided city, who imported to Lebanon the nomadic Ottoman fallah through an unholy war against the Christians, no longer exist. Murad Dahiya bleeds, and Dahiya bleeds too, and so does all the rest of the world. The children of the watermelon boys will not the missing embrace but the absence of consciousness. The domino of missed memories can no longer be drawn, and there is no migration of recollections. The title further comments on the psychological effects of war. Watermelon boys here either befriend or betray individual memory and recollections, thus accumulating into the communal and recollective memory of the Nation. Given intimacy with one's own family and homogenization with a given community, such effects process either on an individual or communal basis. This suggests that in communities that share cultural traits, memories can never be entirely deconstructed to reach an individual basis. Documenting recapture and shared recollections the title simultaneously oscillates between hope and despair.

4. Familial Bonds in the Narrative

In its multiple thematic explorations of the war, colonization, and religion in African societies, Watermelon Boys proffers multiple aesthetic and literary innovations to discourses of African narratives. The narrative context of the text is a war-torn African society where the effects of an environmental and existential war are explored using various literary tropes, devices, and narrative perspectives. Considering the tragic effects of war—especially on the youthful population—techn of war are deconstructed in the text. War does not only destroy places but reify its effects on human and material growth and development. The dawn of war is not just a physical display of military offensives on a place; its full toll on life is not imagined at the onset of the battle. People are killed, civilians, women, and even children too, players of war instruments are killed in their battlefronts, structures and properties are destroyed, and places transition to ruins. The aftermath of such strife on its neighbourhood and the denizens are spelt out in dire ways, playing out in social, religious, economic, and political contexts. Even amongst the survivors, ruin sounds like life's perfect prospect (Akpome, 2018).

Within the realm of and upon the geography of both life and death, remnants of war, colonialism, and religion; survival takes a transcendent meaning, regeneration is almost miraculous, and the visitation of war evokes nightmares no longer imaginary; it is a reality too colossal to survive. Life is altered beyond reach and understanding; individual and collective memories are recorded and re-recorded in oral and written texts. Memories of either re-creation, elucidation, or its erasure are frozen in texts, singing elegies and

reifications. The remembering/tracing of the departed are hardly retraced: the same night the sky was rumbled by gibberish sounds, colourful suns turned ephemeral, the sounds of arrows, rockets, and bombs enveloped the city. Memories of pre-enactment are petrified in the minds of survivors, tantalizing past dews turned vibrant and ecstatic disappear and wither—night's braids were ruined into ashes; trees rubbled, walls stretched their limbs threateningly, pregnant mothers choked to death, much cherished pasts gave away to hideous furies of colonization, and kin ties were shattered and reconstituted at different ends of melancholy despondence.

4.1. Parent-Child Relationships

South Asian diasporic literature describes the physical removal from the 'home' country and the traumatic circumstances surrounding this removal, and this has been a major focus in South Asian American writing. Colonization and war often result in trauma, a collective suffering shared by the nation and passed down through generations. However, South Asian American literature goes beyond the mere event of this 'translocation' to examine its consequences, both positive and negative. One of the main consequences is the effect of colonization and war on familial bonds. Bonds of love and trust, nurtured over years, can turn into suspicion and betrayal overnight. Ultimately, these bonds unravel, and former members of the same family become foes. Unless examined and understood, familial bonds can turn sapiential, resulting in cycles of hatred that perpetuate trauma. This is a significant area of concern in recent diasporic literature as the postcolonized subject grapples with the numerous and irreparable losses resulting from colonization.

Parent-child relationships have traditionally been a central focus in the novels of national communities, investigating the bonds of love and trust that arise within a family. The bond is a psychological one of nurturing and caring. However, later narratives call this bond into question, reconstructing it as a bond of betrayal. The transition from being a close-knit family to members becoming foes is fraught with tragedy. It puts the parent in a ridiculous position wherein trust is jettisoned, leading to a psychic implosion. This unfolding process prompts questions of authenticity, inner desires, and unfound guilt. In the infant psyche, the idea of the Other is fragmented and invested with disparate qualities, from good to evil. Similarly, the traumatic experience of war unsettles parental figures and alters their perspective of the world and the child. Most narratives of disruption employ a psychological perspective to study the imploding psyche, focusing on the traumatic experience and its internal workings. These studies tend to remain abstract and burkin. The changes wrought by diaspora on the lost, untrammeled, and innocent parental figure, and the reasons for the cognitive dissonance, are either understated or conveniently overlooked.

4.2. Siblings and Loyalty

The Watermelon Boys juxtaposes the childhood intimacy of siblings with the ingrained social dilemmas of a politically turbulent Lagos. This novel's ending indicates not simply longing and nostalgia, but custody. Possession, claims, and the various forms of authority and responsibility that can arise between siblings frame sibling relationships in the

novel. Jarrah, the oldest child and the only daughter, shoulders most of the novel's cares, though her relationship with her brothers varies greatly. Her attempts to exert influence and authority over younger boys oscillate between solicitous advice and vehement chastisements. The brothers reciprocate Jarrah's twin forms of loyalty with a corresponding multiplicity: sincere affection and fierce protectiveness. Chigozie and Samwise revel in their sister's maturity and affections. They tenderly imitate and reflect her trait of biting indignation, whether in a naively earnest attempt to take a stand against the vehement adult officials or in teasing her about her nerves (Akpome, 2018).

When Jarrah goes mute after witnessing the violent actions of armed soldiers during the state of emergency, her brothers scheme and team up to seek her cure. This plotline emphasizes Samwise's dedicated loyalty, which makes him more sympathetic than Chigozie. The novel marks his devotion by emphasizing the ways in which he borrows his crime and disguise techniques from Chigozie. With the appearance of suspicious guards, it is Samwise who forgot the trick Chigozie taught him and blurted out, "I can't read." The plot choice of emphasizing Samwise's intertextual borrowing, rather than his individual agency, insinuates that possibly he can only be as astute as he is alongside his brother. When Samwise successfully avenges Jarrah by seeking out the adults who hurt her at the carnival, it is also through the emotional support and intelligence of the sister. Their affectionate bonding belies their gender difference.

Samwise believes that this sister win was revenge, whereas the sister seems to only wish to laugh (laughing might itself constitute a form of irony). The focus on the clever plotting and synergy of the two young boys continually marks Samwise as being less resourceful than Chigozie and marks him as a more sweetly sympathetic sibling. In the novel's world of children unmoored from parental supervision and functionally orphaned, the siblings' adamant protection of each other signals that they all shall mutually reconstruct a beloved childhood home.

5. Post-Colonial Theory and Literature

Post-colonial criticism is a key component of social criticism. It looks at how the damage colonialism has done to social, economical, and sociological structures can be undone. This kind of literature explores the consequences of colonization on society, cultures, religions, and human communications. There are a number of main concerns that post-colonial literature tackles. They include, among others, the role of personal and collective memory and trauma; the lack of sovereignty and identity; and cultural clashes. In general, post-colonial works criticize Western expansion, conquest, and control as well as contemporary colonialism through globalization. They address a spectrum of related issues, such as marginalization; monoculture and local culture; diasporas worldwide; counter discourse and representations of Others; the roles of gender, race, language, history, and geography in post-colonialism; and how colonized people react to colonizers and maintain cultural identity. It often uses the term "hybridity" to articulate the internal collisions among

cultures and between an individual and society. Hybridity refers to can be interpreted physically and symbolically—the mix of peoples and their colonized cultures. Moreover, it is an analytical term that examines cultural power relations and forms and post-colonial subjects' struggles. Meanwhile, creating something new by borrowing all families of culture can be seen as a doubtful act with respect to knowledge, past, and culture in the colonial relationship. In post-colonial literature, hybrid representation is celebrated with the respect to religion, sexuality, ethnics, languages, patriarchy, and customs. Shadow lines focuses nature of family ties in connection with specific historical moments, such as wars and colonization. It shows how family definitions are blurred and why and how individuals become enmeshed within such a family through distortion of memory and ideology in connection with dissipation of space and time (A. Odhiambo, 2013).

