REFLECTIONS ON ACCULTURATION IN SELECTED NOVELS OF PAUL BEATTY AND ABDULRAZAK GURNAH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

English

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DECLARATION

I, hereby declared that the presented work in the thesis entitled "**Reflections on Acculturation in Selected Novels of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah: A Comparative Study"** in fulfilment of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.)** is outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of **Dr Sandeep Kumar Sharma**, working as **Associate Professor**, in Department of **English**, School of Liberal and Creative Arts of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever work described here has been based on findings of other investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled "**Reflections on Acculturation in Selected Novels of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah: A Comparative Study"** submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in Department of **English**, School of Liberal and Creative Arts, is a research work carried out by **MEHAK BAKSHI**, 12021095 is bonafide record of his/her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.

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Name of supervisor: Dr Sandeep Kumar

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Abstract

This thesis seeks the processes of acculturation as portrayed in the works of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah. Utilising John Widdup Berry's framework on acculturation as a key theoretical perspective, the research delves into how individuals navigate their cultural identities amid the challenges of displacement, migration, and interactions with dominant cultures. Berry's model outlines four acculturation strategies assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation and offers a detailed approach to understanding the different reactions to cultural interactions and transformations. The study contends that while both authors address the complexities of acculturation, their protagonists approach these experiences in unique ways that reflect the specific historical and socio-political contexts of their stories.

This thesis will primarily be a qualitative study. It delves into the portrayals of characters, their inner lives, social interactions, and the symbolic meanings embedded within the chosen novels. The study employs a comparative approach, analysing and contrasting how acculturation unfolds differently in the works of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah. The primary method of investigation will be close reading and textual analysis of selected novels by both authors. This involves examining language, themes, character development, and narrative structures to uncover deeper meanings related to acculturation.

Paul Beatty's works, especially *The White Boy Shuffle*, *Slumberland* and *The Sellout*, provide a satirical and often irreverent examination of African American identity in modern America. Beatty's characters frequently confront the absurdities of racial politics and the legacy of slavery, engaging in cultural resistance that challenges traditional ideas of assimilation. Through sharp humour and social critique, Beatty reveals the shortcomings of a society that demands conformity while perpetuating systemic inequalities. His characters often practice "selective assimilation," strategically adopting certain elements of the dominant culture while maintaining a critical distance and preserving their distinct cultural heritage. This selective approach enables them to challenge dominant narratives and create

spaces for self-expression and artistic validation. The thesis explores how Beatty's characters use satire and irony as resistance, questioning the concept of a singular, unified African American identity.

In contrast, Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels, including *Paradise, Desertion* and *The Pilgrims Way*, present a more sombre and reflective examination of acculturation, focusing on the experiences of individuals displaced from their native lands and navigating the complexities of postcolonial identity. Gurnah's characters, often refugees or migrants, struggle with losing their cultural foundations and adapting to new, often unwelcoming environments. Feelings of alienation, nostalgia, and a deep sense of dislocation characterise their experiences of displacement. The thesis also focuses on how Gurnah's protagonists navigate their identities within the framework of cultural hybridity, often employing an "integration" strategy that seeks to balance the preservation of their cultural heritage with adopting new cultural practices. However, this integration process is rarely smooth and is often filled with tensions and contradictions. Gurnah's narratives emphasise the psychological and emotional impact of displacement, examining how individuals reconstruct their identities in the face of loss and trauma. Additionally, this thesis explores how acculturation intersects with other social categories, such as race, class, and gender, analysing how these overlapping identities influence individuals' experiences of cultural interaction and transformation.

The multifaceted nature of cultural adaptation through a comparative analysis of Paul Beatty's satirical portrayal of African American experiences in the contemporary United States and Abdulrazak Gurnah's exploration of postcolonial identity on the Swahili coast.

Beatty's protagonists grapple with the contradictions of the American Dream, caught between assimilation and resistance. At the same time, Gurnah's characters navigate the fragmented landscapes of cultural hybridity and displacement in a globalised world.

Beatty's satirical and incisive prose addresses the ironies and contradictions in African American acculturation within a contemporary United States that continues to confront its racialised history. His protagonists, frequently positioned between assimilation and resistance, reveal the illusory nature of the American Dream while interrogating traditional notions of identity and belonging. Gurnah's narratives explore the enduring impacts of colonialism and globalisation on the Swahili coast, tracing the fragmented identities and cultural dislocation experienced by individuals navigating the tension between tradition and modernity. His characters, often depicted as migrants or exiles, contend with the complexities of cultural hybridity and the quest for belonging in a

world shaped by historical forces.

John W Berry's acculturation model offers a significant framework for exploring the complexity of cultural adaptation as represented in the works of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah. This thesis will employ Berry's fourfold typology of acculturation strategies namely integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation to analyse the various methods by which characters negotiate their cultural identities.

The comparative approach, analysing authors from different backgrounds grappling with similar themes, enriches the field of comparative literature. It reveals commonalities and divergences in literary representations of acculturation across cultures, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the human experience. This comparative analysis employs frameworks from postcolonial theory and cultural studies to investigate how power dynamics, historical contexts, and individual agency influence the acculturation experiences portrayed

in the novels. By juxtaposing Beatty's incisive social critique with Gurnah's examination of displacement and memory, this work illuminates the shared human experiences of cultural negotiation, resistance, and the ongoing pursuit of self-definition in an increasingly fluid and interconnected world.

Beatty's satire exposes the ironies inherent in African American assimilation within the contemporary United States still grappling with its racial past. His protagonists, caught between conformity and defiance, challenge the American Dream and conventional notions of identity. Conversely, Gurnah's narratives explore the lasting effects of colonialism and globalization on the Swahili coast, portraying characters grappling with fragmented identities and cultural displacement amidst the interplay of tradition and modernity.

Employing John Berry's acculturation model as a framework, this study examines how characters negotiate through integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalisation of their cultural identities. Beatty's sharp social critique is juxtaposed with Gurnah's subtle exploration of displacement and memory, revealing shared human experiences of cultural adaptation, resistance, and self-discovery in an increasingly interconnected world. The analysis further considers the role of language, both as a barrier and a bridge between cultures, and its impact on belonging and identity.

This research argues that while Berry's typology provides a foundational

understanding, historical and socio-political forces significantly shape individual acculturation experiences. With the diverse strategies employed by the protagonists, this thesis illuminates how individuals define themselves amidst cultural exchange. The works of Beatty and Gurnah offer insights into the ongoing challenges of acculturation, underscoring the need for cultural sensitivity and a multifaceted understanding of identity formation.

Furthermore, this study posits that literature can catalyse intercultural dialogue, promoting a more inclusive and equitable global community.

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Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, where borders blur and cultures intertwine, the concept of acculturation takes centre stage. It delves into the process of cultural exchange and transformation that individuals and groups experience when they encounter different ways of life. Even as the sun sets on empires, its long shadows continue to shape the contours of culture and power. Postcolonialism, far from a clean break from the past, marks a period of ongoing struggle, negotiation, and redefinition (Storey et al. 58-59). This thesis ventures into this dynamic terrain, examining how societies grapple with the enduring legacies of colonialism, seeking to dismantle its ingrained power structures and reclaim their cultural narratives. Rather than a simple absorption of a new culture, acculturation encompasses a complex interplay of adaptation, negotiation, and resistance, often accompanied by both opportunities and challenges.

In the latter half of the 20th century, a new era emerged as numerous countries gained independence, transitioning from being colonies to sovereign nations. According to literary experts and scholars, the term "Postcolonial" refers to the cultural impact of the imperial process from the time of colonisation to the present day (Mama). Colonialism has significantly shaped global history, societies, and individuals, influencing broader issues such as culture, race, gender, and identity. Postcolonial theory and literature often explore themes like race, gender, ethnicity, identity, and culture. One contentious topic within postcolonialism is the exploration of identity and culture, particularly in today's world with increasing immigration, the rise of hybrid nations, and countries with diverse cultural backgrounds (Urrieta 189-92). Theorists have focused on issues of identity, with figures like Franz Fanon discussing the effects of colonialism and immigration experiences. Edward Said emphasized the importance of resistance and self-recreation in constructing a postcolonial, anti-imperialist identity. Postcolonial novelists, particularly those from former British

colonies, have garnered attention for their works, shedding light on identity crises that emerged in the postcolonial era (Adamopoulos). These writers often address themes of diaspora, exile, and identity in their novels.

Postcolonial literature, a vibrant tapestry woven from the threads of diverse cultures and historical experiences, is marked by both striking divergences and compelling convergences (Steere-Williams). While each postcolonial text emerges from a unique context, grappling with specific legacies of empire, they collectively contribute to a global conversation about power, identity, and the complex process of decolonisation. The choice of language itself becomes a political act. Some writers embrace the coloniser's tongue, subverting it from within to express their realities, while others reclaim and revitalize indigenous languages, asserting their cultural sovereignty. (Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors, 1995). While shared experiences of colonialism provide common ground, the specific thematic concerns of postcolonial writers vary greatly. Some grapple with the dismantling of traditional social structures, others explore the complexities of hybrid identities, and still others expose the ongoing effects of economic and political neocolonialism. (Collingwood–Whittick, 2007).

The postcolonial period is characterised by the quest for self-identification and attaining autonomy. Numerous nations during this time faced challenges in terms of both economic and cultural development. Those who resist colonial rule are commonly referred to as anti-colonialists. The clash between the cultural identities of the colonised individuals and those of the colonisers was a significant factor in the struggle for independence. Stuart Hall (1990) explores the process of cultural identity formation among diasporic individuals who interact with diverse cultural groups in his work "Cultural Identity and Diaspora". Even after gaining independence, the legacy of colonisation persisted, leading to the emergence of hybrid identities and new cultural amalgamations among individuals moving between former

colonies, resulting in cultural conflicts (Abdulqadir Dizayi). The issue of cultural identity stands out as a key point of contention within the realm of postcolonial studies. Jones Brockimeier and Donal Carbaugh, in their research on Narrative and Identity, argue that "the concept of cultural identity encompasses a wide array of intellectual inquiries that have been scrutinised across various disciplines and theoretical frameworks."

From magical realism to stark social realism, postcolonial literature encompasses a rich diversity of styles and aesthetics, reflecting the multifaceted nature of postcolonial experiences and the desire to challenge Western literary conventions. Many works engage in the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies and their lingering impact on thought patterns, cultural practices, and social structures. (Kalua, 2014). A central preoccupation is the reclaiming of history from colonial narratives and the assertion of marginalised voices. (Postcolonial literature - Wikipedia, 2003). The complexities of hybrid identities, formed at the intersection of coloniser and colonised cultures, are a recurring theme, challenging essentialist notions of culture and belonging. (Asl et al., 2020). Postcolonial literature often critiques the subtle forms of economic, political, and cultural domination that persist in the wake of formal independence. (Schulze–Engler, 2002).

Acculturation, far from being a bygone concept, pulses with relevance in both contemporary and postcolonial literature, serving as a bridge between the legacies of the past and the realities of the present. Acculturation is used as a means to analyse the lasting effects of colonialism on personal and group identities. It reveals the power imbalances present in cultural interactions, showing how colonised individuals were frequently compelled to adopt the customs of dominant cultures, resulting in the marginalisation of their heritage and languages. Postcolonial writers use acculturation to reclaim their narratives, challenging Eurocentric perspectives and highlighting the resilience and agency of colonised people. They explore themes of hybridity, mimicry, and the formation of new cultural identities that

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emerge from the crucible of colonial encounters. In an increasingly globalised world, acculturation becomes a lens through which to examine the joys and challenges of intercultural contact, migration, and diaspora. Contemporary writers explore how individuals navigate multiple cultural influences, forming hybrid identities and challenging notions of fixed national or ethnic belonging.

Contemporary literature continues to provide a platform for marginalised voices, exploring how issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality intersect with acculturation experiences. It sheds light on the ongoing struggles for equality, inclusion, and the right to be fully oneself in a diverse and ever-changing world. By centering the experiences of those who have been historically marginalised, postcolonial literature sheds light on the ongoing struggles for cultural recognition, self-determination, and the right to define one's own identity in a world still grappling with the aftershocks of empire. By offering portrayals of acculturation experiences, contemporary literature fosters empathy and understanding across cultural divides. It encourages readers to question their assumptions, challenge stereotypes, and engage in meaningful dialogue about the complexities of identity and belonging in a globalised world. "We are the roots that clutch, what we should not clasp, we are the lines that strain, what we should not hold." These lines from Adrienne Rich's poem "Diving into the Wreck" speak to the complexities of holding onto one's cultural roots while adapting to a new environment.

Essentially, acculturation acts as a significant common theme that links the historical challenges portrayed in postcolonial literature to the current dynamics of cultural interaction and compromise in today's society. Through examining these stories, we enhance our comprehension of people's ability to adjust, persevere, and the continuous conversation between different cultures that influences our global environment. Understanding acculturation requires moving beyond simplistic models and embracing its complexity.

Contemporary approaches acknowledge the fluidity, context-dependency, and psychological dimensions of this process, recognising that individuals navigate cultural boundaries in diverse and evolving ways.

John Widdup Berry

John W. Berry stands as a prominent figure in the field of cross-cultural psychology, renowned for his significant contributions to understanding the complexities of cultural adaptation and intercultural relations. His work, spanning over five decades, has profoundly shaped how we conceptualise the psychological experiences of individuals navigating diverse cultural contexts. He is widely regarded as a pioneer in the field of cross-cultural psychology. His research focuses on cross-cultural psychology in general, as well as immigration and acculturation. Berry has received international acclaim for his research on acculturation, intercultural relations, and ecological factors in human behaviour. Berry is a distinguished figure within the realm of cross-cultural psychology, having made substantial contributions to the comprehension of how culture influences human behaviour, particularly in the realms of acculturation, cultural identity, and intercultural relations.

Berry's research primarily focuses on acculturation, the process by which individuals adapt to contact with different cultures. His seminal work, including the development of the widely recognised acculturation model, has provided a robust framework for understanding the diverse strategies individuals employ when encountering new cultural environments. This model, with its emphasis on the interplay between cultural maintenance and intercultural contact, has become a cornerstone of cross-cultural research and has been instrumental in guiding interventions aimed at facilitating positive intercultural relations. Beyond his contributions to acculturation research, Berry is recognised for his commitment to ethical research practices, particularly when working with Indigenous communities. His

emphasis on collaboration, respect, and cultural sensitivity has set a standard for conducting culturally appropriate and ethical research in the field.

The global population is witnessing significant movements of people, with over 280 million immigrants and refugees residing in countries other than their birthplace. In Western nations, these individuals are known as first-generation immigrants. When considering their descendants, known as the second generation, the total numbers are even higher. Both generations aspire to lead culturally rich lives in their adopted countries, contributing to the diverse communities and regions they inhabit. A central concern for these societies is how to effectively coexist amidst the cultural disparities introduced by these populations. It is often suggested that the challenges of living in culturally diverse environments can result in various psychological and social issues, especially for young individuals navigating complex social systems like healthcare, education, and social security.

Whether the research focuses on one specific scenario or another, historical control can be maintained over the data. This means that when studying acculturation, the researcher is closer to using a laboratory method compared to studying a culture solely in its present state without any historical context. The study of acculturation provides ideal conditions for investigating the nature and processes of culture, as it involves more known variables than other types of research in the field of human civilisation. Observing cultures in a state of change allows us to witness transformations that are only theorised in stable societies. Additionally, studying how culture influences human personality amid cultural conflicts reveals reactions that may not be apparent during times of cultural stability. Culture significantly shapes individual personality, and cultural conflicts often reveal reactions and behaviours that remain hidden during periods of stability. Consider the concept of cultural dissonance, where individuals experience psychological stress when encountering values or beliefs that conflict with their own. This can lead to various reactions, including assimilation,

where individuals adopt the new culture and abandon their original one; separation, where individuals maintain their original culture and reject the new one; integration, where individuals combine aspects of both cultures; and marginalisation, where individuals reject both their original and the new culture. (Psychology and Culture).

While the term "cultural stability" isn't always explicitly used, many modern English writers explore themes of culture and its influence on individuals and societies. (Twentieth-Century English Literature, Wikipedia) mentions Irish writers like James Joyce and Samuel Beckett as central figures in Modernism, and their works often depict the interplay between individual consciousness and cultural contexts. (Teaching Literature in Australia: Examining and Reviewing Senior English, n.d.) discusses a shift in secondary English education from a "study of Culture" to "cultural studies," suggesting a changing understanding of culture's role. (Novel as a Cultural Narrative, n.d.) highlights how literature reflects "social norms of religion, race, caste, creed," etc., indicating an awareness of culture's multifaceted nature. The value patterns in England and the United States, touch on the idea of cultural unity and diversity. These works offer different perspectives on how culture shapes individuals and societies, sometimes implicitly addressing the concept of cultural stability by exploring periods of change or conflict.

The research examined immigration through the lens of interactions between individuals and their environments, aiming to identify the factors within individuals, environments, and their interactions that contribute positively or negatively to the health and well-being of both immigrant and native youth populations. Immigrant youth shared insights on their acculturation strategies, while native youth provided perspectives on their expectations and preferences regarding the acculturation of immigrants.

Cultural identity is a component of acculturation that centres on immigrants' self-perception rather than their actions and beliefs post-immigration. It encompasses both ethnic

and national identity. Studies on acculturation and cultural identity offer diverse viewpoints on immigrant matters, offering important context for examining immigrant teenagers. By integrating these perspectives, we can analyse the distinct and interconnected roles they play in the lives of immigrant youth and how these youth engage with the cultures they are part of.

Berry introduced a model of acculturation that classifies individual adaptation approaches based on two key dimensions (Berry). The initial dimension pertains to the preservation or abandonment of one's original culture (i.e., the significance of maintaining one's identity and traits). The second dimension relates to the acceptance or refusal of the host culture (i.e. the importance of engaging with the broader society). These two inquiries give rise to four distinct acculturation strategies.

This thesis draws upon Berry's influential work, particularly his acculturation model, to examine the reflections of acculturation in the selected novels of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah. Berry's model of acculturation, with its focus on integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation, provides a powerful lens for examining the complexities of cultural identity and belonging as depicted in the works of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah. Both authors explore the experiences of individuals navigating the intersections of different cultures, highlighting the challenges and possibilities of acculturation in a globalised world.

Navigating the Terrain of Acculturation

Acculturation, a multifaceted concept, encompasses the intricate processes individuals undergo when engaging with different cultures. Numerous theoretical models attempt to capture its complexity, each with its strengths and limitations. Early models, like Robert Park's assimilationist perspective, viewed acculturation as a linear progression where immigrants gradually shed their original culture, adopting the dominant one. This approach,

often termed the "melting pot" theory, assumes a unidirectional shift and fails to acknowledge the persistence of cultural heritage or the possibility of integration. Recognising the limitations of unidimensional views, John Berry's model introduced a bi-dimensional approach, positing that individuals relate to both their heritage culture and the new culture along two independent dimensions. First is Cultural maintenance, which emphasises how individuals value and maintain their original cultural practices, values, and identity. The secondary approach is contact and participation, which focuses on the extent to which individuals engage with the new culture, adopting its customs and interacting with its members. This framework allows for various acculturation strategies, including Assimilation, Integration, Marginalisation and Separation.

Assimilation

In John Berry's acculturation model, assimilation is one of the four distinct acculturation strategies individuals may adopt when navigating between their heritage culture and a new, dominant culture. Individuals who lean towards assimilation tend to prioritise engagement with the new culture while placing less emphasis on maintaining their original cultural practices, values, and identity. They actively seek to adopt the customs, beliefs, and language of the dominant culture, often striving to fit in and be seen as part of the new society. It's important to note that Berry views assimilation as a voluntary process, chosen by individuals as their preferred mode of acculturation. However, he acknowledges that societal pressures and power imbalances can influence these choices, sometimes making assimilation feel less like a free choice and more like a necessity for acceptance or advancement.

Berry's model, like many, aims to categorise for the sake of understanding. So, in a purely theoretical sense, someone could decide "I want to be fully part of this new culture, even if it means leaving behind aspects of my origin."That's the "voluntary" aspect.

The choice to assimilate often involves a trade-off. Gaining acceptance in the new culture might mean suppressing parts of one's heritage, leading to feeling like one has to choose between who they were and who they're expected to be. Historically, many groups have been subjected to forced assimilation, where their cultures were actively suppressed (Indigenous boarding schools). While Berry's model focuses on individual choices, this historical context looms large. It's more accurate to say that Berry's model presents assimilation as a voluntary process within its theoretical framework, but he also acknowledges the real-world complexities that often make it feel less than free. Berry's model centres on the idea that individuals have a degree of agency in choosing how they acculturate (Wong and Wong 17). He provides four distinct strategies, implying that individuals can assess their options and select the one that aligns best with their goals and values.

Unlike forced assimilation, where external forces impose cultural change, Berry's model doesn't include coercion as a defining feature of assimilation. It focuses on the individual's psychological and behavioural adaptation to a new culture. However, Berry doesn't ignore the influence of societal factors. He recognizes that discrimination, economic disparities, and social pressures can significantly impact an individual's acculturation experience, potentially limiting their choices and making assimilation seem like the only viable path to acceptance or success. It's important to approach the concept of assimilation as a way of living for migrants with nuance and sensitivity. While it can be a chosen path for some, for others, it's a complex process shaped by external pressures and internal struggles. Feeling accepted and included in the new society can be a powerful motivator. Migrants might adopt the dominant culture's language, social customs, and even humour to fit in and build relationships. A migrant might adopt the dominant language and customs at work or in public but maintain their native language and traditions at home with family. Children of

immigrants often assimilate more quickly than their parents, leading to intergenerational differences in cultural practices and values.

Karen van der Zee and Jan Pieter van Oudenhoven in their research work "*Towards a dynamic approach to acculturation*" focuses on Immigrant children raised in the neighbourhood more often displayed favourable patterns of upward mobility, assimilating into more privileged layers in society, as compared to immigrant children who spent their childhood in the former neighbourhood. Confronted with different cultures, they put pressure on others to assimilate or they try to exclude others to get rid of their anxious feelings. The intercultural competencies of cultural empathy, open-mindedness and social initiative predispose individuals to experience diversity as a positive learning experience. Being confronted with different cultural perspectives, they respond with curiosity and eagerness to learn.

Assimilation can be a source of both opportunity and struggle. The constant effort to fit in can be emotionally draining and lead to feelings of inauthenticity. Negotiating multiple cultural identities can be challenging, leading to feelings of confusion, alienation, or a sense of losing oneself (Ohkawa 247–60). Leaving behind aspects of one's heritage culture, even if by choice, can involve a sense of loss and mourning. Instead of viewing assimilation as a single, fixed path, seeing it as a fluid and multifaceted process is more helpful. Migrants navigate cultural boundaries in diverse ways, making choices and facing constraints within their unique circumstances.

Integration

According to Berry's acculturation model, integration represents a balanced approach where individuals maintain their heritage culture while actively engaging with the new, dominant culture. Individuals who favour integration value both their original cultural identity and participation in the larger society. They strive to maintain their customs,

language, and values while also adopting aspects of the new culture. Integration is seen as enriching, allowing individuals to draw from the strengths and values of both cultures (Ltd 73-78). It fosters a sense of belonging to multiple groups without having to sacrifice one's identity. Individuals develop fluency and comfort in navigating both their heritage and the dominant culture. They can adapt their behaviour and communication style depending on the context.

By embracing both cultures, individuals may experience less stress and conflict associated with adapting to a new environment. This means maintaining proficiency in one's native language while learning the dominant language, building relationships with people from both their heritage culture and the new culture, and preserving traditions from their heritage culture while participating in cultural events and customs of the new society.

Integration thrives in societies that value and support cultural diversity. Discrimination and prejudice can hinder integration efforts. It is associated with greater social support, higher self-esteem, and lower stress and anxiety levels. Its bicultural competence can be an asset in various settings, opening up opportunities for education, employment, and social mobility. While integration is often seen as a positive outcome, it's essential to respect individual choices and recognise that not everyone may desire or be able to achieve this balance. Berry views integration as a desirable acculturation strategy that benefits individuals and society. It represents a harmonious approach to cultural adaptation, fostering a sense of belonging, identity security, and well-being.

A rational society values open-mindedness, tolerance, and the free exchange of ideas. Integration plays a key role in cultivating these values by Reducing Fear and Prejudice, Promoting Empathy and Compassion, and Strengthening Social Trust. Exposure to different cultures and perspectives helps break down fear and prejudice, fostering greater understanding and acceptance of difference. Interacting with people from diverse

backgrounds cultivates empathy and compassion, encouraging individuals to see the world from multiple perspectives. When people from different backgrounds interact positively and productively, it builds social trust, which is essential for the functioning of society.

Integration, through the cultivation of critical thinking, the questioning of biases, and the encouragement of open discourse, establishes a conducive environment for the development of a more logical and thoughtful society. This process enables individuals to interact with the world in a more sophisticated, knowledgeable, and empathetic manner, resulting in improved decision-making and the advancement of a more peaceful and equitable society.

Marginalisation

In Berry's model of acculturation, marginalisation represents the option with the lowest levels of maintenance of both the original culture and engagement with the dominant culture. It's characterised by a sense of alienation and estrangement from both the heritage culture and the new society. It occurs when an individual sees little value in maintaining their original culture and has limited desire to engage with the dominant culture. While Berry presents marginalisation as one of four acculturation strategies, it's essential to recognize that it's often not a freely chosen option but rather a consequence of systemic barriers, discrimination, and social exclusion.

Marginalisation can have significant negative consequences for individuals and communities, including Identity Crisis, Social Exclusion and Psychological Distress.The lack of belonging to any cultural group can lead to a sense of confusion and uncertainty about one's place in the world. Feelings of alienation, powerlessness, and lack of control can contribute to mental health challenges, such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Marginalised individuals may face social isolation, limited access to resources, and reduced opportunities for advancement.