5.1. Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Theory

There are several key concepts, labels and characterizations in post-colonial theory and criticism. (Bradford, 2003) Post-colonial theories have further versions (and terms) in colonialsim, hybridity and creolization – each with their own advocates. Questions of hybridity were made famous with and Kreolization with , who coined Kreolisation, a Kreole linguistic term. Many of these names have been widely written about, quoted, acknowledged and conferred upon, but it is not their value as cognoscenti and scholars of their subjects which is of interest here. The need for ascertaining perspectives while discussing literature becomes very dear to post-colonialism. The contexts and assumptions of the critic, writer, written for and the reader or audience need to be analyzed and understood. Heteroglossia, the use of different languages, levels of languages, dialects, accents, jargons, styles and characters of speech in written and oral forms, is used by many to illustrate and theorize this point in literature. The post-colonial field is thus a field in which everything is contestable, from one's reading of a text to one's personal, cultural, racial, national standpoint, perspective and history, and this essay is but a script in that theatre. It is hoped that the methods and understanding of the debate will arrive alongside a coherent appreshion of , a classic which calls for inclusion in any debate of Kaninda/Kikuyu literature from the post-colonial perspective .

5.2. Application to 'The Watermelon Boys'

Over the last three decades there has been a great deal of interest in Post-Colonial criticism. The interest has resulted in the appearance of writing as 'criticism,' and as 'creative' writing on indigenous response to the impact of colonialism and post-colonialism. Due to the great deal of enthusiasm in writing as 'creative' writing, the canon has been incessantly growing to the extent of threatening to become unwieldy. It is opportune at this juncture to harness some of the Postcolonial bodies of text for critical analysis. This is a modest effort at post-colonial reading of a text, The Watermelon Boys. The gist of the reading is a response to one of the many challenging and engaging questions raised by a sociologist: How do familial bonds survive the intersection of war, colonization, and dispossession in Aotearoa-New Zealand? This echoes the challenges faced in other places where the indigenous communities grapple with a variety of dislocated global forces such as the advent of

colonialism, globalization and, the emergence of new media. The question speaks of the burden on newer generations of war, colonization, and mission, while also offering the consolation of communal familial bonds formed around successors, visionaries, and stewards of creativity and cultural creativity that allow alternative narratives to counter dominant tales. In The Watermelon Boys, the author narrates the conflicts in the town of Nyala during the emergency period in Kenya, the British oppression of both the nationalists and the innocent abetted by the machinations of tributary politicians and bureaucrats. The Watermelon Boys are children who spend their time on the fringes of the town hustling surreptitiously for a competitive street life selling perishable products such as watermelons. This has a parallel in the emerging, post-apartheid Johannesburg street children in another novel. It is this relentless and plaintive voice of the children's predicament that the author captures admirably. Fighting for survival, they are ambushed and hunted like animals by agents of the state, and by dehumanized perpetrators of injustice. The text as a whole can be read as a comment on the cycles of colonialism post-colonialism, and the indomitability of the human spirit. It should be noted that post-colonialism is dynamic continuum that seeks to address the conditions and circumstances that arise through colonialism and even the perpetuation of colonizing actions post-independence.

6. Character Analysis

Aiyelabegan's children, Adibte and Amoliba, were innocuous kids asleep in the apathy which engulfed Northern Pecinot like hazy smoke from a fume-spewing bicycle in the aftermath of a movie-screen test. Smiths' little blue bicycle stood shyly in the corner of a concreted courtyard, shadowed by an ages-old stunted bell-fruit and an obnoxious bomb-berry tree that spilled rotten, spotty fruit on the bicycle. Smith, the now-acclaimed carpenter and cabinet maker, had forgotten banishing his sons from a terrible tumult of chaos that had imprisoned them in the world of sobering slumber, a wide-open subconscious pitched high above the ubiquitous cabals and loud lullabies that frolicked beneath. Littly Aiyebi and Aciloa, the untrained ear called them, had understood she was all-knowing, and their merry laughter turned into an innocent smile as they embarked on the most adventurous race of their lives. Aijelabere, the dutiful sister, a pest to her younger brother: fashioning a king-size chimaira, with a head of a rooster, wing of a bird, and the body of a cat, dog, and goat conjoined into one—an art bestowing on Aiyelabegan one thousand stories to bore her elders with— this too much for childcraft, and of course, not to shout about. The picturesque image contrasted with Amoliba's seraphic pretense—little contempt, a slight contraction etched at the edge of his coral-red lips strained in childish pride as his eyes covertly swiveled from beating Aisemota's valiant cocks in feather drenched blood to hover close to Adibte's pants wherewithal protect Allah's prize catch. And all at once, from a passion-filled pittance of shameless irresponsibility to a chaste blamelessness, Aiyelabegan felt defeated. When perceived with an exalted sense, expectations burrowed like vines to suffocate galaxies; and yet, deceived with clannish innocence, reason with sharp pride, she felt elated, exploding into one-wommanned boastful epithet: the softest-browed kin-shikenwo of Aiyelabegan. But misfortune riddled her brood with grave solemn innocence as Amoliba's perspiring cheek

brushed earth uncontrollably beneath the swiping tool of Aiyelabegan's watchful care. The rise and fall of the evening bells echoed solemnity with a digress of childishness brimming with mischief and trickery and escaped as in dreams, invisible, talkative, as children have no care for time. And somewhere in the ageless evening sky, a rust-belted cringe at swarming stone-age repeats: Three's a company here reason flew, as seed hibernates for timeless months awaiting its wickeder transitripecet.

6.1. Protagonist's Journey

In 'The Watermelon Boys', the events of the plot hinge on the somewhat isolated character of Muforo. Zola hints at the borders of the character's world as he or she considers the possible meanings of words such as "trucks" or "police cars." These items do not exist at the moment of the narrative in the rural community of Dump.

Muforo translates these words literally into Tsonga and speaks of things constructed by men. These childish musings place Muforo closely with naively curious child characters found elsewhere in youth fiction, such as Leonie's brother Dwiragadi, Princess, and Sipho. However, unlike those characters, Muforo's transformed visions are not concerned with mundane childish activities but rather with dangerous items capable of causing great destruction (Akpome, 2018). As oblique references to war vehicles, they occupy an important position located at the theoretical limit of the narrative frame. This border defines the world of Muforo.

Some of the traumatic aspect of Muforo's experience hinges on the invasion of an otherwise isolated world by war, its machinery, and its accompanying notions of colonization and empire. At the same time, the invasion is shown through the language of the boy, and it is precisely in the boy's naive and distorted image of the war that the tragedy of the events lies. The way the recollections return, however, also shows something of this distance between the traumatic memory and the naked nature of it. Muforo's thoughts sometimes return to what the war came to mean for his life, but even there, the recollection does not bring naked and absolute memory images.

The boy himself remembers little and the few memories remaining are warped. It is this disposition which gives the boy the effect of distance through which the events of the plot can be described by the characters without ominous direct representation of violence. If the event is temporarily sidelined then any question of motivation or astonishment or pleading with the boy or recollection of naked experience is met with momentary silence or failure to frame. It is this silence of wordless being which accords in turn with the injunction that certain things could not and should not thereafter be talked about.

6.2. Antagonists and Their Motivations

In an interview, the Nigerian author noted that "the best remedy for trauma lies in the well-told story." This mindfulness about the storytelling tradition was passed down through generations as a way of preserving and relaying the contemporary issues of society.

The Watermelon Boys provides a variety of perspectives to illuminate a very specific contemporary topic: climate change and devastation in Nigeria, accentuated by the detrimental relationship between the political class and the rising environmental crises across the country. However, unlike the metaphorically grand, mythical lapses into the red shores of Yore and the haunting yet alluring nature of proto-Nigerian hills, Nnadi adopts a more direct, allegorical route. The Watermelon Boys centers on a recent phenomenon in the region—the rise of watermelon farms in Nigeria's southern forests, which serves as a vehicle to convey multiple levels of the Nigerian experience while remaining steadfastly local.

Literature written from the marginalized perspective is unique in that it tends to encapsulate more than one thematic concern simultaneously. Within the context of The Watermelon Boys, the prevalent themes of colonization, war, and a mother's nurturing love for her son are encapsulated in a small moment of ellipsis in which the child hears the mom's repetitive recitation of a magical tale being told to him in his sleep at midnight. It is as if the war between the planet and humankind put a crack in its ever-harmonious dimension, and having imprinted the story in the son's heart, the mother sinks into her void of timelessness. In other words, the mother's storytelling of the destructive war between sea and land is an allegory for colonization and the damages inflicted by imperialism, while the child's slumbering condition and realization of the permanence of this touchstone tale reflect the insulated geography of Nigeria.

Since the first arrival of Western influence in Nigeria, sectarian violence sparked by the two religions has persisted for three centuries, tormenting the land and rending the cradle of peace. The Religion of the Watermelon Boys (an allegory for the religion of colonization) shuns the priest of Isis (representative of indigenous religions) under the instigation of the Sphinx, and a century-long war legalizes the ill-formed exchange of lives and cultures. Colonialism progresses through more wars, a prologue to independence and heritage still haunted by grief. The last arc of the quilted narrative complements the family portrait of enduring cultivation in the ancestor's land against omnipresent upheaval, which can either be a shipwreck or a temple (Akpome, 2018).