Marginalisation, while often experienced at an individual level, has profound and far-reaching consequences for both culture and society as a whole. It creates a ripple effect, impacting not only those directly marginalised but also the social fabric and cultural landscape of communities and nations. When groups are marginalised, their traditions, languages, arts, and perspectives risk being silenced or lost. This diminishes the richness and vibrancy of a society's cultural tapestry. When groups feel excluded and unheard, it can lead to social fragmentation, mistrust, and a breakdown of social cohesion. It can lead to a disconnect from cultural roots, particularly for younger generations resulting in a loss of identity, belonging, and a sense of shared history. Without the contributions and perspectives of marginalised groups, societies may become culturally stagnant, lacking the dynamism and innovation that come from diverse voices and experiences. Marginalising talented individuals based on their cultural background deprives society of their skills, knowledge, and contributions, hindering overall progress and innovation. Scholars emphasise the need to consider the intersections of multiple identities and forms of marginalisation to understand the diverse experiences of individuals and groups.

Intersectionality, where the circles overlap. This term, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, is key. It means a person can be marginalized on multiple levels at once. Example: An immigrant woman of colour faces a different set of challenges than an immigrant white man, even if they come from the same place. Each overlapping identity creates a unique experience. A wealthy Black woman may face less economic hardship but still encounter racism based on her skin colour. Even within one marginalised group (e.g. "immigrants"), experiences vary wildly like Country of origin, reasons for migration (refugee vs. economic), legal status, language skills, and family support, all play a role. Two people of the same ethnicity can have vastly different upbringings and thus, different ways marginalisation affects them. Addressing marginalisation requires understanding the specific ways it

manifests for different people. Berry stresses that marginalisation is often imposed rather than chosen, due to systemic barriers like discrimination that prevent integration.

Separation

Separation happens when someone prioritises preserving their original culture and avoids significant interaction with the dominant culture. It is an active choice to maintain cultural boundaries. Separation, as an acculturation strategy, has a complex and multifaceted impact on both the cultures involved and the broader society. Separation can be a powerful force for preserving cultural traditions, languages, and values that might otherwise be lost through assimilation. It allows communities to pass on their heritage to future generations. Maintaining distinct cultural practices can provide a strong sense of identity and belonging for individuals, especially in the face of pressure to conform to the dominant culture. Separation often leads to the formation of close-knit communities that offer support, shared values, and a sense of familiarity. Depending on the societal context, separation can limit access to opportunities (education, employment, political participation) that require interaction with the dominant culture.

The presence of distinct cultural groups, even if separated, can contribute to the diversity and richness of the broader society. Exposure to different perspectives, traditions, and art forms can foster creativity and understanding. The Limited interaction between separated groups can lead to stereotypes, prejudices, and mistrust. This lack of communication can hinder social cohesion and create divisions within society. Separation can have varying economic impacts. While some separated communities thrive economically, others may face disadvantages due to limited access to mainstream markets or discrimination. Separation challenges the idea of a homogenous society and raises questions about how to balance respect for cultural diversity with the need for social cohesion.

High levels of separation can make it more challenging to foster integration and create a sense of shared national identity. In extreme cases, separation can contribute to social fragmentation and even conflict, especially if groups feel marginalized or their rights are threatened.

The impact of separation varies greatly depending on historical, political, and social contexts. What might be seen as positive in one society could be problematic in another. It's crucial to distinguish between voluntary separation and forced segregation. The latter is a form of discrimination that limits opportunities and perpetuates inequalities. Separation is not always absolute or static. Individuals and communities may navigate between separation and other acculturation strategies depending on the situation.

Paul Beatty

Paul Beatty is a literary provocateur, a master satirist, and a fearless voice who tackles complex issues of race, class, and social injustice in America with a potent blend of humour and unflinching honesty. Born in 1962 and raised in Los Angeles, Beatty's upbringing in a predominantly Black neighbourhood deeply informs his writing. He witnessed firsthand the realities of systemic racism and how it shaped the lives of those around him. In 2016, Beatty made history by becoming the first American author to receive the prestigious Man Booker Prize for his novel *The Sellout*. His novel *The Sellout* also earned him the National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction. Beatty's works have garnered widespread critical acclaim for their sharp wit, insightful social commentary, and innovative use of language.

Through his writings, he vividly portrays the struggles faced by African Americans within American society (Cheuk), shedding light on the enduring prejudices and hostilities that persist against this demographic in the United States. Beatty's profound connection to the African American community is evident in the themes he addresses and the narratives he

constructs in his literary works. Despite his fervour for storytelling, Beatty also dedicated a considerable portion of his career to the field of poetry. In 1993, Beatty received a grant from The Foundation for Contemporary Arts for his contributions to the visual arts, as documented by Maus (4). This grant facilitated the creation of his debut novel, *The White Boy Shuffle*, which he attributes to enabling his creative freedom. The book was subsequently published in 1996 and received significant praise from the literary community, as noted by Nazir Scholar. The narrative of the novel centres on an educated African American man during the progressive climate of the 1990s, delving into themes of racism, gender, and sexuality. (Ravela). He also contributed to and edited Hokum: An Anthology of African American Humor (2006). Beatty is an associate professor of writing at Columbia University in New York.

Richard Bernstein, review of *The White Boy Shuffle* (Books of the times; Black Poet's First Novel Aims the Jokes Both Ways, 1996) provides an early perspective on Beatty's work, noting his unique voice and satirical targets. He writes,

Mr. Beatty's literary contribution aligns with a significant category within American literature known as the black Bildungsroman. His work portrays a narrative of personal growth and development set in an urban environment, where the protagonist, Gunnar Kaufman, navigates themes of racial identity, societal norms, and the challenges faced by artists. Reflecting on his upbringing in Santa Monica, Gunnar describes himself as "the funny cool black guy" and humorously refers to himself as "the whitest Negro in captivity," highlighting the complexities of his racial identity and experiences.

Beatty uses satire as a tool to expose hypocrisy, challenge societal norms, and make readers confront uncomfortable truths about race and inequality in America. Beatty doesn't shy away from difficult or controversial topics. He tackles them head-on, forcing readers to confront their biases and assumptions. His writing is often infused with a musicality and

rhythm reflecting his poet background. He uses his unique voice and literary skills to spark conversations, challenge the status quo, and offer a fresh perspective on the complexities of the American experience.

Paul Beatty doesn't just hold up a mirror to American society; he smashes it, picks up the shards, and forces us to look at the jagged reflections of our biases and hypocrisies. Beatty wields satire like a scalpel, dissecting the absurdity of racism and its insidious pervasiveness in American life. In *The Sellout*, for instance, the protagonist's attempt to reinstate slavery and segregation in modern-day Los Angeles lays bare the enduring legacy of racism and how it continues to shape American society. Beatty's humour is often dark, biting, and unapologetically provocative. He forces us to confront uncomfortable truths by making us laugh at them, prompting a visceral reaction that can be more effective than straightforward moralizing.

Beatty refuses to play by the rules of traditional storytelling or cater to expectations about how Black characters should be portrayed. His characters are complex, flawed, and often defy easy categorisation. Through his characters' experiences, Beatty challenges the myth of the American Dream, particularly for those who have been historically marginalized and excluded. He exposes the systemic barriers that prevent many Americans from achieving true equality and opportunity.

Beatty's writing is not always comfortable to read. It can be provocative, challenging, and even unsettling. But that's precisely his point. He wants to shake us out of our complacency, make us think critically about the world around us, and spark conversations about race, identity, and social justice that are long overdue. His writing is infused with a musicality and rhythm reflecting his poet background. His sentences crackle with energy, drawing readers in and keeping them engaged, even when tackling challenging subject matter. He seamlessly blends different dialects, slang, and cultural references, reflecting the

diversity of American speech and challenging the notion of a singular, monolithic "American" voice. By refusing to shy away from difficult truths, Beatty offers a fresh and necessary perspective on the complexities of the American experience, reminding us that true progress requires confronting our past and present with open eyes and honest dialogue.

African American literature has flourished in diversity, size, and impact since the twentieth century. As a result, African American literature has experienced a renaissance in variety, scope, and influence. In particular, satire has served as an influential and valuable framework for African American writers to express themselves, particularly when it comes to criticizing issues such as slavery and civil rights. However, in the twenty-first century, a shift has been observed in the style and effect of the satire genre, indicating that the previously conceptualized understanding of the genre needs to be updated. To investigate this shift, this thesis will examine the three novels by the renowned African American author Paul Beatty, *The White Boy Shuffle* (1996), *Slumberland* (2008) and *The Sellout* (2015). It will determine whether the novels should be classified as satires or whether a new term would be more appropriate to describe their tone and style. Beatty's texts are scathingly critical, absurd, unpredictable, and delightful to read (Beatty).

 John McMurtrie has three decades of experience as an editor and writer. As an independent book editor, he works for fiction and nonfiction authors, literary agencies, and publishing houses. His review of *The Sellout (The Sellout*,' by Paul Beatty, 2015) offers a concise overview of Beatty's style and themes, highlighting his sharp wit and social commentary.

Paul Beatty's novels are characterized by a blend of humour and critical analysis, employing literary techniques such as the absurd in distinct manners. For instance, in *The White Boy Shuffle*, the protagonist Gunnar navigates the evolving racial and geographical

landscapes of America as he grapples with his identity. Initially resistant to assuming a leadership role within the African American community, Gunnar paradoxically incites his followers to self-destruct in the pursuit of racial justice. In contrast, *The Sellout*, released over two decades later, features a protagonist and narrator who exhibit indifference towards the reinstatement of slavery and segregation in Los Angeles. Through works like *The White Boy Shuffle*, Beatty sheds light on the marginalization of minorities within the educational system, the media's exploitation of racial stereotypes, and the political mechanisms that stifle dissent among minority groups. Darryl Dickson-Carr in his book *African American Satire: The Sacredly Profane Novel*, places Beatty within a lineage of Black satirists, examining how his work uses humour to critique racism and social injustice. In *Slumberland*, Beatty features a cast of characters from various cultural backgrounds. The protagonist, DJ Darky, is African-American, while others come from different ethnicities, including German, Japanese, and Irish.

Through these characters, Beatty explores the intersections of race, ethnicity, and cultural identity. The characters in *Slumberland* grapple with questions of identity and belonging, navigating the complexities of cultural assimilation and cultural heritage. DJ Darky, in particular, struggles with his own identity as an African-American man living in Berlin and faces challenges related to his cultural background. Beatty's narratives underscore the significance of open dialogues on racial identity between minority leaders and the dominant white society as a crucial step towards effecting meaningful societal change.

The selected novels are *The Sellout, The White Boy Shuffle and Slumberland.*

The Sellout is a biting satire that throws a spotlight on the persistent issues of race, class, and social injustice in contemporary America. The story unfolds in Dickens, a neglected and forgotten agricultural community on the outskirts of Los Angeles. This setting,

a stark contrast to the glitz and glamour often associated with the city, becomes a microcosm of the racial and economic disparities prevalent in American society. The novel is narrated by an unnamed black farmer who, deeply affected by the injustices surrounding him, decides to take matters into his own hands. Reinstituting slavery and segregation in a bid to expose the hypocrisy and deeply ingrained racism he sees all around him. Beatty uses outrageous scenarios and biting humour to hold a mirror up to society, forcing readers to confront uncomfortable truths about race relations in America. The protagonist, an unnamed narrator, is a crucial element of the satire. He's a black farmer in modern-day Los Angeles who embarks on a series of outrageous social experiments, including reinstituting slavery and segregating a local school.

The novel directly confronts the lingering effects of America's racist past on the present. The protagonist's radical actions, like reinstituting slavery and segregation, are meant to expose how deeply these systems are woven into the fabric of society, even if they're no longer explicitly practised. The novel challenges simplistic notions of what it means to be Black in America. The protagonist's experiences and those of the diverse characters he encounters highlight the vast spectrum of Black identities and experiences. Beatty uses satire to expose the hypocrisy of a society that claims to value equality while perpetuating systems of oppression. The novel critiques institutions like the justice system, education, and even well-meaning liberal movements, revealing how they often fail to address the root causes of inequality. *The Sellout* is a provocative and darkly humorous exploration of what happens when a society built on inequality is forced to confront its contradictions.

The White Boy Shuffle

Paul Beatty's debut novel was published in 1996. It introduces readers to his signature blend of sharp satire, social commentary, and unflinching exploration of race in America. The novel unfolds across two contrasting settings: the predominantly white suburbs

of Santa Monica, California, and the predominantly Black inner-city neighbourhood of Hillcrest, Los Angeles. This geographical divide mirrors the larger racial and social divisions that the novel explores. At the heart of the story is Gunnar Kaufman, our protagonist. He's a Black boy adopted by white liberal parents and raised in the sheltered bubble of Santa Monica. Gunnar is a gifted writer and observer, acutely aware of his outsider status in both the white and Black worlds he navigates.

The White Boy Shuffle follows Gunnar's journey as he grapples with his identity, searching for a sense of belonging in a society that constantly reminds him of his otherness. He navigates the complexities of race, class, and culture with a mix of humour, anger, and insightful observations. Beatty weaves together seemingly disparate elements – basketball, graffiti art, political activism – to create a vibrant tapestry of Black life in America. Gunnar's experiences, from his time on an all-Black basketball team to his involvement in a radical political movement, challenge stereotypes and offer a nuanced perspective on Black identity.

This novel established Paul Beatty as a powerful literary voice, unafraid to tackle difficult subjects with wit and intelligence. The novel continues to resonate with readers today, offering a timeless commentary on the complexities of race, identity, and belonging in America. Gunnar's journey is a constant negotiation between the two worlds he inhabits: the predominantly white suburbia where he grew up and the predominantly Black inner city he's drawn to. He grapples with questions of authenticity, belonging, and what it truly means to be Black in America. Beatty masterfully dismantles stereotypes about race, class, and culture. Gunnar, a gifted writer and observer, defies easy categorization. The novel challenges readers to look beyond simplistic labels and confront the diversity of Black experiences.

Through sharp wit and biting humour, Beatty critiques the hypocrisy and absurdity of a society grappling with racial inequality. He tackles issues like cultural appropriation, white liberal guilt, and the often invisible barriers faced by people of colour. Gunnar finds

solace and a means of self-expression through writing and graffiti art. The novel highlights the power of language and creativity to challenge societal norms, express individuality, and connect with others. Despite the challenges he faces, Gunnar's journey is ultimately a search for connection and belonging. He forms bonds with a diverse cast of characters who, like him, are navigating the complexities of identity and searching for their place in the world. *The White Boy Shuffle* is a thought-provoking and often hilarious exploration of what it means to come of age in a society still grappling with the legacy of racism and the complexities of identity.

Slumberland

Published in 2008, Slumberland shows how Paul Beatty's signature blend of sharp wit, social commentary, and captivating storytelling. This time, he takes readers on a transatlantic journey fueled by jazz, history, and the search for identity. The novel unfolds across two primary settings: the vibrant, culturally diverse city of Berlin, Germany, and the American South, steeped in the history of the blues. This geographical and cultural interplay sets the stage for a story that explores themes of displacement, belonging, and the power of music. *Slumberland* is a captivating exploration of identity, belonging, and the power of music, set against the backdrop of historical echoes and cultural collisions.

Protagonist Ferguson W. Sowell, a Black American DJ, embarks on a journey to Berlin seeking refuge and a deeper connection to his musical roots. His experiences in this new environment force him to confront his own identity as a Black man, an American, and an artist. Beatty skillfully weaves historical events and figures into the narrative, highlighting how the past continues to shape the present. From the transatlantic slave trade to the complexities of race relations in post-war Germany, the novel explores the enduring impact of history on individual lives.

Ferguson finds himself drawn to a diverse cast of characters in Berlin's underground music scene. These individuals, each with their own stories and struggles, form an unlikely community united by their shared love of music and their search for belonging. Beatty's signature wit and social commentary are ever-present. He tackles issues of race, identity, and cultural appropriation with humour and insight, prompting readers to confront uncomfortable truths about society.

Our protagonist, Ferguson W. Sowell, also known as "DJ Darky", is a Black American DJ with a deep passion for jazz, particularly the obscure and forgotten sounds of "Afropessimism". Feeling like an outsider in his own country, he embarks on a journey to Berlin, seeking refuge and a deeper connection to his musical roots. In Berlin, Ferguson finds himself drawn to the city's underground music scene and a cast of eccentric characters who, like him, are searching for something more. His journey becomes a quest for identity, as he grapples with his personal history, the legacy of race in America, and the universal language of music. Beatty weaves together historical events and figures, particularly those connected to jazz and the African diaspora, into the fabric of the narrative. From the legacy of slavery to the complexities of Black identity in post-war Germany, the novel explores how history continues to shape the present.

Slumberland is as much about the power of music as it is about the search for identity. Beatty's prose is infused with the rhythms and energy of jazz, creating a sonic tapestry that immerses readers in Ferguson's world. Through Ferguson's experiences, *Slumberland* offers a thought-provoking and often humorous exploration of race, history, and the universal search for connection and belonging.

Abdulrazak Gurnah

Abdulrazak Gurnah is a literary figure whose work illuminates the often-overlooked experiences of migration, displacement, and the lingering effects of colonialism. Born in Zanzibar in 1948 and later forced to flee to England as a refugee, Gurnah's personal history is deeply intertwined with the themes he explores in his writing. Gurnah was awarded the Nobel Prize "for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents." Gurnah, a Zanzibar-born novelist who writes in English, holds a distinctive position in postcolonial literature. His writing is influenced by his deep ties to his homeland and his extensive experience as a diasporic writer in the UK. Raised in a Muslim household and receiving both Islamic and colonial education in Zanzibar, Gurnah's life took a turn at 18 when political unrest in his newly independent country led him to seek refuge in England. This experience significantly influenced his literary style and themes. By drawing from his Zanzibari roots and his diasporic life in Britain, Gurnah's novels intricately explore themes of displacement, cultural blending, and the quest for a sense of belonging, providing readers with a profound examination of the postcolonial state. Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels touch on intricate topics such as displacement, identity, and the enduring effects of colonialism, spanning from the sunny shores of Zanzibar to the lively streets of London.

Gurnah's academic interests lie in colonial and post-colonial studies, particularly focusing on African, Caribbean, and Indian literature. Known for his works on authors like VS Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, and Wole Soyinka, Gurnah's writing often delves into themes of migration, identity, and cultural displacement. His narratives have been well-received for their exploration of humanity and historical perspectives, positioning him as a prominent figure in colonial and post-colonial literary fiction. He employs a more critical approach in his writing compared to post-colonial authors like Wole Soyinka and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, who are recognized for their analytical style. Nevertheless, there are indications that Gurnah

has extensively assessed earlier African literary works and recognized the shortcomings of depicting Africa as a homogenous entity with a unified history and culture. Consequently, he endeavours to redefine the socio-cultural representation of the African literary tradition in his works (Côté). In contrast to his predecessors who primarily crafted their texts in response to colonial oppression, Gurnah focuses on the lingering colonial issues. Specifically, he challenges the conventional perspective of colonial history from the colonizer's standpoint; a viewpoint that earlier writers were unable to address the "specificities of disintegration within a colonized society," as they articulated it. Thematically, Gurnah's narratives are post-colonial, yet they diverge from previous literary conventions in their thematic focus (Shafaei).

According to Gikandi, these writings are part of a group of African authors' works that he categorizes as the 'literature of disillusionment'. This genre is driven by the belief that African nations had transitioned into a neo-colonial phase, where colonial structures maintained significant influence over the new states while adopting ideological facades of blackness and modernity (McDermott Levy). Gikandi contends that texts produced in the early years of independence are constrained in their perspectives due to the author's disillusionment with the traditional models of national identity. He interprets this as the onset of a new era in African literature that acknowledges the complexities of nationalism and the authors' struggle to effectively articulate the true post-colonial reality. At this juncture, Gurnah is commended for revitalising disillusionment literature and providing an accurate portrayal of the post-colonial condition (Kaigai). All of Gurnah's narratives are based on his experiences as a refugee. His fictions provide a window into how migration affects people's interactions around the world in a globalising world that allows the free movement of people, goods, and ideas but in which hostile and inhospitable tendencies are on the rise (Yaksitch 64).

He is the author of ten novels, including *Paradise*, *By the Sea*, and *Afterlives*, which have garnered international acclaim for their lyrical prose, nuanced characters, and insightful exploration of postcolonial themes. His first three novels, *Memory of Departure (1987), Pilgrims Way (1988), and Dottie (1990)*, all of which are set in contemporary Britain, document the immigrant experience from a variety of perspectives, as do his subsequent novels. *Paradise (1994)*, his fourth novel, is set in colonial East Africa during the First World War and was a finalist for the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1994. The novel *Admiring Silence (1996)* tells the story of a young man who leaves his home in Zanzibar and emigrates to England, where he marries and begins a career as a high school English instructor. A return visit to his native country 20 years later profoundly impacts his attitude toward himself and his relationship with his wife (Wolfson, Roberta). Finally*, by the Sea (2001)* is a documentary film that tells the story of Saleh Omar, an elderly asylum seeker who lives in a seaside town in England (Felicity Hand). *Desertion (2005)*, which was shortlisted for the 2006 Commonwealth Writers Prize, The *Last Gift (2011)*, *Gravel Heart (2017),* and *Afterlives (2018)* are his most recent novels. In 2007, he edited The Cambridge Companion to Salman Rushdie, which Cambridge University Press published.

The selected novels are; *Pilgrims Way, Paradise, and Desertion.*

Pilgrims Way (1988)

Pilgrims Way delves into the life of Daud, a man who emigrated from Zanzibar to England as a young student and built a new life, even marrying an English woman. However, his past resurfaces when his estranged father, whom he hasn't seen in decades, unexpectedly arrives in England seeking refuge and reconciliation. Gurnah moves beyond the simplistic narrative of displacement. He explores the multifaceted experiences of migrants, including their struggles with identity, belonging, and the constant negotiation between their past and present

lives (Gurnah 97). Daud's story highlights the challenges of straddling two cultures. He grapples with feelings of alienation, the pressure to assimilate, and the complexities of maintaining ties to his homeland while building a life in a new country. The sudden arrival of Daud's father forces him to confront unresolved issues and the painful legacy of their broken relationship. The novel explores themes of abandonment, forgiveness, and the enduring impact of family secrets. The father-son relationship is further complicated by their reversed roles in England. Daud, now the provider and caretaker, navigates a power dynamic that challenges traditional notions of filial piety.

Gurnah subtly questions the reliability of memory and how it shapes our understanding of the past. Daud's memories of his childhood and his father are coloured by time, distance, and his emotional baggage. Similar to his other works, Gurnah seems to challenge dominant historical narratives by centring the experiences of those often marginalised – in this case, immigrants from former colonies navigating life in the very heart of the former empire. Gurnah challenges the idea of "home" as a fixed location. For Daud, home is a complex and often elusive concept, tied to memories, relationships, and a sense of belonging that he continues to seek. The novel suggests that true belonging might lie not in a physical place but in coming to terms with one's past, reconciling with loved ones (or finding peace in their absence), and embracing the complexities of one's identity. This novel is a poignant exploration of migration, family, memory, and the search for belonging in a world marked by cultural displacement and the enduring legacies of colonialism.

Gurnah paints a realistic and empathetic portrait of the immigrant experience, moving beyond stereotypes to capture the emotional complexities, challenges, and triumphs of building a life in a new land. The novel delves into the intricacies of family relationships, particularly the often-fraught dynamics between fathers and sons, marked by unspoken resentments, the weight of expectations, and the yearning for connection. Gurnah subtly

portrays the cultural differences and misunderstandings that can arise between immigrants and the host society, as well as within immigrant families themselves, as generations navigate different cultural norms and expectations. The novel captures the passage of time and its impact on individuals and relationships. Memories fade, perspectives shift, and the past continues to shape the present in unexpected ways.

Gurnah explores this question through Daud's journey, suggesting that home is not merely a physical place but a complex tapestry woven from memories, relationships, and a sense of rootedness that can be elusive for those who have left their place of origin. Daud's identity is fluid, shaped by his upbringing in Zanzibar, his experiences in England, and his evolving relationships. The novel explores how our sense of self is constantly negotiated and transformed by the places we inhabit, the people we encounter, and the choices we make. *Pilgrims Way* is a story about forgiveness and the possibility of reconciliation, both with oneself and with others. Daud's journey is a testament to the enduring power of family ties, even when strained by time, distance, and past hurts.

Paradise (1994)

Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* is a coming-of-age story set in early 20th-century colonial East Africa. It is a richly layered novel that goes beyond a simple portrayal. It's a reflection on several key themes, aiming to expose and challenge readers' perceptions of history, identity, and power dynamics. It follows Yusuf, a young boy forced to leave his family due to a debt owed to a wealthy Arab merchant named Aziz. As Yusuf navigates life as Aziz's servant, he encounters the complexities of colonial rule, cultural clashes, and the brutal realities of the caravan trade. Yusuf's journey is marked by a gradual loss of innocence as he witnesses the harsh realities of the world around him. He grapples with betrayal, exploitation, and the violence inherent in the colonial system.

The novel explores the intersections of Arab, African, and European cultures in colonial East Africa. Yusuf encounters diverse characters and navigates the complexities of language, religion, and social customs. The title itself is ironic. While Yusuf initially views Aziz's opulent home as a paradise, he soon realizes the darkness lurking beneath the surface. The novel questions the very notion of paradise in a world marred by colonialism and exploitation. Amidst the turmoil, Yusuf experiences love and forms deep bonds, only to face heartbreak and loss. The novel explores the complexities of human relationships against a backdrop of social and political upheaval. It offers a powerful critique of colonialism and its lasting impact on individuals and societies. It exposes the exploitation, cultural disruption, and psychological scars left behind by colonial rule. Gurnah masterfully employs symbolism throughout the novel. The journey, the landscape, and even the characters themselves often carry deeper meanings, enriching the narrative. While Yusuf's perspective dominates the story, Gurnah occasionally offers glimpses into the lives and thoughts of other characters, providing a more nuanced understanding of their motivations and complexities.