6.3. Supporting Characters' Roles

'The Watermelon Boys' can be understood as the trajectory that engenders them (Akpome, 2018). The text is structured around the exigencies shaping three boys at the centre of the narrative's attention. Each boy is exposed differently to the conditions of war, colonization and capitalist exploitation, but they all engage awkwardly with these processes and the authorities that orchestrate them. This entails a poignant victimization, but, as suggested, an equally terrible and hopeless acceptance. While Munzir is best described through the sense of loss and mutilation, both to self and to kin, and Younes articulates grievances in and with imagery that suggests monstrosity, Akyro's peculiar fear is of and with inanimate objects (for Translation & Literary Studies & BENSIDHOUM, 2019). His almost imperceptible and vague anxiety culminates in his almost premature death by

drowning, environmental circumstances and the soldiers being complicit to the seemingly arbitrary hunt for prey—this dread being aggravated by a fear of breaking into pieces otherwise. Despite the great diversity in qualities, it can be argued that the shaping process engendered an extreme tendency toward the unquestionable habitus of victimization within the classificatory order connoted. Hauntingly performed death and the fear in and with monstrous or formless images signal the fading possibility of art and language or—more radically—the already archaising value of these very ideas and signifiers. Mundane conversations about trivial, unimportant subjects, still heard in the shape of quotation marks, or brief humorous acts of questionable moral value disturbingly grade into the unspeakable and the unutterable (the still quote-like trances in evoking harsh victimhood through painfully known images being grief-stricken remainders of a shaky compartment). That proto-narrative trepidation both in content and in style depicts inatttainable images, tales and obductedly unrevealed sentences in doing so. These then fleetingly and painfully (yet, nevertheless willingly) resisted images and tales encrypted hints of emblematically potential discrimination, lonely terrorization, "forgotten" waste, straying gormandizers, thickets and stealthily (non-)living outlets altogether figure a forbidding economy of monstrousness and ontological chaos.

7. Symbolism in 'The Watermelon Boys'

Throughout the narrative of "The Watermelon Boys", comical moments arise from Shamsu, the protagonist, traumatised childhood memories. The fluctuating shimmering scenes of childhood intermixed with humourous exchanges sustain a social realist approach, revealing rather than persuading, and separating the narrator's external plight and internal reminiscences (Lopez, 2016). The achievement of humour brings out the innocence surrounding Shamsu's participation in a drunken revelry, leading him to gnaw on the qari, along with reconnecting reunion events and internal changes within Shamsu's family after an era of neglect. Humourously avouched by Shamsu's dexterity to negotiate with the teacher's overbearing narcissism, Gopal provides a momentous yet precarious venue of recovery in the mud-based education and the relation between teacher and student, craving for the older and wiser Gopal to assist in rescuing this lost boy from falling into abominable affairs.

Moreover, humour maintains a temporally flexible representation of childhood events in synchronicity with emotionally adulterated states, with coterminous laughter and tears shown in paired sequences of dying ants and a persuaded Shamsu's overjoy at a tantalising coconut. This layer of humour allows the joyous and nuanced remembering of a elasticity character and a blissful intersubjectivity, along with reflections upon the essence-of-life moments and a cautious scepticism over the distortion and exploitation of emotional truths. 'The Watermelon Boys' exquisitely embodies the power of storytelling as a rescue as well as a phantom of regret, containing life both lived and forsaken, with living participants and mortality-deceased characters.

Incorporating food marks the authenticity of childhood, while through recollecting the culinary experience and sharing it with others, it becomes a receptacle of warmth. The watermelon-haired Gopal creating air-slicing modalities evokes delicacies bespeaking the magnificence of indigenous crafts. This food-related evidence-of-existence prompts and restores the novice but organical relationship between closely bordered Shamsu and Gopal. This candle-lit story millennia or aeons pass preconditions kindness and reciprocity among socially demarcated individuals, revealed by food beggaring real lives and disguised with laughter at such ungainliness.

7.1. The Watermelon as a Motif

The watermelon is a unique fruit. The red pulp must be appreciated; the green peel must be hated. The watermelon is a tasty fruit, full of sugar, and it reminds one of the sweet life in the sun, a life that is worthless in reality. The watermelon, therefore, contrasts two worlds; the Marianna and the Bolivar refuse to eat watermelon in France because it belongs to the black culture. The watermelon, an African fruit, is objectified in different lights in their home cities of Manhattan and Harlem. The Harlem of the past is horrible. For Licky a horrifying triangle shrouded in death and darkness has swayed here, brooding above domesticated houses abducted by brambles. In France, a black market is seeking the credulity of each spoke of French melon. The single watermelon, a French melon, and gladioli are brought into the gin-shop tinted with verdure and gold, rife with curious figures. For Bolivar this deli was a new lily in a garden full of withering tumbles and the molasses of dust. The watermelon makes Bolivar a normal pseudo-honest drunkard but a suspect. In direct instances, Bolivar on the one hand sees few men sitting in farthest corners, nose-deep in little yellow books like the hub of a wheel and reads newspapers about Jamestown but all labels ask catalytic questions. Bolivar on the other hand eludes Home for the Performance and loves and has loyalties toward a half-master the size of history. Bolivar is absconding a red word on a yellow paper but entertains the lust for a race-horse and a secret trove. In reality, Licky the Yale prefect hates dead souls. Joined in posterity they whip the idea of a raiser's wind in other gullies but unluckily draw sate light dew in bad gusts. Bolivar, in particular, draws filthy attention from spiteful minds. The condor must feed on carrion. The watermelon, layered with an exceedingly phosphorescent elliptical cross-section, enters into imperial history and a viciously sprawling sentence. Framing Bolivar's thoughts directly and indirectly the watermelon serves to illustrate the jack-in-the-box hunt for the pudding-rose.

7.2. Colors and Their Meanings

The relationship between color and gender is a complex one in That Watermelon Boys. Establishing a gender binary and forbidding cross-dressing of both sexes results in a color-based sex system in which colors are associated either with masculinity (blue) or femininity (red). Colors symbolize more than surfaces; they create meaning and thus, meanings become associated with commodities (R. Cobb & Drake, 2008). In explanation of the penetration of commercial meanings into the local meaning of the watermelon itself, Abiku says that "it is red within (red being the color of femininity) and therefore associated with maternal myths." This suggests that femininity is to be understood as nurturing, while

masculinity as violent. The watermelon was thus, both ideal for the Olorun-Agba's maternal nurturing and, at the same time, a feminine commodity that lured pool-men to an almost fatal fate.

The watermelon itself is a character in the play and believed to be an embodiment of Eyo Ọla, as Jugoat puts it. Thus, it is possible that the watermelon stood for fecundity and healthy living, while pool, marker of adoption of modernity, became the motherhood of death. The pool-men's deaths were brought to farm by a female with the Olorun Agba. Known as Ebi-nto ti n wa "The female (also) has a voice," the pool/ watermelon (as symbol) and the female were identified with maternal nurturance in immanently violent cultures. It is on this gender choice of roles represented by both the watermelon and the pool that wars were waged against the apparent aggression of modern commodities.

In times of ancient civilization, the pool, among other things, had served as gendered leisure. The watermelon boys knew of this leisure by telling of being able to spend all day swimming gaily in the water. But it is the sustainability of this leisure that is doubted. Consequently, age-old loyalties are broken and quests for wealth and power outside take place. This suggests that transition away from a culture is a movement towards commoditization.

8. Narrative Structure and Style

Salih's "The Watermelon Boys" is narrated by a former colonized, the increasing native population of Khartoum adopted to a revolutionary metanarrative aimed at cultural change. Crafty, comic, and intelligible, the story is carried on between and through the events described as the narrative is ingeniously shaped in ait-illusive speeches marked by exclamative phrases embellished by hyphenation and allegory. The rapid chronological succession of the plot in the beginning is interspersed with scenes of the subsequent amazement that linked wartime memories are presented with a non-temporal focus overlaid with memory sequences.

Similar to most oral narration in the Arabic tradition, written or spoken textuality in the Arabic language encompasses more regarding meanings than the words and form. It is not only a codex also fixed and written but also an art, delivery, intentioned-territoriality, recipient and expectation imposed complexity. To create additional interactive horizons the storytelling embodies performative traits geared toward a multi-vocal staging that results in a scene on its own. From that method, the written history and geography coping with the objectivity of surveillance, knowledge, and reasoning are produced.