Gurnah dismantles any romanticised views of colonial East Africa. While the title might initially suggest an idyllic setting, the story reveals the harsh realities hidden beneath the surface of *Paradise*. The novel exposes the exploitative nature of colonialism, not just through the obvious political control but also through economic systems like the caravan trade, where young men like Yusuf are caught in a system designed to benefit those in power. Through Yusuf's journey, Gurnah gives voice to those often marginalised in historical accounts – the young, the exploited, and those caught in the crosscurrents of cultural change. By centring his story in East Africa and drawing on the Swahili language and traditions, Gurnah challenges the dominance of Western narratives and offers a different perspective on history and identity.

Desertion (2005)

   Desertion unfolds across two intertwined love stories set in colonial East Africa. In the early 1900s, an Indian merchant named Hassanali finds himself drawn to Rehana, a mysterious, independent woman who disrupts the expectations of their community. Decades later, their descendants, Rashid and Jamila, experience a passionate but ill-fated love affair in postcolonial Tanzania, haunted by the echoes of the past. Gurnah subtly reveals how colonial structures, often invisible yet pervasive, shape intimate relationships. The power imbalances inherent in colonialism seep into personal lives, influencing choices, expectations, and the very possibilities for love and connection. Both love stories challenge societal norms and taboos surrounding interracial relationships, highlighting the complexities and prejudices that persist even within colonized communities. The novel unfolds like a mystery, gradually revealing the hidden connections and unspoken truths that bind the two love stories across generations. Family secrets, long buried, resurface to illuminate the present and challenge inherited narratives.

   Gurnah explores how silence and shame, often used to protect family honour or maintain social order, can perpetuate cycles of pain and misunderstanding across generations. grapple with hybrid identities shaped by the intersection of cultures, languages, and histories. They navigate the complexities of belonging in a world where identities are fluid and constantly evolving. Both love stories involve a sense of longing for the "other" – someone who represents a departure from societal expectations. Yet, this allure is often intertwined with the burden of societal disapproval and the challenges of bridging cultural divides. Gurnah employs multiple narrative voices, allowing readers to piece together the fragmented stories and understand the events from different perspectives. This technique emphasizes the subjectivity of truth and the importance of considering marginalized voices. By centring his story on seemingly ordinary individuals caught in the currents of history, Gurnah offers a

counter-narrative to dominant historical accounts, giving voice to those often overlooked or silenced.

Overall, *desertion* is a poignant exploration of love, loss, and the enduring legacies of colonialism on individual lives and relationships. Gurnah invites us to consider how history shapes our present, how identities are fluid and contested, and how the search for love and belonging can transcend time and cultural boundaries.

Chapter's Overview

The introduction includes the background and the experience of acculturation, a complex process of cultural negotiation and identity formation, which has been a central theme in postcolonial literature. While focus exists on both Paul Beatty's satirical critiques of American society and Abdulrazak Gurnah's poignant explorations of displacement, there is a gap in comparative analyses of how these authors depict acculturation across distinct cultural contexts. This thesis examines how Beatty and Gurnah portray the challenges, strategies, and psychological impacts of acculturation on their characters. Through a close reading of selected novels, this comparative study analyses how their distinct literary styles and backgrounds contribute to their portrayals of cultural adaptation and identity formation in a globalised world.

Chapter I examines Berry's notion of Marginalisation and Separation in Gurnah's *Pilgrims Way* and Beatty's *The Sellout*, which serves as a significant framework for examining the literary works of Abdulrazak Gurnah and Paul Beatty. These writers delve into the narratives of marginalised individuals and communities who are isolated from the dominant societal norms. Through their works, they provide insightful reflections on the character's power structures, cultural conflicts, and identity constructions that emerge within the texts.

Chapter II includes the elements of dichotomy and dissonance in Gurnah's *Desertion* and Beatty's *Slumberland* and also focuses on overall parameters that function as potent instruments for delving into the intricacies of identity, belonging, and cultural interactions. Through an examination of the inner struggles experienced by their characters, these writers present nuanced depictions of individuals grappling with the tensions of straddling diverse cultural spheres, prompting readers to reevaluate their preconceptions regarding race, culture, and societal norms.

Chapter III aims to explore the two dimensions of Acculturation i.e. Assimilation and Integration in the selected works of Noble Prize laureate Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* and esteemed African American writer Paul Beatty's *The White Boy Shuffle*. Both Gurnah and Beatty's works highlight the tensions between cultural identity and the desire to belong. Their characters' experiences serve as powerful reminders of the importance of challenging dominant narratives and creating spaces for diverse voices and perspectives.

Comparative studies that helped researchers examine the thematic links between Beatty's and Gurnah's writings. Both authors delve into topics such as identity, power relationships, and the influence of the character's personal experiences. By comparing how they address these themes, we can identify subtle distinctions and individual viewpoints in their writing styles, enhancing our understanding of their literary works.

Acknowledging Gramsci's concept of hegemony in this work reflects the mechanisms through which dominant factions wield influence over subordinate factions, not solely through overt coercion but also by shaping their beliefs, principles, and behaviours. This perspective offers a valuable lens for analyzing how the prevailing culture impacts the process of acculturation. It encompasses how immigrants or marginalized communities may assimilate certain facets of the dominant culture while concurrently opposing or questioning it. Hegemony theory underscores the significance of ideology in maintaining supremacy and

how various social groups engage in ideological conflicts. By employing this theoretical framework, one can explore how different groups involved in cultural assimilation navigate and challenge interpretations, principles, and identities.

Homi K. Bhabha's notion of hybridity originates from a range of academic disciplines including anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, and postcolonial theory. Its interdisciplinary character encourages scholars to integrate methodologies and theories from diverse fields to gain a deeper comprehension of the intricate processes of acculturation. Hybridity underscores the proactive role played by individuals and communities in shaping their cultural identities, emphasizing that they are not passive recipients of cultural influences but rather active agents who engage in the creation and negotiation of significant cultural manifestations. This perspective prompts us to investigate how individuals and communities leverage their cultural assets to innovate and adapt in response to evolving circumstances. Scholars emphasize that hybridity goes beyond broad categorizations and acknowledges the diversity present within cultures, recognizing the unique characteristics of individuals within a specific culture who possess distinct backgrounds, beliefs, and practices, all of which are crucial for appreciating the complexity of cultural expression.

Research Scope

This study will employ a comparative literary analysis, drawing upon close readings of selected novels by Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah. By examining acculturation through the lenses of these two significant literary voices, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of cultural adaptation and its impact on individual and collective identities. The comparative approach highlights the traces and shared experiences of acculturation across diverse cultural contexts, fostering cross-cultural understanding and empathy.

This research delves into the ways Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah, two acclaimed authors from distinct backgrounds, portray acculturation experiences within their selected novels. By juxtaposing Beatty's sharp social commentary on African American life with Gurnah's exploration of postcolonial identities in the context of migration, this study aims to examine how characters in the chosen novels navigate cultural adaptation, assimilation, integration, or resistance, Marginalisation and Separation. Compare and contrast the strategies employed by characters in Beatty's works, often set within the complexities of contemporary American society, with those of Gurnah's characters grappling with displacement and hybrid identities.

Analysing how power imbalances based on race, ethnicity, nationality, or social class influence the acculturation process for characters in both authors' works. Exploring how Beatty and Gurnah depict the interplay between dominant and marginalized cultures and the challenges faced by individuals navigating these spaces. Additionally, emphasises how characters experience identity negotiation, belonging, alienation, and the potential for cultural hybridity or conflict. And how the authors' use of language, imagery, symbolism, and narrative structure to convey the complexities of acculturation.

Similarly, current research also aims to explore the multifaceted aspects of American society, particularly focusing on the ongoing depiction of racial challenges in the satirical works of Paul Beatty (Bernards). An examination of racial discrimination within the American social landscape as portrayed in Beatty's works will be a significant aspect of this study. This investigation is expected to provide valuable insights for individuals of all racial backgrounds in America and contribute to a broader understanding of humanity. The analysis will commence by delving into the portrayal of racial discrimination and acculturation in Beatty's novels, addressing themes such as individual existence, identity formation,

integration, assimilation, marginalization, separation and the existential significance of Black individuals navigating racism and cultural stereotypes (Silvia Cristina Bettez).

Research on acculturation has the potential to contribute significantly to the formulation of social policies and educational initiatives aimed at fostering intercultural understanding and addressing the obstacles encountered by immigrant and minority populations. This research can play a pivotal role in cultivating a more inclusive society. The characters depicted in the works of Gurnah and Beatty engage with issues of identity that resonate with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, offering a platform for introspection and a deeper comprehension of the intricate ways in which cultural factors shape personal identity. Beatty's literary works provide a satirical perspective on race relations in the United States, offering a lens through which researchers can analyze how characters navigate the process of acculturation, thereby shedding light on matters related to racial identity, power dynamics, and resistance within contemporary societal contexts (Dizayi). Gurnah's examination of acculturation illuminates the enduring impacts of colonialism, offering valuable insights into the experiences of formerly colonized nations and their ongoing struggles with identity. Both authors present characters grappling with the complexities of acculturation, thereby enriching discussions on multiculturalism, immigration, and the challenges faced by minority groups seeking to assimilate into mainstream society.

By conducting a more thorough examination, it is possible to enhance our analysis by integrating pertinent theoretical frameworks from postcolonial studies, including concepts such as acculturation, hybridity, and hegemony. By employing an acculturation perspective to analyze their literary works, readers can acquire a more profound understanding of the intricate mechanisms of cultural adjustment and evolution portrayed in their novels.

Relevant secondary sources, such as critical essays, scholarly articles, and interviews with the authors, will provide further context and enrich the analysis.

Literature Review

The existing body of work in the proposed field serves as fundamental resources that guide our thoughts, perspectives, and interpretations (Pervez). It inspires us, sparks new ideas, and enhances our ability to analyze existing publications or materials in various forms. After selecting a specific area or topic for research, the first crucial step is to review literature directly or indirectly related to the subject. This process is vital in gaining insight into existing concepts and viewpoints. A thorough review of relevant works enables researchers to establish a solid foundation for their study, accurately define research problems, and deepen their understanding of the specific research area (Ray and Herskorits). The review process involves more than just summarizing; it requires an analytical approach. Therefore, this section provides a concise and analytical assessment of pertinent literature, including books, theses, research papers, and online resources.

The concept of migration is often symbolized as a representation of movement and displacement in postcolonial theories. For example, Salman Rushdie explains in one of his essays that the term metaphor signifies the "migration of ideas into images," portraying migrants as "metaphorical beings" who transition from one culture and nation to another (Rushdie 2010, 278). Rushdie suggests that through migration, individuals come to realize that "reality is an artefact," leading them to resist rigid forms of knowledge. Homi Bhabha shares a similar perspective, stating that metaphor, as indicated by its etymology, conveys the essence of home and belonging across various distances and cultural boundaries within the imagined national community (2000, 139). Bhabha argues that migrants possess the creative ability to introduce fresh perspectives about their home country. Therefore, both Bhabha and

Rushdie define migration as a process of self-empowerment that diminishes the loss of identity and suffering while promoting a sense of pride.

According to Andrew Smith, migrancy is now widely recognized as a theoretical concept, referring to migration not just as an action, but as a fundamental aspect of human existence. In the field of postcolonial studies, migration is often examined in terms of its transformative effects, such as new perspectives and understandings (Noyes). Smith suggests that the focus of postcolonial critics on migration in world literature limits their exploration of how the connection between storytelling and movement evolves in the context of colonialism and its aftermath (Ying & Han).

Sean J. Flynn in "*Without Reservation: Benjamin Reifel and American Indian Acculturation*" (2018) presents a different perspective on American Indians during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, moving away from portraying them solely as victims of conquest. Focusing on a topic often overlooked in American Indian studies - the experiences of twentieth-century American Indians - Flynn highlights the story of a man who succeeded in mainstream American society while still embracing his racial heritage.

Sanna Asghar in an article entitled "*Post-Racial Identity and Self-Alienation: A Comparative Study of Paul Betty's and Mohsin Hamid's works*" attempts to subvert the American claim of entering into a post-racial era where there is no racial discrimination anymore. It is an attempt to explore the silent mode of maintaining the superiority of Americans over non-Americans.

Mark Beeuwkes in the thesis "*Defining Racism for a White Liberal Audience: Americanah and The Sellout*" This thesis explores how two novels lead the white liberal reader to recognize institutional racism in the American context. The main argument is that these novels, *The Sellout* by Paul Beatty and Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie redefine racism and how it functions in society for a white liberal audience.

The field of postcolonial studies has long grappled with the complex interplay between culture, identity, and the legacies of colonial rule. Scholars have examined how colonial encounters have led to the emergence of new cultural formations, often characterized by hybridity and the negotiation of power dynamics between colonizers and the colonized (Adeyemi et al.)(Kumar and Parameswaran)(Nawaz et al.).