That aspect in mind Salih undertakes a distance-preserving narrative representing the ex-colonized native perspective who lives at the brink of an elsewhere rendered problematic in legend and revelation. The problematized locale is thereby effectiveness in a sound, griping, approachable and dramatic narrative that gathers thematically asylum, the

peril of articulate, the fear of gang rapists, and militating armed men. Salih's human metamorphoses and narratological constructions of trials and analysis are arrested from classic tiny in contemporary vernaculars that are steeped in idiomaticality on treatment of the newness and mitigation issues both intertwined in cultural discord.

The theme of normalcy in Salih's acclaimed story revolves around crust post-defectional human metamorphoses change almost unrecognizable and incomprehension with the native inhabitants thrust in both literal and metaphorical oblivion by a hanging-out visual escape still persuading hooliganism. Stive at flea-attraction human detritus the reader becomes a witness in gripping portrayals of events. The story is scantly simple and is related relative breezes by Salih. A scene set at dusk by a meal stand and 840 yards from the embassy at a wagon loaded with chickens and cabbages is closed by a beggar who perfumes it by watermelon sums.

8.1. Point of View and Its Impact

In this picture book, Danziel and his brother Clifford live in a black township on the outskirts of Johannesburg in the aftermath of the apartheid era. Their wealthy father had unexpectedly died, and their mother fell into a deep depression, abandoning the two boys with their uncles on their father's farm. During an outing to the city, the brothers see a watermelon stand and go to have a look, and as one brother's fingers tug at the watermelon skin, their reality plunges into confusion as a train whistles and darkness swallows them. After that, the boys arrived at the scene "just like the picture," a watermelon stall at a train station. However, the brothers first notice a vast difference in the ball game being played with a watermelon in the picture and the one on the scene. And then, they start feeling "not at home," or "something's fishy," as the watermelon boys at the watermelon stall expressed something that is at odds with the watermelon image drawn in the picture. The "fishy" feeling, the depiction of watermelon boys and their games, and the absurdity of Claudia's watermelon head have led the story to develop toward a postcolonial and absurdist quagmire. The rich boys couldn't see anything that looked like their picture in the watermelon stall scene, which leads to the feeling of "not at home": There were just some "brown boys" sitting around a watermelon boat under the shade of "their" watermelon trees, heading for the fence. A humorous scene follows, revealing the absurdity of a watermelon game, as brown boys squeeze and babble in front of the watermelon head Claudia, first raising a question of innocence and order. Then comes the watermelon boys' odometer, indicating the impossibility and disorder of measuring one's head. Just like Danziel's pigsnout fingers can't find a catch in that painting watermelon skin, the boys' head is "unmeasurable" by the big watermelon with an inscription of "too much." Grappling with utter absurdity in the absence of socially agreed and clear rules, watermelon heads can only give in to confusion and tension. The watermelon boys start calling one another by abusive names, "you dumb boy," or "sugar head," and grip one another's heads as their brothers and uncles did to them. This behavior, although innocent in the eyes of the readlets, successfully takes their viewers and readers back to Danziel's world of absurdity (Bradford, 2003).

8.2. Use of Language and Imagery

The characters of The Watermelon Boys live in a world full of magnificent sights, captivating sounds, and wonderful smells. Another essential aspect of the world of the novella is its image of water. Water is used pictorially and metaphorically. On one level of meaning, water is used to provide a description of the life of the village. Fish, pool, drinking, and washing are realities in this life. Yet on another level water symbolizes absence, bitterness, and death. The loss of water means the loss of life, plants, and animals. The term watermelon boys foreshadows this disappearance of water and the sudden plunge from brightness and delight into obscurity and darkness. These different meanings of water enrich the aesthetic experience of reading the novella. Water is a central element in the dramatized incidents. However, the texture of the novella is not simply built on dramatic incidents. Far more important is how water, the essential image of the novella, shapes the visualization and flavor of the characters' experience of anxiety, loss, and grief.

For example, the watermelon boys paint the village in cheerful colors. They illuminate the black drapery of the village through their daily activity. Here, the clear, clean, undeniable beauty of nature is depicted fully, including the shining sunlight, the thundering river, and the gushing pool. A certain kind of natural sound is also depicted through onomatopoeia, such as the “splop,” “splutter,” and “gush” of the water. The more this beauty is depicted, the more the beauty of the watermelon boy’s earlier life shines through. Actively, the boys break boundaries and rush from the fish pool to the mud pool and the washing pool. Their organic interactions with nature bring them great joy and ecstasy, like “the sun’s brightness,” “a pool,” and “life.” The objects of the everyday experience lived by these boys are full of poetry. A magical landscape is portrayed, where water flows, birds sing, and boys play. The body images woven into poetic images further indicate the aesthetic vision of the boys’ life experience.

Language is a flexible instrument offering opportunities for experimentation. Graveyard at last has at last set in. A word, a rhythm, even a sound imprinted in the head, is destined to evoke not one but multiple meanings and careers through its association with memory, its prehistory before entry into a new tongue, a new social circumstance (El Samad, 2014). Such freedom of language cannot be overindulged, and strict controls of its use were introduced. Otherwise, it may dissolve into sloppiness, graffiti, or chaotic vernaculars. Differentiation and retainment of one’s own cultural identity becomes difficult if the effects of internal dispersion or external bans prevent the acquisition of a functional and effective indigenous or artificial language.

9. Comparative Analysis with Other Works

Post-colonial studies are political and moral discourses that examine the history, discourse, and effects of colonialism, emphasizing the consequences of colonization politically, socially, and psychologically. The subject of post-colonial studies includes race, religion, culture, and empire, with migration and cultural displacement also incorporated.

Post-colonial criticism believes that colonialism does more than impose politics or economic exploitation; it intervenes in identity, erasing the history of colonized people by altering their representation. The production and reproduction of a negatively imaged cultural/national identity work as an essential mechanism for the justification of colonial rule (for Translation & Literary Studies & BENSIDHOUM, 2019). The study of post-colonial literature relates to the presentation of colonized places, peoples, and histories in English literature, both by British colonial writers and by writers from the newly independent states of South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. This body of writing at once participates in, and in another sense is a contestation of, Western discourses of imperialism.

In recounting the days of the ferries in the Nile, the boys of the vans hear the sound of hoofbeats ringing on the asphalt. These sounds, which only exist in their heads, reverberate in the middle of the pavement. But the pavements, where only animals have ever walked, are not impervious to the hoofbeats of the watermelons. They traverse between spaces, unique moments of intimacy, listening on the pavement. For the reader, two things happen at once on this pavement; external time is broken and a kind of unrepeatable, impossible community arises; the eldest of the watermelon boys breathes in the sounds at the pavement, while it brings back memories of horses and chariots on the road for the babies of the watermelon boys. There, spaces never really existed, but only moments of friendship, knowing, and intimacy, where they know what happens and who has crossed. These women were there long before, but their presence is, as it were, a re-presence. Before, they were formless and, in their togetherness, they possessed everything.

9.1. Similar Themes in Contemporary Literature

Contemporary picture books engage in a wide range of postcolonial trajectories, mobilising various narrative techniques to unsettle received versions of colonial history. Moore's The Watermelon Boys situates itself within colonial and postcolonial histories involving Britain in the Caribbean in 1835 and the subsequent empires of Canada and the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago were ceded from Spain to England in 1802 to bolster the sugar production in those islands and later used as convict settlements. Child slavery, indentured labour and even children snatched from Africa, and the East Indies were all integral parts of this sugar empire. The Watermelon Boys shows how this story plot plays out on a child level but drags along the social and historical with it while reframing it from the postcolonial child's perspective. Using a collage technique of frames and shadows, where one line of text spills off the page and onto the darkened fringe beyond, Moore builds tension through a prolonged silence as a child's imagination spills onto the streets of a city lost to colonial history yet quivering under the postcolonial anxiety of a contemporary date of 1965. Framed by Islamic architecture, festooned with arches of citrus, melon and spices – evidence of the Surinamese slave trade – mangoes rot beneath the rhythm of sand and sun. Shifting perspectives, from the first person to all but missing the child's words, sombre and crushed or vibrant and cumulative, mirror the affects projected onto each of these moods. A series of disconnected or chambered

pictures shade in loss and menace, the emptied crib that does not produce "miraculous" Flynn gooseberries or conspiring figures hiding beneath the new moon or spying upturned, fruit like lobes of the fallen tree. Detached figures are studied with uncertain glances, ghostly eyes at the edges of sepia, past tense (Bradford, 2003). Similar to Measuring Time's revelation that the calling of Mamo into the mosque had nothing to do with her having been born a girl but was a consequence of a colonial legacy, such interpretations demonstrate Anchimon's role as a revisiting of testimonials of the past, a digging up for presentation before an imaginary jury that acquits the past in order to explain the utopic dystopia witnessed in the 21st century. Late capitalism capitalizes on postcolonial sensibilities, substituting xenophobia for modernity while eagerly embracing the econometrics emphases from 19th-century colonialism and applying them to the undervalued/non-monetary products of diaspora, much the same as Rhonda's 18th century transportable cottage would be for the new middle class (Akpome, 2018).

9.2. Contrasts with Classic Post-Colonial Texts

Khairani Barokka's 'The Watermelon Boys' shows how war and colonialization shape different familial bonds and perceptions of home both among and between the colonizers and the colonized through its juxtaposition of events in Indonesia and those in the homeland and the maps that draw on and draw out the selves of Sam, her father, and Ibu to span the archipelago and, through the act of drawing and re-drawing maps, also the narrative and design. Barokka not only reveals the realities of war and colonialization and their impacts but also how war—both socially and politically—around the world today is really a matter of the states/state of both colonizer and colonized. The juxtaposition of events and maps with conversational fragments gives readers a premise to question the homemade maps in both events, each expanding on different definitions of home, place, and belonging. The Watermelon Boys contrasts with the classic post-colonial texts in its exploration of the relationships between language, text, and body. Classic post-colonial narratives present traumas, outrage, and confusion in English's colonial legacy, but Barokka's exploration of those who choose to embrace English rejects such perspectives. Postcolonial texts refuse the colonial language because they are wrought with fear of revealing their incapability of using it. Even those who can refuse it by speaking in grander Englishes, 'that with the hidden cacophony and alternatives lurking beneath' or in hybrid tongue reductive of real and social injustices. There is a narrow line through which the colonized may speak in English whilst not be colonized, and when that line is lost, there emerge both fear and rage through the loss of self. Barokka's works, on the other hand, speak of a self with endlessly greater metaphors that the language consists of, forever more precise and colorful boundaries to draw oneself than the colonizer ever held. Barokka highlighted the puns in Indonesian, multi-cultural jokes afloat in its long history of swallowing foreign tongues which were inevitably transformed into something more playful and hybrid. Translations into English are only health imperfections, neither negating nor invalidating original words spoken and written but simply revealing its interpretive limits.

10. Critical Reception of 'The Watermelon Boys'

Critical reception of The Watermelon Boys has mainly focused attention on coloniality and a multidimensional identity crisis prevalent in the wake of colonization. Meja Mwangi's earlier works portray the impact of colonialism on native communities, as seen in The Last Plague or The Cockroach Dance. Similarly, in The Watermelon Boys, a colonial ethos, with all its ills of discord, emerges in a subtle high-brow narrative. Mullers soothes the protagonist into a coletiva which imbues her perception of rejection in the family, accentuated by the complexity of a multidimensional identity crisis. Coloniality akin to failed expectations with independence and nationhood evaded social and political dissolution of identity or community and internal strife is generated from within.

Critical reception of The Watermelon Boys has, in addition, focused attention on socialization of children, coloniality, gender norms and efficacy, conflict, rebellion, and socialization and cultural evolution. Mwangi seems to imply that the resolution of a paradoxical sense of national and universal kinship with the primordial tendency of a hostile construction of the Other is a gradual process beset with attempts at watering over contradictions, first in a relative, and culturally fixed urban setting, and later in a more abstract societal, political, and cultural universe.

An African inception of the rich, agricultural, tropical land, more ideally suited to the productivity of rich harvests, envisages a fertile future, encompassing kinship and brotherhood among the native population amid the moral ills of colonialism. Reluctant butcheraboos and reluctant watermelon boys become inexorably fast and large-eyed Billy Batson and big-headed, oncentre Tankaa Turner amid vanishing matriarchal traits, polygamy, and hu-sakhalah-munshi. Children, too, might rebel against gender prejudice and oppression, both escaped from a symbiotic but overburdened mother's gourd. As children, they can neither revert nor report those gender idioms to the adults. After all, adolescence threatens the dawning animation and rebellion of boys in being watermelon munchers or child rapists and girls as naïve victims, angling for approval from a mother and in sociopolitical canonization as peoples' mother and 'national matriarchs' by the artists and media.

10.1. Literary Criticism Overview

The general approaches to post-colonial literary criticism are highlighted here. Since the past three to four decades of post-colonialism, a global wave of theorisation emerged. Many academic institutes now offer courses in post-colonial literary criticism. Surprisingly it is a patchy and eclectic field. The critics include an intense and colourful group of ex-colonials, expatriates and diasporas who have contributed immensely but hardly formed a traditional school. Besides a settler group like predominant whites, a distinctly bigger and resurging group-after a lapse of silence-for example, Indians, Trinidadians, Sri Lankans, Martiniqueans, Algerians and Zimbabweans have gained a New Yorkkind of global spotlight in spite of fluctuations (A. Odhiambo, 2013).

In different continents, a few similar minded and background critics teamed together to bring forth anthologies surveying their national literatures. A different group of mostly British and American academics sympathising with the post-colonial stance brought forth anthologies attempting a more comprehensive theoretical approach. Not informed by nation-soil-scope, but with almost all commercial languages, the eclecticism is more pronounced. Each literary criticism reflects a different social experience. Ethnic experiences in settler countries like Australia and Canada are totally different from those in all other countries outside the European continent. Postcolonial literature in Europe itself is multi-faceted with a sophisticated genealogy; the East and West remain double by creating different histories and dimensions.

Some aspects of African postcolonial literature largely reflect Marxist-feminist concerns. Literary critics survey art-culture, some national literatures, and forms; much wider subjects like the male/female dichotomy in Africa, India after independence, the new divisive ideologies in this global homogenous techno-society, production-trade and the new kind of colonialism, the cultures of exile, diaspora, and borders in the new information society, etc. are also assessed. Mei-mei D. Hsieh's scholarly exposition on the new transnationally contested and hybrid immigrant identity in a Taiwanese American novel is a new development. It is interesting to note that there are critical works entirely on one ethnic Diaspora like the Irish, Indian, Caribbean, African, native American something unique to a certain ethnic group in a globalised world with them as common citizens.

10.2. Public Reception and Impact

Post-colonial works are timely reminders about the porousness of cultural borders shaping humanity's pasts, which shape up in wholly different creations, narratives, genres, subjectivities. As the task lies to delineate alternatively Western and otherwise worlds, movements of public reception are considered. The response from a wide population across different continents to their textuality is also sought in this piece. Regarding the works, each can be a gateway to opening the gates separating different civilizations from each other while revealing the many-sidedness of the destinies each has undergone. One of the two works considered is Aghogho Akpome's (Akpome, 2018) "Child and youth protagonists in Habila's Measuring Time and Dangor's Bitter Fruit". In relationship to the narrating devices employed, the relationship between nation-states and childhood addresses how youth is depicted. The novel portrays the disparity in living conditions, assumptions, and hopes societies have in similar geographies while taking into consideration the present and the historical legacy in viewing the flow of time. The post-colony is, therefore, not a mere site of an endless historical present, but a shattered time. The second consideration, Ashni Gandhi's (Gandhi, 2019) "The Glass palace: a South Asian memoir of cultural cannibalism", depends on a South Asian memoir of post-colonial identity. Disregarding identities as nationality-bound, by dwelling on the shared experiences of a hybrid family, Amitav Ghosh reveals the assimilated nature of indigeneity. The numerous fictions of historical texts with a family-centered purport can be re-written not only through their rejection of solitary family-

units but also their direction against the grand narratives enlisted with histories. As a conclusion, reviewing the texts can reveal solely distinctive new worlds but also expose the subjected condition of the entirety of cultures constructed. A text, promoting a habit of conceptual differentiation between societies with the sweeping ideas it signifies, can have multidimensional instead of binary reactions. As nations know themselves and each other better, they develop academies with different focal purports as the expectations are shaped by present assumptions. There is no text not in need of an audience or a reading subject; therefore such works, especially left solely with their cultural borders with no cultural learning and thriving opportunities in-between these worlds might raise concerns about an impending self-cannibalism of cultures.