At the heart of this discourse lies the concept of acculturation, which refers to the process by which individuals or groups adopt the cultural traits or social patterns of another group (Schulze–Engler) (Kalua). As populations migrate across borders, they inevitably encounter new cultural systems, leading to the blending of traditions, beliefs, and practices. This process of cultural exchange and adaptation is not without its challenges, as individuals and communities grapple with the loss of their own identity and the complexities of navigating the host culture (Colic–Peisker and Walker).

One of the key themes in postcolonial theory is the rejection of the hegemonic narratives propagated by the colonizers, and the assertion of indigenous cultural superiority (Nawaz et al.). This is often manifested in the creation of a "third space," a liminal zone where new cultural forms emerge, challenging the binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized (Nawaz et al.).

However, the notion of a fixed, homogeneous identity has been increasingly scrutinized in the twenty-first century, as scholars recognize the dynamic and fluid nature of cultural identity (Kalua). Rather than nurturing a facile optimism about the linear march of history and identity, postcolonial theorists have advocated for an ever-contested and infinitely viable terrain, one that continually interrogates the notion of identity as rooted in realism and tradition (Kalua). As the movement of people and the exchange of cultural practices across borders continue to shape our world, the study of postcolonialism, acculturation, and the dynamics of culture and migration remains a vital and ongoing area of inquiry (Kalua).

In academic discussions, there has been a diverse examination of Gurnah's works, often focusing on his perspective as a migrant sharing his personal experiences through fiction (Bungaro 25). Erik Falk notes that many critiques of Gurnah's work primarily concentrate on *Paradise* (1994) and highlight Gurnah's strong opposition to nationalism, exploring its connection to Diaspora and displacement (Falk 7). Gurnah himself acknowledges this perspective, stating that migration is not only a central theme in his life but also a significant narrative in contemporary life (Sibree 11).

Other authors such as Ngugi and Achebe have focused on the impact of colonialism on native Africans in their writings about the African experience. Gurnah, on the other hand, emphasizes migration as a central theme in his novels. While critics tend to focus on the various aspects of migration in Gurnah's works, this does not imply that his writing should be solely defined by this theme.

Maria Olaussen argues that in his novels, Gurnah explores Eastern Africa within the context of the Indian Ocean World, focusing on transnational migration where Zanzibar and the East African coast are seen as both points of arrival and departure amidst a history of changing power dynamics. This analysis effectively summarizes Gurnah's thematic concerns in his fiction. By depicting the East African coast and its historical movements, Gurnah highlights the significance of the Indian Ocean as a crucial passageway that facilitated these exchanges. The concept of shifting power relations in Gurnah's work reflects the transitions in political leadership throughout the region's history, such as the shift from Arab to British to African rule as depicted in *Paradise*. Olaussen's examination of power dynamics emphasizes how power operates between individuals and institutions, particularly focusing on how individuals respond to institutional power and assert their agency. This perspective aligns with Foucault's idea that power is not just held by institutions but is also present in everyday interactions, where individuals resist and affirm themselves in the face of institutional power.

Tina Steiner is recognized as a prominent scholar who has shown a strong interest in Gurnah's works through her numerous dedicated articles. In her analysis of 20 Desertions, Steiner offers a unique perspective that is relevant to the thesis at hand. She interprets Gurnah's fiction as an attempt to redefine Africa by highlighting relational spaces that defy the negative impacts of exclusion and violence stemming from nationalistic and ethnic ideologies. Steiner's examination of Gurnah's novels, particularly *Desertion,* emphasizes the portrayal of nuanced relationships within the historical context of East Africa, showcasing moments of hospitality amidst colonial and imperialist oppression and the exclusionary rhetoric of new African nationalisms.

This reading aligns with the thesis's focus on the empowerment of marginalised voices within broader societal frameworks. While Steiner's analysis primarily addresses the effects of colonialism and African nationalism, the thesis takes a different approach by emphasizing the resilience and survival of individuals across various barriers, emphasizing human agency and resistance against oppressive forces within society, rather than solely focusing on the influence of political powers.

Folisade Hunsu (2014) argues in her analysis of the novel *Desertion* that Abdulrazak Gurnah utilizes the autobiographical form to depict African experiences influenced by contemporary issues like migration and biracialism. Hunsu suggests that Desertion emphasizes the autobiographical aspect to explore how individuals navigate their identities amidst the challenges of a multiracial coastal region in East Africa. She acknowledges the significance of the novel's form in shaping its content and highlights Gurnah's stance against oversimplifying humanity into racial categories. Additionally, this analysis delves into Gurnah's narrative techniques, particularly focusing on the novel's use of multiple voices as a key strategy. According to Hunsu, "*Desertion* is a novel in which the

auto/biographical is underlined to reveal how dislocated subjects negotiate their identities and transform themselves within and outside a multiracial coastal region of East Africa" (78)

Dianne Schwerdt (1997) conducted a study on Paradise that delves into the role of power in race relations and the impact of gender in these dynamics. She argues that various nationalities, such as Arabs, Africans, Indians, and Europeans, engage in power struggles as the dynamics of dominance and submission evolve. Schwerdt's research focuses on the historical colonial powers that controlled the coastal area. Notably, she also examines how these colonial influences affected individual characters in the novel. This analysis aligns with the main thesis, although the author's interest diverges from power linked to political authority. She contends that "Arabs, Africans, Indians, Europeans and other nationalities square off against each other as the boundaries between dominator and dominate shift and settle" (91).

Felicity Hand and Steiner, two critics believe that storytelling in these novels serves as a way for characters to resist dominant narratives they encounter in their home countries or exile. Characters like Daud in *Pilgrims Way* use letter writing as a form of self-expression, which also acts as a form of resistance. This is significant for the research because characters using storytelling as a form of resistance are challenging authority figures. By doing so, they are employing what James Scott (1985) refers to as "weapons of the weak." To analyse Gurnah's work in a new light, it is important to examine his narrative style and how it serves a moral purpose in his novels. By combining the form and content of the novel, readers can identify the intersection between literature and ethics. Neglecting the details of his narrative structure undermines his artistic skill and overlooks the importance of narrative structure in fiction. Power dynamics play a role in understanding the human condition and are central to the proposed thesis.

Research Gap

There has been a lack of extensive research specifically addressing the process of acculturation in the East African region. The primary focus is on the changes characters experience throughout the novel. How their identities have been framed historically by the host society. The concepts of hybridity and hegemony in the fictional works of Abdulrazak Gurnah and Paul Beatty have not been previously examined using acculturation as the main theoretical framework. The impact of acculturation on individuals in this area, particularly concerning historical injustices carried out in the name of civilization, such as border shifts, can lead to psychological disturbances that persist across generations.

These unique grievances are evident even in second and third-generation migrants. Building on this historical context, two literary novelists explore the experiences of diverse communities, bound by culture, in shaping the characters' identities. Gurnah and Beatty offer an examination of acculturation, drawing from personal migration experiences. They delve into the complexities of acculturation and its effects on individuals and communities. Their works emphasize the significance of cultural diversity, advocating for the recognition and appreciation of different cultural backgrounds (Wu and Mak).

Abdulrazak Gurnah and Paul Beatty's novels have not been extensively examined through the lens of acculturation, as scholarly analyses have predominantly focused on other theoretical frameworks such as postcolonialism, race, and identity. While acculturation is a pertinent theme in their works, it has not been the primary emphasis of academic scrutiny. This study bridges the gap by examining how their distinct backgrounds, literary styles, and cultural contexts shape their portrayals of acculturation.

Gurnah's novels, including *Paradise* and *Desertion*, have been predominantly analysed within the realm of postcolonial literature, with scholars delving into themes like colonialism, imperialism, and the effects of globalization on indigenous cultures. His writing

is often viewed as a means to delve into the intricacies of cultural identity and the enduring impacts of colonialism in Africa. Similarly, Beatty's novels, such as *The White Boy Shuffle* and *Slumberland*, have been predominantly examined in terms of race and identity, with scholars exploring his use of satire and humour to address issues of racial politics and cultural inclusion. His work is often regarded as a critique of contemporary American society, challenging readers to critically engage with matters of race and identity. While acculturation is indeed a recurring theme in the works of both authors, it has not been the central focus of scholarly analysis. Instead, researchers have tended to concentrate on other elements of their writing, such as language usage, character and community portrayals, and their engagement with broader social and political issues (Pavel).

Nevertheless, there is potential for future research that adopts acculturation as a framework for examining Gurnah and Beatty's novels. Such an approach could offer fresh insights into their works and present a novel perspective on the intricate cultural dynamics depicted in their fictional realms.

Chapter 1

Marginalisation and Separation in *Paradise* and *The White Boy Shuffle*

Marginalisation inflicts more than just social exclusion; it leaves an indelible mark on the psyche, shaping the core of individual identity. This chapter will explore the psychological mechanisms underlying the experience of marginalisation in Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* and Paul Beatty's *The White Boy Shuffle*. By analysing Yusuf's journey of self-discovery amidst colonial oppression and Gunnar's satirical navigation of racial prejudice, we will examine how these characters grapple with feelings of alienation, negotiate their sense of belonging, and ultimately forge their paths toward resilience.

While separated by vastly different contexts, their experiences with marginalisation offer compelling points for comparison. John W. Berry, a prominent psychologist, has conducted thorough research on acculturation and the cultural adjustment of individuals and groups. The core ideas such as marginalisation and separation may have consequences that correspond with the themes examined in the novel. The human experience is fundamentally linked to the quest for belonging. However, for numerous individuals, this pursuit is complicated by various challenges, as societal frameworks and entrenched biases establish obstacles to inclusion. Marginalisation, which involves relegating individuals to the periphery of society, imposes a significant psychological burden, influencing personal identities and lived experiences.

Berry's research on acculturation can be connected to the themes explored in Paul Beatty's novel *The White Boy Shuffle*, particularly about the protagonist Gunnar Kaufman's challenges with cultural identity and acculturation (Berry). Beatty's work delves into the concept of separation outlined by John W. Berry, which examines the boundaries and disparities between diverse cultural groups and their effects on individuals and communities.

The novel illustrates the concept of separation through the protagonist's struggles as a person of mixed racial heritage. The theme of "Marginalisation" and "Separation" and their correlation with identity, culture, and power dynamics is a recurring motif in the scholarly research of John W. Berry on Acculturation and in Paul Beatty's literary work, *The White Boy Shuffle*. While Berry's studies concentrate on the experiences of immigrants and refugees, Beatty's novel delves into the intricate intersections of race and identity within the African American community (Albert 89). Beatty articulates, "We black men are afraid of many things, among them the police, water and the math section of the Scholastic Aptitude test" (Beatty 18).

Both pieces of work underscore how individuals and communities navigate cultural disparities and power structures in their everyday interactions. Gunnar's experiences reflect the tensions between cultural identity and social acceptance that are central to Berry's work (Horowitz and Vigil). Like many immigrants and refugees, Gunnar faces discrimination and racism, which threaten his sense of belonging and self-worth. "...I was the only black kid in the whole damn town. And even though I was half white, that half was usually overlooked." This reflects the common experience of biracial individuals being categorized based on appearance rather than the full complexity of their heritage (Beatty). At the same time, he is drawn to the dominant culture and desires to fit in and succeed within it (Chicago, 19). This push-pull dynamic creates a sense of internal conflict and ambivalence towards his cultural identities. Berry's theory of acculturation pertains to the phenomenon of cultural transformation that transpires when individuals or collectives from one cultural background interact with another.

Gurnah's novel delves into the insidious effects of colonialism in East Africa, exposing how systems of power create and perpetuate social hierarchies. Beatty's work, on the other hand, dissects the complexities of race and identity in contemporary America,

satirizing the pervasive nature of racial prejudice. By examining these two distinct yet interconnected narratives, this chapter will illuminate the multifaceted nature of marginalization and its profound impact on individual lives.

In the novel *The White Boy Shuffle*, the protagonist Gunnar Kaufman's upbringing in a predominantly white environment despite his black heritage is a prime example of the acculturation process (Adams). Kaufman is immersed in the prevailing white culture and embarks on a transformative journey of assimilation, endeavouring to harmonize the influences of both cultures.

In *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci explains the concept of hegemony it is, ". . . the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (18).

Growing up as a biracial teenager in a predominantly Black and Latino Los Angeles neighbourhood, Gunnar experiences a profound sense of not belonging. He's seen as an outsider by both white and Black communities, subject to stereotypes and assumptions based on his appearance. Gunnar encounters subtle but persistent forms of racism, from backhanded compliments to exclusion from social circles, which chip away at his sense of self-worth and belonging. He grapples with the pressure to conform to the expectations of both Black and white cultures, feeling like he has to choose sides or suppress parts of his identity to fit in.

Gunnar's biracial identity places him in a liminal space, never fully accepted by either Black or white communities. He's constantly reminded of his "otherness," making it difficult to find a sense of belonging. In his predominantly Black and Latino school, he's taunted for being "too white," while some white students view him with suspicion or exoticize his

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Blackness. He grapples with questions of identity and self-acceptance, unsure of where he fits in. He internalizes the stereotypes and prejudices he encounters, leading to self-doubt and a fractured sense of self (Hogarth 4-11).