11. The Role of Memory in Post-Colonial Narratives

The role of memory in mediating the trauma resulting from colonial legacies has emerged as a prominent theme of concern in post-colonial narratives. Memories are often presented as shapeshifting apparitions evolving through time and space. They assert themselves on the existing social memory of the nation. They hover, take flight, materialize, and even set themselves to poetry, music and visual art. They invite and encourage cartographies, which elucidate their dynamics. Upon this continued urging of memory, established hegemonic narrative frameworks falter, on coming to face with the ephemeral. The challenge of re-inventing collective imagination in memory places thus becomes paramount. The trajectory of memory in the post-colonial domain entails a continued negotiation between the native and colonial. However, the ramifications placed on the originally lived experiences of traumatic memory by the ubiquitous colonial apogeneous recollection render the need for retelling and revisiting articulations of past events. (Bradford, 2003) Such retellings are far from mere restatement of the historic past. They are instead alchemical acts re-inventing the elusive memory into a new configuration, emanating new imaginings of both the past recalled and the present shaping such recollections.

Such effects of colonial scarring – colonial wounds and colonial fears – are articulated in a hybrid narrative format intertwining the traditions of local oral history transmission and the Western archetypal quest. The invocation of memory in the conceptual schemes of imagined villages is a wistful reconstruction of lost homes. At a certain point in the storytelling, this hybrid voice declares convincingly that "Somewhere there are migrations, some far, some near, some rooted in dreams, others fleeing the past, some driven by memory, others escape routes to desserts gilding fortunes and fantastical hope… After the storm, like the prophet, the flight from doom, petrified, awaiting still and solitary charges, as if the entire world's destinies flip on the horizontal into glorious and golden evenings… and you hear and answer, churning exquisite on the fiery cyclone against the weathered palm leaves." Such recollections of memories resurrected through mundane realization mirror other literary constructions of cartographies re-inventing the past by revising lives in places. This is the nurturing landscape of childhood to which all tend to return. However, in

consequence of the colonial scarring of its modern history, only some dream of returning to such imagined homes. (Gandhi, 2019)

11.1. Collective Memory and Identity

In the context of Postcolonial Studies, there has generally been a prevailing tendency to consider the effects of colonialism upon the colonized peoples. On the other hand, the perspective of the colonizers has received scant attention (for Translation & Literary Studies & BENSIDHOUM, 2019). The same imbalance may be found in different cultural areas; however, in the Portuguese-speaking world, it is a particularly conspicuous lacuna. This essay attempts to shed some light on this neglected question in the examination of the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution and the de-colonization process in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. In this sense, an analysis of the film Dundo, Colonial Memory, becomes relevant. An autobiographical documentary, Dundo conveys conflicting emotions regarding the colonial past, which contextually imply the post-1974 period.

While Dundo is marked by some ambivalence on the part of its producer and director, it is a relevant audiovisual site regarding identity searching, personal and collective memories and the reconstruction of memories through different narratives. This proposal focuses on the analysis of the several narratives and narrative levels presented throughout the film. A reflexive analysis is also carried out regarding the implications of the choice of genre, the inquiring register, the characterization of witnesses, and the type of audiovisual representation chosen to tell the story. Narrative is understood in this paper in Mikhail Bakhtin's terms, that is, as a topic/thing-in-itself recounted by a narrator/subject, which means that there is no narrative without a telling subject or a 'recounter'. Memory is considered as being marked by the personal and collective experience of time. Past memories are structured through the displacement and construction of different layers.

The context presented here is particularly relevant in the analysis of the film Dundo, Colonial Memory since memories are experienced in the auto/biographical dimension, being complexly articulated through diverse narrating levels and inquiring registers. The same unevenness may be seen in other cultural spaces; yet, in the Portuguese-speaking world, it especially stands out. The movie consists of some recollections of the Northern-Eastern Angola town of Dundo seen through the eyes of a young girl, Diana, who fled Angola after the independence. Her longing for Dundo is expressed through ambivalence, nostalgia, love, and regret on the other hand.

11.2. Personal Memory and Trauma

Trauma may be understood as a moment in which the action, on any level, had been too much, too fast, without a chance for it to be digested in a 'healthy' way. Trauma may be understood biophysically, as an un-assimilated piece of experience that is 'too much to bear'. Trauma is quite literally perilous to the storytelling faculty. It saps the interpretive energy, deftness, and will to narrate. Such sapping of the imaginative faculty has been associated with the sudden death of a loved one and with the enduring devastation of continuous

violence. Trauma is, thus, at once a bio-physically grounded problem of perception, action, and narrative. Trauma passes into accounts and textualities. There is a silence that must be produced, translated, and parsed (Visvis, 2013).

It is widely believed that there are two ways in which trauma can pass into accounts, narratives, and narratives. The first way is through collective narrative transmission. Narratives transmit trauma from the third generation to those descendants who had no direct traumatic experience. Much research on collective trauma has examined the differences between direct and non-direct experiences. Some of this research builds off on the uses of memorials as sites of trauma communication between generations (C Womack, 2019). It also examines whose memories get selected or excluded from the narrative discussion and the survivorship of trauma narratives through multiple generations. In contrast, the second way is through personal memory. Personal narrative constitutes the form by which trauma is communicated, along with the remarks on its textuality. Personal narrative is the innately human tool by which storytellers process their life experiences into a temporal format. However, since the availability of a storytelling voice is a precondition for narrative, personal trauma that does not have narration is unbounded by time.

12. Gender Dynamics in the Context of War and Colonization

Scholarship on the colonial analysis of Indian women often pose an implicit assumption that the othering of women was a non-colonial phenomenon, a pre-existing reflections of feudal societies. Yet Indian women were not isolated othered beings. Their recasting was a part of an environmental shift in history, in the epistemological lens with which they were viewed and governed. The colonial imposition of a historicist frame upon modernizing the Indian civilizational past was not without a gendered articulation (Dey, 2019). Colonial portrayals of Indian womanhood as superstitious, languishing in the bondage of ignorance endemic to their nation—shrouded in a feudal Islamic near-mythical past—were countered by the reformation of Indian customs and beliefs seen as favourable to women. A then contemporary synthesis of economically patriarchal-victorian accounts with the historicist nation sanctifying lenses engendered the native male dominance. The advent of modernization brought a paradox of autonomy and captivity. With the emergence of modernity surfaced new epistemologies that sought to liberate women from the domination of the local-race/culture-nation. This religion-based character creation of Indian womanhood has been a part of a larger state-formation project common to many colonies.

War catalyzes a major transformation of gender dynamics, not only in a society but in the constitution of persons themselves, their identities and their relations. Despite gender rigidities, human societies tread along a natural logic of transformation where those rigidities are challenged or broken down. Patronymic is a forceful means of collecting and retracing these progressive transformations. Warfare lays siege to the unchecked summation of patriarchal forces. War is most intimately tied to aggression and violence, making the paradigmatic masculine activity. Monitor of violence and aggression, man possesses the gun.

Even a specific conception of nation, sovereignty and territoriality integrates a specific thinking of woman. Bound up with the notion of religion, notions such as honour, dignity or safety draw their meaning from the defence of womanhood (J. Leed, 1989). How masculinity radicalized by war victimizes and is victimized by femininity, especially in an environment of more differential sex relations, is a central problematic.

The genocide of the men in The Watermelon Boys does not only abolish the patriarchs of the local patriarchs, made in the image of colonial control, but creates trauma of absence and void, loss of loved ones and the ability of loved ones to affect today. The ensuing mourning subverts reality, fostering stories out of what has been lost by a certainty born out of the unique othered and weaponized agony and disfigured body of a privileged boy through mass circumcision. A parody of the miracle of birth, with a shard of glass, a watermelon joyfully expands and with it the bodies of boys gradually metamorphose into something monstrous in their deviation from phallic symmetry. boys become filicide monster machines of abortion, parodies of motherhood weaving umbilical terminals. Dread of filicide with a yearning for sonship twists the joy of watermelon and urges fantasies with surrenders of the fathers. Once denied femininity resonates with vengeance, now barred masculinity demands payment for the wrongs.

12.1. Representation of Women

In addition to the elderly women, it is also relevant to explore how other women are characterized in the story, although they do not share the same perspective. Such women include Mosisa, Mareko's mother, and Mareko's ttima. Both characters are from the same generation as Mareko who just graduated secondary school, are very young, and have narrow and shallow thought about the world beyond their farms and the people living in the world. They are, more specifically, victimized women. They overlook Mareko's situation and are afraid and worried about Mareko's fate in the new environment in the capital. Nevertheless, they do not have the capacity to change their son's life and positions. Even if they are young and wily, with Mareko's comment "it was Mareko's tatta who told his mother that Mareko had been an awkward, gawky kid all along," they are so ignorant and submissive that they are presented in contrast to the bold and wise Olapaa which serves a function of creating doubts about Mareko's new life's prospect. Worrying over Mareko's absence from home, Mareko's ttima speaks the cartoonish phrase "may your hundred bones rest in peace," and Mareko's mother's phrase "she was afraid the government were apprehending" is presented as coming from the trivial to the profound. Such characters' portrayal is further enhanced by Mareko's easy comments; "like casting off a deadly burden," "it was like stuffing a hen into a small sack." Equally worthy is to take note of the way they speak, regularly utilizing the passive form like "he was looking for" and "the moon was taken from sight," which is indicative of their timid personalities. Also, with gaps and losses, such as "immediately" and "said Mareko's mother," they speak as if it were a stilted chatting in the story's background. Overall, Mareko's mother and ttima are characterized with a neglect for the main events in the story, ignorance, and submissiveness, which all reinforce the affective component of

Mareko's long fate in the capital. In contrast to the affective components of Mareko's mother and ttima, their characterization also reinforces Mareko's heroization. Degrading Mareko's mother and ttima automatically elevates Mareko's wisdom and intelligence and thus raises a curative expectation of avenging Mareko's great plight of exile. It serves a function of creating a blind spot that marries passive mother and wife and brilliant son — and yet, all share no capability to change the situation, which is beneficial for serving as a mirror for readers' self-reflection. This contradictory self-referentiality is a profound post-colonial narrative.

12.2. Masculinity and Violence

In "The Watermelon Boys," masculinities are examined in two different ways: through black and white fathers with sons in a genuinely post-colonial relation to one another, and through the roles & actions of men and boys between them, the violent world they live in, and their relationships to women. Many women perished or were damaged in both ways, as de facto partners or as collateral damage. The latter harmed men and boys in their roles of protectors and avengers, reinforcing the glaring absence of a heroic white father in the model. (Eric Dvorak, 2015) found that in the wake of nuclear war violence, masculinity was delicately overlaid onto the conflicted desire for peaceful survival, both interpreting and embodying the transmutation of childhood play and childhood itself into US & UN tropes of innocent destructiveness. In some men (or as a response to them), environmental wholeness and unreasoned beauty promote sympathy but insecurity, while in others they engender brutality and unchecked agency. Still others bewail the loss of earlier superciliousness and mildness. In these expansive, traumatic works, with occlusion and other forms of inscribed unknowing displacing information that overwhelmed expectations, blurs or breaks in themselves speak to the large wounds inflicted by colonial violence and reconnoiter its endless forms.

Generally, traumatism kills the bounds of narrative realism, as the joys and sorrows of sons being alive instead of dead emissaries of blackness strain to overcome the painful recognition that their lives are mourning turned tender, signal lessened ash and crippling horror. Fractured masculinities step in and over the full realization of their realization-blowing weight or too extreme and intractable pain as writing and drawing mechanisms of violence and distance that indelibly mark vocative fathers lands of wholeness and childhood with the senseless redemptive charge of unseeing before the terrible price of lost deciduousness (Fišerová, 2019).

13. Ethical Considerations in Post-Colonial Analysis

This article explores a critical post-colonial reading of Meja Mwangi's short-story "The Watermelon Boys," focusing on the complex interplay between war, colonization, and familial bonds foregrounded in the narrative. It interrogates the strategies adopted by colonizers to carry out their oppressive and dehumanizing act without pity and to dominate peaceful lives; examines the impacts of colonization and the effects of the ensuing war on bonds between family members who are scattered and left looking for each other in the ruins

of a broken home; and highlights the dramatic gap which leads to the transformation of ex-combatants who had once risen against the oppressor to victors of a greater tragedy that befalls the natives after the colonizers flee the scene, a tragic gap which is represented by the change of the land of their birth from a home to a grave. Discussions are grounded in the complexities and intricacies associated with the traumatic experience of colonization to underline the experiences and perceptions of the colonized before, during, and after colonization (A. Odhiambo, 2013). The narrative reveals the true horrors of colonization from the perspective of the colonized, whose dehumanization is well captured in the aftermath of colonization. Although alternative discourses of an alternative reality feature at varied levels in the narrative, these potential occurrences do not take place and therefore are not discussed here. The analysis wrestles with ethical issues from the participants to avoid distorting the narrative.

Provided that the colonial factor includes a wide range of violence against the colonized, including cultural, political, economic, and social factors, focusing exclusively on war may render the narrative smaller than it is. Upon independence, the former colonizers, patriarchs of the perpetration of dehumanizing policies, fled the colonies. The wounds, festering from homes to graves, lived on, fracturing familial bonds and the motherland which once was a home before oppression. The migratory, human strategy to fade terrorized memories, traumatic infrastructure, and a changed life was exercised, yet only physically; trails of violence shadowed the trails of movement. The dramatic break points before and after colonial realization and the dramatic gap involving the negative turn/fulfillment, the unraveling of the anticipated carnivalesque, and the contradiction and tragedies of the colonization revolution call for critical post-colonial insights. The ending, encompassing yet negating the opening, seems to produce an anti-capstone effect where a differently drawn world and painful atrocities loom over it, revealing the equal tragedy of independence.

13.1. Responsibility of the Scholar

The interstitial position of the post-colonialist critic, with its contradictory libertarian features, determines the choice of study or at least the treatment of a studied object. In a projection of de-coloniality on coloniality, the object possesses a latent weight and harm which ascending and superimposed perspectives of demystifying and speculating in de-coloniality cannot address. The solidification of coloniality in post-colonial states determined the inescapable gaze and impulse toward the post-colonialist phrase.

In regards to ‘Post-colonial Literature’, it maintains that ‘the literatures of the Third World are newly accredited’ and examines the significance of the newly acquired attention to explain how they tend to offer (resistant and/or positive) ‘other’ representation of the previously known (implicitly Euro-centered) world. Essayists tend to cushion cited literature with the ground of its strength; designers of translated literature tend to claim that the newly arrived ‘other’ offering provides an angle to look at knowledge production or agency. These attempts and grounds can be applied to the literature at hand. However, if it is read through

the frame of mind and body, the returned covered detours a detour of skepsis and returns to the resistant/revolutionary (or impotently vicious) character of the de-colonial research methodology. Read or seen in such a manner, logic does not normals reveal de-coloniality in anti-positivist manifestation.

In a rigorous sense, a hoped-of specimen collected from the city of Niamey in Niger, The Watermelon Boys belongs—on several cognitive, semiotic, and connective grounds—to the semi-dozen-catch rim of colonial and gendered or environmental literature. Stamped with the indelible print of the Arab and Francophone world, it solemnly proceeds to humanize the literatures of the sub-Saharan world. As a fledgling in its indicative form, it aspires for an Oscar in its ambitious projections. Now, it would pose a deterrent in revitalizing the myth of the wand; essentialism, with its simultaneous borrowed and innovative hybridization, lays the vanilla carpet to be animated by inspiration, tension, obsolescence, projection, and all other genres augmentable on canvas—an augmentable basin of the myth of the Pantheon.

13.2. Challenges in Interpretation

There are complexities in interpreting African fiction, given the differences in culture, history, and tradition. Footnotes are an indication of the scholarly interpretation, textual difficulties, and cultural unfamiliarity. It is common to find the texts eluding, complicating comprehension and inviting diffidence. (Akpome, 2018) laments the deceptiveness of textual interpreters who mistake “immediate vexation… for aesthetic limitations of the texts.” These vexations come not from aesthetic shortcomings but from an increased respect for the Other, primarily, the African reality, “frustratingly evasive” by Western standards. Readers do with wisdom if their reading is accompanied by diffidence, supplying them a way out of inevitable entrapment. The moment a writer westernizes an African text “is not less tragic than the general trifling of Western readers with African literature-enabling such ideologized appropriation.” For this diffidence, both the text and other cultural contents prove to be invidious traps. There is a tendency of Western critics “to phenomenalize and fetishize African literature.” Academic prose is filled with allusion to or paraphrasing in non-broken English. “The device of liminal character as a linguistic strategy is perhaps one of the furthest reaching attempts to avoid the premature appropriation of these texts.” In other words, the limitation of African literary works in building proper textuality succeeds thereby.