He constantly analyses his appearance, wondering if he's "Black enough" or "white enough," highlighting the pressure to conform to societal expectations of race. Gunnar encounters a constant barrage of microaggressions – subtle, often unintentional forms of prejudice that chip away at his self-esteem. These experiences, though seemingly small, accumulate over time to create a hostile and invalidating environment. Teachers assuming he's good at basketball because he's biracial, or classmates constantly touching his hair without permission, perpetuate harmful stereotypes and make him feel like an object of curiosity rather than an individual.

Kaufman's formative years were marked by adversities, with his recollections harbouring internal repression. He faced taunts from white peers, such as the derogatory remark, "Can't teach an old nigger new tricks" (Beatty). The concept of postmodern schizophrenia is relevant to the themes of power dynamics and control as observed in cultural, social, and psychological analyses. The influence of social control on personal identity delves into the protagonist's psychological state, complicating his ability to establish meaningful connections with others in society. ". . . no one could read a blind man's eyes and no one could read a niggers mind" (Beatty).

The constant exposure to racism, both overt and subtle, leads Gunnar to internalize some of the negative messages he receives. He begins to question his worth and doubt his abilities, reflecting the insidious nature of systemic racism. He downplays his intelligence and shies away from academic challenges, fearing that he'll confirm the negative stereotypes associated with Black masculinity. He feels pressure from both Black and white communities

to conform to their respective cultural norms and expectations. This pressure to choose sides or suppress parts of his identity creates a sense of fragmentation and internal conflict. He feels pressured to excel in basketball to prove his Blackness, while simultaneously feeling the need to downplay his intelligence to avoid making his white classmates uncomfortable.

Ultimately, Gunnar rejects the pressure to conform to any single identity. He embraces the complexities of his heritage, recognising that his identity is multifaceted and cannot be defined by rigid categories. He finds solace in writing, using it as an outlet to explore his experiences, challenge stereotypes, and assert his unique voice. "Being the only Negro in Santa Monica meant that I was the resident expert on all things black. Little did they know that my blackness was a costume I donned each morning like a pair of PF Flyers." This highlights the burden of representation placed on minority individuals and the pressure to conform to stereotypes.

On the contrary, Yusuf in *Paradise,* a young boy in early 20th-century East Africa, faces prejudice and exclusion due to his Muslim faith. He witnesses the encroachment of colonial powers and the often exploitative practices of Arab traders, both of which disrupt his community's traditional way of life (Cleton and Scuzzarello 343-45). Yusuf's family, once prosperous, falls into debt, further marginalising him within a society where wealth and status hold significant sway. Yusuf is subjected to economic exploitation, his labour is used to enrich the colonizers. He's denied economic agency and independence, further reinforcing his marginalized status. Throughout the novel, it has been seen how there was unfair treatment he receives from his employers demonstrates this exploitation.

This economic vulnerability makes him susceptible to exploitation, as seen in his forced journey to the coast. His journey to the coast, intended as a rite of passage, becomes a descent into a world where he is treated as a commodity, stripped of his innocence, and

denied agency over his destiny. His journey to the coast, meant to be a rite of passage into manhood, becomes a traumatic experience that shatters his innocence and sense of security. Yusuf lives under the oppressive weight of colonialism, which dictates his social and economic status. He's treated as a second-class citizen, subject to the whims of the colonisers. As in the novel, his indentured servitude demonstrates this subjugation.

The harsh realities of the journey – the physical hardships, the casual cruelty of the traders, the exposure to the darker side of human nature – leave an indelible mark on Yusuf's psyche. Throughout his time on the coast, Yusuf is treated as little more than a commodity – bought, sold, and exploited for his labour. His experiences working in the merchant's shop and later as a houseboy expose him to the dehumanising aspects of a system that values profit over human dignity. While Islam is a source of identity and community for Yusuf, the arrival of colonialism introduces a hierarchy that positions his faith as inferior. This is evident in the dismissive attitudes of some colonial administrators and the subtle erosion of traditional customs. The imposition of European clothing and education systems, often presented as "civilising" forces, implicitly devalued Yusuf's cultural heritage.

Ironically, Yusuf also faces exploitation at the hands of fellow Muslims – Arab traders who view him and other villagers as commodities to be exploited for profit. Yusuf's forced journey to the coast is orchestrated by an Arab merchant who preys on his family's desperation for money, highlighting the economic disparities within the Muslim community itself. His family, once relatively well-off, falls into debt due to a combination of factors, including drought and changing economic landscapes. This financial vulnerability makes them easy targets for exploitation. The family's decision to send Yusuf away with the merchant is driven by desperation, illustrating how economic hardship strips them of agency and choice. Besides, his poverty limits his access to education and other opportunities that might have provided a path to a better future. While some children in his village receive some

schooling, Yusuf is forced to work to contribute to the family income, perpetuating a cycle of poverty.

Yusuf's marginalisation is a multi-layered experience that strips him of his sense of belonging, his economic security, and ultimately, his innocence. It's a stark reminder of how power imbalances, both within and between cultures, can create systems that perpetuate inequality and suffering. As Yusuf travels, he encounters different cultures and languages, further emphasizing his outsider status. He struggles to find a place where he truly belongs, caught between his origins and the unfamiliar world he is forced to navigate. His journey becomes a metaphor for the broader cultural displacement experienced by colonized peoples. He also experiences a sense of cultural dislocation, separated from his familiar traditions and customs. He's forced to navigate unfamiliar cultural landscapes, leading to feelings of alienation and rootlessness. In the novel, his encounters with different languages and customs throughout his journey highlight this dislocation.

Both characters occupy liminal spaces, caught between cultures and struggling to find acceptance. They experience a loss of power and control over their own lives due to forces beyond their control (colonialism, racism). Both embark on journeys of self-discovery, seeking to define themselves amidst the complexities of their social environments. Yusuf's marginalisation stems from the brutal realities of colonialism, while Gunnar's arises from the enduring legacy of racism and segregation in America. Yusuf faces more overt forms of exploitation and physical displacement, while Gunnar experiences more subtle but insidious forms of social exclusion and psychological harm. Yusuf, though raised Muslim, finds himself increasingly distanced from religious practice and belonging. He observes the hypocrisy and corruption within the religious community, further isolating him. For example, the casual cruelty and exploitation justified by religious rhetoric create a sense of disillusionment in Yusuf. His indentured servitude highlights the economic disparities

inherent in colonial societies. He is treated as a commodity, his labour exploited for the benefit of those in power. His lack of agency and economic independence reinforces his marginalised status.

Despite their vastly different settings, Yusuf and Gunnar's experiences offer a powerful commentary on the universality of marginalisation. Their stories remind us that exclusion and othering can manifest in myriad ways, leaving lasting scars on individuals and communities. By comparing their journeys, we gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of identity, belonging, and the enduring struggle for social justice. "...my father, a lapsed black militant with a penchant for Irish setters, married my mother, a white woman with a penchant for my father..." This immediately establishes Gunnar's position as someone existing between two worlds (Beatty).

In Berry's terms, separation signifies maintaining one's original cultural identity while rejecting or minimising contact with the host culture (Albert). Gunnar's initial attempt to distance himself from his black identity and culture could be seen as a form of separation. He tries to fit into the white culture by downplaying his blackness. However, this approach creates a sense of disconnection and alienation (Mesch et al.).

Nolan Weil in her book *Speaking of Culture* affirms that "Culture consists of all the things we make and nearly everything that we think and do, to the extent that what we make, think and do is conditioned by our experience of life in groups"(46). The protagonist, Gunnar Kaufman, grapples with the complexities of his biracial identity, experiencing a sense of dual belonging while simultaneously feeling disconnected from both racial groups. This internal conflict is portrayed through Gunnar's challenges in reconciling his racial heritage and integrating into racially segregated societies.

Additionally, the book delves into the divide among various social classes. Gunnar hails from a lower-middle-class area in Los Angeles, but his exceptional basketball abilities allow him to attend an elite private school. This exposes him to a whole new environment where the distinction between socio-economic classes is visible.

As quoted by Frantz Boaz "Cultures that is, groups sharing a common set of beliefs, ideas, Practices etc. " The disparities and divisions between these social classes highlight the challenges and complexities of belonging to different spheres. Additionally, separation is evident in the racial tensions depicted throughout the novel. The characters, particularly Gunnar, are confronted with the stark realities of racial prejudice, discrimination, and systemic racism.

The distinction among various racial groups is evident not only in explicit acts of racism but also in the more nuanced, underlying societal partitions. The novel highlights how such divisions can result in feelings of separation, exclusion, and the continuation of social disparities. In general, John W. Berry's concept of separation can be analyzed in *The White Boy Shuffle* on various fronts, including the protagonist's mixed-race background, the stratification of social classes, and the racial conflicts depicted in the narrative. These divisions contribute to a deeper examination of identity, power structures, and the impacts of societal separations within the text.

Yusuf's journey in *Paradise* has a profound sense of separation he experiences throughout the novel. It's a multifaceted separation: from his family, his culture, and ultimately, his innocence. Yusuf's separation begins with the wrenching experience of being sent away from his family and village. This decision, driven by economic hardship, marks the beginning of his physical and emotional displacement. The novel's opening chapters depict

Yusuf's distress as he's made to board the boat, leaving behind the familiar world of his childhood. The imagery of the receding shoreline emphasizes the finality of this separation.

Throughout his journey and later in his life, Yusuf is haunted by a deep longing for his family and the world he left behind. This yearning underscores the profound impact of this initial separation. Yusuf often reflects on his mother and siblings, clinging to memories of their life together. This nostalgia highlights the emotional void created by their absence. As Yusuf encounters different cultures and belief systems, he grapples with a sense of cultural dissonance (Kwong 871–83).

The values and customs of the coastal society often clash with his upbringing, leaving him feeling like an outsider. The casual attitude towards alcohol and relationships outside marriage in the coastal town contrasts sharply with the stricter moral code of his village, leaving him feeling adrift and disillusioned. The novel subtly portrays how Yusuf's own religious beliefs are challenged and reshaped by his experiences. The hypocrisy and materialism he witnesses within both colonial society and among some members of his faith contribute to a sense of spiritual alienation. Yusuf's encounters with corrupt religious figures and his observations of the exploitative practices of some Arab traders create a sense of disillusionment and challenge his previously unquestioning faith. His journey to the coast is a brutal coming-of-age story. He's exposed to the harsh realities of the world – exploitation, violence, and betrayal – which shatter his childhood innocence and leave him deeply scarred. His experiences working for the Arab merchant, witnessing the casual cruelty inflicted on slaves, and his encounters with prejudice contribute to a loss of innocence and a growing cynicism. The cumulative impact of these separations leaves Yusuf with a fragmented sense of self. He struggles to reconcile his past with his present, his cultural heritage with his evolving identity, and his idealized vision of the world with the harsh realities he confronts.

The novel's non-linear structure, shifting between Yusuf's past and present, reflects his fragmented state of mind and the ongoing struggle to make sense of his experiences. Yusuf's story is a poignant reminder of the profound impact of separation – not just physical distance, but also the emotional and psychological divides that can emerge from cultural displacement, loss of innocence, and the challenges of navigating a complex and often unforgiving world.

The theme of separation in Gunnar's story in *The White Boy Shuffle*. It's a pervasive feeling that shapes his interactions and sense of self. Gunnar's biracial identity makes him feel like an outsider in both Black and white spaces. He doesn't fully belong to either, leading to a sense of isolation and a constant need to navigate between worlds. At his new school, he's both intrigued and intimidated by the Black students' effortless cool, feeling like a nerdy imposter among them. Conversely, his attempts to connect with white students are often met with awkwardness or suspicion (Ahmed 65–69).

Gunnar lacks relatable role models who understand the complexities of his biracial experience. He observes divisions and prejudices within and between racial groups, making it difficult to find a sense of community or shared identity. He notices how even within his own family, there are unspoken tensions and different perspectives on race. His white father, while loving, struggles to fully grasp Gunnar's experiences with racism. Gunnar, being biracial, is constantly forced into predetermined racial categories. He doesn't fit neatly into either Black or white society, leading to feelings of marginalization and a sense of not belonging. He's pressured to conform to stereotypes and expectations from both sides, which he ultimately rejects through satire and ironic detachment. *Example:* The scene where he's chosen as the "token white boy" for the basketball team highlights this pressure.

Gunnar develops a somewhat detached and ironic persona as a defence mechanism against the emotional turmoil of navigating his identity. This emotional separation helps him cope with the microaggressions and feelings of otherness he encounters. He often uses humour and sarcasm to deflect uncomfortable questions about his race or to downplay his own experiences with prejudice. This defence mechanism, while understandable, also creates a barrier to forming genuine connections. Gunnar hesitates to open up fully to others, fearing judgment or misunderstanding. This fear of vulnerability prevents him from forming deep, meaningful relationships and intensifies his sense of isolation. He keeps his writing, a source of solace and self-expression, largely to himself, afraid to share his true thoughts and feelings with others. The novel critiques the pressures of hypermasculinity within both Black and white communities. Gunnar is expected to adhere to certain masculine ideals, which he finds absurd and ultimately subverts. His creation of the "post-soul" movement can be seen as a rejection of traditional masculine ideals (Tonui and Mitschke 121-38). Gunnar also faces pressure to assimilate into the dominant white culture, particularly in his early life in the suburbs. This pressure to conform clashes with his developing sense of Black identity. As through the text, his experiences at the predominantly white school highlight this pressure.