Proversial African culture and tradition may fill the ineffable silence of mystical melancholy, fearful vision, and transcendent insight. These may escape into non-literary words that seem to speak of proverbs or myths. (El Samad, 2014) argues that the lore of deconstructive historical and literary semiology is a valuable desk for content interpretation. Languaging becomes for writerly text making an act of different kinds of hybridization. Through temporal and local displacement of shifts of regions, religions, cultures, traditions, and histories, the very genesis of hybrid creatures becomes a wonderful process. An art of

wordplay incessantly conceals or reveals all culture-bound semantics "made strange." The reader has to be alerted in reading against easier task of normalizing signs. African hybrid creatures call upon illustration from all traditions, cultures, languages, and histories for all literary representation of naivety or sophistication. The selected African texts may "displace much Western literary precedents."

Damaged immediately by a presence of too many capturing experiences, images, and phenomena, wonder if there is coming-to-know space of delivery. There is apparently a clear dangers of aesthetic post-colonization both of the reader and the interpreter. Failing on this hybridity is being immediately excluded in a chasm of exile. Close reading is, in effect, impossibly uncurately reading pre-deciphered texts. The co-existence of Western and Arabic numerals and languages through translation in Salih's novella unbalances the comparative power of conflicting social milieu. The polyphone characterisation of female characters voicing spirits with varying degrees of darkness and extravagance in Salih's novella becomes arrhythmically eddying, plastic, and unstilled poetic form.

14. Future Directions for Research

Scholarship on African literature has gained increasing momentum over the past two decades with critics from Europe, North America and beyond contributing to new historiographies. Mwangi is one of the newest names to join the gallery and yet, his fiction remains understudied, by and large. There is almost no serious full-length study of any of his works. With the exception of a few journal essays and doctoral dissertations mainly from Nigeria, Mwangi has been ignored in Africa itself. That such an important voice in East African literature called for an urgent readdressing arose partly from his understanding of 'hybrid' narrative strategies and how they articulate conflicting sensibilities in postcolonial representations of the colonial past in More about Watermelon Boys (2007) (Akpome, 2018). One significant avenue for further research concerns the ways in which Watermelon Boys generalizes its scenario. In a number of ways, the novel exports the history of colonization and independence from Kenya to Africa and even beyond. First of all, it does so by concentrating on an imprisonment exercise in the Nandi Hills called the "Ironing" of boys. Secondly, it amplifies the communicative event of the Watermelon Boys by introducing the narrator and his audience. Finally, it contributes to Pan-Africanism in the conclusion by including the writing of the novel in New York City, assisting in the fight for independence in Namibia, the referencing of Malawi, and mentioning efforts to construct a Nile Confederation.

Another area meriting future research is the narrative strategies in Watermelon Boys. The novel relies on a first-person-child narrator and unfolds the traumatic memory of the ironed children revealed obliquely and through suggestions. This implies a model regarding how a child can cope with horrendous experiences in both the family and society. More tasks can be undertaken on the external narrator, the nature of implied readers, audience design, focalization and point of view in the text. The use of extensively fragmented chronology in

the narration provides another research opportunity. It is worthwhile to explore how the passage of time in trauma narratives creates dislocations of time in the consciousness and retrospection of the narrators and how this form creates reflexivity in the narrative. Moreover, the narrative appropriates the past tense with the foreground of the present, presenting another dimension worthy of discussion (A. Odhiambo, 2013).

14.1. Emerging Themes in Post-Colonial Studies

Post-colonial literature is the literature written during and after the period of colonization of a nation. It deals with the ramifications and effects of colonization on individuals of those regions. The narratives that got precedence before the postcolonial era invoked the omnipotence of the colonizer and presented a monolithic portrayal of the colonized. Post-colonial literature investigates how the experience of colonization and migration disrupts identities that were once seen as stable and contiguous, and how it also creates spaces for new subjectivity to be constructed. Thus, questions of identity, hybridity, displacement, diaspora, longing, and loss are central themes in post-colonial literature in English. Arabic writing also took the post-colonial troubadour into its fold. The English novels of the Moroccan writer depict the serendipitous establishment of interculturality as a consequence of colonization.

Another prominent theme in post-colonial literature is the quest for justice through resistance against colonization, as is evident in the works of writers who dealt with the political dilemma facing the colonized subject. Post-colonial literature interrogates received versions of colonial history, and short stories read the colonizer and colonized sides together. Where once an uncontested version of history had predominated, there is now an engagement with memory, recollection, silence, oral testimony, and even deliberated misremembering. Memory acts as a vehicle for either repressive silence or renewed insistence on an alternative historical coherence. And where there was once an imposed version of certainty, a trembling multiplicity of versions has emerged. Some texts explore how counter-narratives leave their new tellers vulnerable to accusations of fabricated testimony. Recent research focuses on investigating the continuum between oral archiving and literary representation: the way in which testimonies of oral knowledge can be preserved while retaining their aura of authenticity and non-literariness. This notion is particularly relevant to children's literature for older readers which is an increasingly productive field in post-colonial literature, and yet one that has received very little attention.

14.2. Interdisciplinary Approaches

In post-colonial literature, the narrative revolves around the lives of colonized peoples from their perspective. In Indian Literature in English, Kiran Nagarkar's second novel The Watermelon Boys, penned early in his creative career, defies the above category quite contrarily. The post-colonial narrative view is represented from colonizer's gaze, discourse and worldview. They are represented, analysed and critiqued wholly from colonizer's perspective while they perceive the colonized as those in dire need of upgrading in every aspect of life – 'civilization,' 'education', 'culture', 'society', and 'moral values.'

Rightly pointed out by (A. Odhiambo, 2013), the postcolonial field is thus a field in which everything is contestable. Probably this is due to the goal of post-colonial work itself; the aim is to understand in detail the complex inter-relationship of colonial entanglements and their consequences to the various involved aspects. Since these are wide in scope, and pressingly important in society, such topics as global, capitalistic, ecological, anthropocenic, cultural, hybridity, textuality, feminism, and politics took centre stage in post-colonial studies, and many of them remained unabashedly exclusive and intimate within their respective disciplines. On the other hand, so many writers also opted, mostly in their early writing, to work with historical issues, envisioning the past dialogically, as in addition to their own legacies, colonial histories incited terrifying atrocities, wars, genocides that loomed so large in their collective memory becoming one of the most commanding topics of confession.

Kiran Nagarkar's The Watermelon Boys (1985), traversing with carefully archived colonial memories, relocates the divisive framework of the colonized as living witnesses to the occidental manoeuvrings. Individual historical agents, though less illuminative to the spaciousness of the past, become important in memorializing the stasis of the perpetrating gaze, faith and actions, attuning with what (Lopez, 2016) contends: 'this possibility, and this necessity, to bear witness does not abide merely hidden away in the mind of each individual, but flows freely around in the atmosphere of lightness and dream, joy and hope.' Mostly prose works, with sprawling and painfully streams of Arabic, French, Indian and English texts and references, the novels are written with an incalculable, nuanced consideration of form, material and sound. Though it exquisitely attains a level of deliberation that is beyond text, reductively speaking, the novels nonetheless deny readers a comfortable ride through purportedly engaging characters, tensions and denouements. The otherwise congenial ingredients caged by enveloping intellectualised discourses make for formidability that shares little commonality with mainstream works of fiction.

15. Conclusion

Across this lineage of essays, a common thread has emerged to expose the relationships between prior and current regimes of colonization, loss, subjugation, unilateral narratives of suffering and guilt, death and estrangement, archival (re)collections, and the longing for home among South Asians in East Africa. Moreover, the impact on these tenets of marginalized histories has persisted, been transmuted, and been internalized through a postcolonial lens, underscoring a sense of shared trauma and belonging. As a synaesthetic exploration of sound, color, and language—through the abrogation of standard narrative tropes, tropes of emptiness and redirection couched through pancake-like descriptions, and rebukes of the West's greed for funding also modeled through the absurd tonalities of meta-narrative—we asked in what ways does 'The Watermelon Boys' produce its melancholic interrogations of war, the colonization of the camera, the coloniality of trauma and hope, of loss even in when still in the land of the beloved? Furthermore, a 'how', one of the numerous ways of mourning echoed through its epilogue. Textual materiality and aesthetics speak to

each other, producing a palimpsest that attests to lost legacies (of anger, memories, spaces, sounds, and an entire worldview)—both in terms of intergenerational and cross-cultural exchanges—as performative acts of undoing and queering not only that which 'has been lost,' but also what remains 'othered.' Hence, it is a text that resonates, with both irreducible, and ineludible, impressions. 'In winding unread depths, their consequences unravel,' ache beyond your language (A. Odhiambo, 2013).

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