Gunnar's separation from family and expectations - While Gunnar loves his family, he experiences a sense of separation from them due to their differing understandings of race and identity. He feels unable to fully confide in them about his experiences, leading to a sense of emotional distance. He witnesses his father's well-intentioned but sometimes clumsy attempts to connect with Black culture, highlighting the gap in their lived experiences. Gunnar feels pressure to conform to societal expectations associated with his race, whether it's excelling in basketball or fulfilling certain stereotypes (Adamopoulos and Kashima 7–12).

His journey involves breaking free from these expectations and forging his path, which can be an isolating experience. He gradually distances himself from basketball, despite its potential to bring him acceptance within certain circles, realizing that it doesn't align with his true passions and aspirations.

Gunnar's story illustrates how separation can manifest in various forms – racial, cultural, emotional, and familial. His journey is ultimately about bridging these divides, embracing the complexities of his identity, and finding connection and belonging on his terms. Gunnar Kaufman, a biracial protagonist, experiences marginalisation from both Black and white communities. He is seen as an outsider, never fully accepted by either group. His "white boy" status in a predominantly Black neighbourhood sets him apart, leading to both mockery and a sense of unease. There is an instance from the novel where he is chosen as the "token white boy" for a basketball team that satirises the absurdity of racial categorisation.

While navigating distinct social landscapes, both Gunnar in *The White Boy Shuffle* and Yusuf in *Paradise* grapple with the isolating effects of societal pressures. Gunnar confronts the rigid confines of racial categorisation and hypermasculinity in a satirical exploration of identity, while Yusuf endures the dehumanizing forces of colonial subjugation, cultural dislocation, and economic exploitation. Through their respective journeys, both protagonists illuminate the profound psychological and emotional toll of existing within systems that deny them full belonging and agency. Gunnar and his crew of misfits are marginalised within their community. They are seen as troublemakers, outcasts who don't conform to societal norms. Their embrace of counter-culture and rejection of mainstream values further isolates them. The novel's satirical portrayal of gang culture highlights the social marginalisation experienced by those who don't fit in. Gunnar's ironic detachment and cynicism can be interpreted as a form of self-imposed marginalisation. He distances himself from others, creating a barrier that prevents genuine connection. His use of humour and satire

serves as a defence mechanism, protecting him from the pain of his marginalised status. For example, his creation of the "post-soul" movement can be seen as a rejection of both Black and white cultural expectations.

By analysing these examples and exploring the nuances of each character's experience, they develop a deeper understanding of how marginalisation and separation function in these novels and how they contribute to the character's psychological and emotional development.

Chapter – II

Traces of Dichotomy and Dissonance in *Slumberland* and *Desertion*

A dichotomy, in simple terms, is a division or contrast between two things that are represented as being opposed or entirely different. In literature, dichotomies are often used to juxtapose opposing concepts, authors can draw attention to complex themes like identity, morality, or the human condition. Characters are often defined by their position within a dichotomy. A character might struggle to reconcile two opposing sides of themselves, or they might embody one side of the dichotomy while another character embodies the opposite.

The term "dichotomy" originated in the English language around 1600, primarily within the context of botany to signify a division into two classes. However, it wasn't until the 1630s that this word began to be used more frequently in the English language. At that time, the word "dichotomy" had its definition broadened (Manaher). In literature, a dichotomy is a rhetorical technique or narrative approach that establishes a clear distinction between two contrasting elements, characters, themes, or ideas within a literary work (Reed). This literary device is utilised to emphasize the inherent conflict and dual nature, enriching the narrative by delving into contradictory aspects. Through the use of a dichotomy, authors can develop intricate characters, examine intricate themes, and stimulate profound contemplation on the intricacies of human existence within the realm of literature (Basu and Coleman).

The dichotomy and dissonance experienced by Black individuals often stem from the conflicting realities of their lived experiences and the dominant cultural narratives surrounding race. W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of "double consciousness" describes the feeling of "two-ness" experienced by Black individuals in a society that devalues their identity(Wikipedia contributors). This duality creates a constant internal conflict between

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seeing oneself as a complete human being and internalising the negative stereotypes projected by the dominant culture. This internal struggle can lead to feelings of alienation and fragmentation.

Paul Beatty's literary works are renowned for their incisive and humorous examination of various dichotomies and discordances. Through his unique narrative style and satirical techniques, Beatty encourages readers to engage in a critical analysis of the intricacies surrounding identity, culture, and societal constructs, thereby challenging established assumptions and anticipations. Beatty's novels are characterised by the presence of dichotomies, evident across multiple facets such as character portrayals, settings, and plot developments (Berry). This recurring theme of dichotomy serves as a prominent feature in Beatty's literary repertoire, enabling him to delve into intricate social dilemmas and paradoxes. The author frequently juxtaposes contrasting viewpoints or scenarios within his narratives, effectively prompting readers to reassess their perspectives and assumptions. The appropriation of Black culture by the dominant culture creates a sense of dissonance. Elements of Black music, fashion, and language are often embraced by mainstream society while the creators and originators of these cultural expressions continue to face marginalization and discrimination (Rios et al.). This appropriation can feel like a form of cultural theft, further exacerbating the sense of disconnect between Black cultural contributions and societal recognition.

A prevalent subject of exploration in Beatty's works is the dichotomous nature of racial dynamics in the American context (Flannery). By vividly illustrating the disparities between Black and White experiences, Beatty exposes the existing inequalities, stereotypes, and biases. His satirical approach serves as a tool to shed light on and challenge these racial dichotomies. Beatty's characters often grapple with internal conflicts related to their identities and aspirations, juxtaposed against societal norms and expectations. These individuals

navigate personal dichotomies concerning self-realization, individuality, and societal conformity (Watts). To navigate different social spaces, Black individuals often employ code-switching, adjusting their language, behaviour, and appearance to conform to the expectations of the dominant culture. While code-switching can be a survival mechanism, it also reinforces the dichotomy between one's authentic self and the persona adopted to gain acceptance.

A few examples that reflect Dichotomies in literature;

A Tale of Two Cities: In Charles Dickens's renowned narrative concerning the French Revolution, the focus is on two principal cities: the turbulent Paris and the comparatively serene London (Barret). The narrative inherently presents a dichotomy through the contrast between these two distinct settings. Furthermore, the introductory section of the novel enumerates a series of dichotomies.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way […]

The story of *A Tale of Two Cities* explores two main thematic contrasts: the divide between the wealthy and the impoverished, and the juxtaposition of light and darkness. Charles Dickens portrays the rich as the antagonists, reflecting the French Revolution's aim to overthrow the aristocracy, while the poor are depicted as the heroic protagonists. The resolution of this dichotomy occurs at the novel's conclusion, where a wealthy character selflessly sacrifices himself to rescue a less affluent individual.

Another illustration where K.M. Weiland shows how dichotomous characters make for compelling writing, using examples from popular film and literature. The Extremes of Conflict in Literature: Violence, Homicide, and War," a chapter in The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Perspectives on Violence, Homicide, and War, explores the different levels of human conflict through the lens of violence and why these toxic dichotomies are so compelling to readers (Pettinicchio).

Dissonance in literature functions as a literary and conceptual tool that introduces tension, intricacy, and profundity into narratives. It encompasses a range of clashes, contradictions, and uncertainties, both within the text itself and in the reader's interpretation. Authors utilize dissonance to challenge traditional standards, delve into the complexities of human psychology, and illuminate cultural, ethical and moral dilemmas. Whether through characters grappling with moral dilemmas, narrative uncertainties, or societal paradoxes, dissonance plays a crucial role in stimulating the intellectual and emotional involvement of the reader, establishing it as a fundamental and enduring component in the realm of literature (Alkhazraji et al.). This examination of dissonance in literature provides a perspective through which to reflect on the multifaceted aspects of human existence and the stories that aim to capture it (Berrigan et al.). In literature, "dissonance" refers to a deliberate lack of harmony or agreement between elements in a text. It creates a sense of unease, tension, or disruption that can be used for various effects.

Dissonance is a lack of harmony or agreement between different groups in a society. Many of the characters in the novel experience personal dissonance as they struggle to reconcile their cultural and individual identities (Branach-kallas). They may feel torn between their heritage and the pressures of the outside world, or they may be caught in the middle of conflicting loyalties.

There are a few benefits of Using Dissonance in Literature. The presence of dissonance in a narrative can introduce emotional tension and internal conflict, enhancing its appeal and relatability to readers (Elliot and Devine). This emotional resonance serves to captivate readers, drawing them into the storyline and fostering a connection with the characters and their challenges. By incorporating dissonance, authors can craft characters with complex internal struggles and inconsistencies, thereby enriching the depth and authenticity of character portrayal. This nuanced character development contributes to the readers' engagement and interest in the narrative. Furthermore, dissonance serves as a conduit for authors to explore intricate and profound themes, including morality, identity, and societal issues. By prompting readers to reflect on these themes, dissonance encourages a deeper level of engagement with the text. The inclusion of dissonance in literary works can prompt readers to engage in critical thinking and textual analysis, leading to discussions and diverse interpretations (Steele and Liu). This interactive engagement with the text can result in a more immersive and intellectually stimulating reading experience.

Slumberland by Paul Beatty grapples with the complexities of race in America, particularly the experience of being Black in a predominantly white society. Consider how the protagonist, Ferguson W. Sowell, navigates these spaces and how his identity is shaped by these forces. The novel is infused with historical references, particularly related to Black history and the legacy of slavery. In the book *Slumberland*, the main character encounters a dichotomy as he grapples with harmonizing his rugged outward demeanour with his delicate inner nature. The figure DJ Darky, a troubled writer, strives to project a tough image to fit in with the harsh urban setting of Los Angeles. Nevertheless, beneath his hardened exterior lies a deep-seated fragility (John). By delving into DJ's contemplative reflections and engagements with other characters, Beatty portrays the tension between surface appearances

and internal truths, highlighting the difficulties of upholding a facade within societal norms (Cooper and Fazio).

In addition, Beatty explores the concept of dichotomy in *Slumberland*, where the main character, Darky, enters a coma and must navigate a dream world that blurs the lines between fantasy and reality. Darky's journey represents the fragmented state of his mind as he deals with themes of identity, guilt, and responsibility. The book uses magical realism to create a feeling of confusion, mirroring Darky's sense of disorientation and detachment. By contrasting Darky's dream world with his waking life, Beatty highlights the fragile nature of human consciousness and the fluidity of what is real.

Black individuals often feel the pressure to represent their entire race, especially in predominantly white spaces. This burden can create a sense of hyper-visibility, where every action is scrutinized and judged as reflective of the entire group. The constant exposure to negative stereotypes and prejudice can lead to internalized racism, where individuals begin to accept and believe the negative messages about their race (Zhang et al.). This internalization can manifest as self-doubt, low self-esteem, and a sense of inferiority, further perpetuating the cycle of marginalization. These are just a few ways in which dichotomy and dissonance manifest in the cultural norms and societal pressures faced by Black people. These experiences highlight the psychological toll of living in a society where one's identity is constantly devalued and challenged.

Slumberland tackles the question of Black authenticity in a complex and often satirical way. Beatty's characters are acutely aware of the expectations placed upon them because of their race, and they respond in ways that are both defiant and deeply personal. Ferguson embodies the struggle between performance and authenticity. He adopts the stage name "DJ Darky Fantastic," a deliberately provocative moniker that forces his audience to

confront their preconceptions about Blackness. He plays into stereotypes of Black musicality while simultaneously subverting them with his avant-garde approach to DJing. His journey throughout the novel can be seen as a search for a space where he can express his unique identity without being confined by societal expectations. The underground music scene in Berlin provides a space for DJ Darky and other marginalized characters to connect with others who share similar experiences. These communities offer a sense of belonging and understanding that is often lacking in mainstream society. However, the novel also explores the complexities of these communities, highlighting the potential for exploitation and the challenges of maintaining individuality within a group. *Slumberland* portrays a world that often feels fragmented and isolating, particularly for those who exist on the margins. DJ Darky's experiences in Berlin, despite the vibrant cultural scene, underscore the difficulty of finding genuine connection and belonging in a globalized world (Zocco 131-50). The novel highlights the psychological toll of marginalisation, exploring themes of alienation, displacement, and the search for identity in a world that often feels indifferent or hostile. The fragmented narrative structure itself mirrors this sense of fragmentation, reflecting the characters' disjointed experiences and the challenges of making sense of a complex and often contradictory world.

Additionally, the novel *Slumberland* delves into the dichotomy between authority and powerlessness (Marshall and Mckenzie). The protagonist, DJ Darky, frequently encounters situations in the narrative that are beyond his influence, subjecting him to the whims of the dream realm's peculiar logic. Conversely, he perceives himself as ensnared in the banality of his everyday existence, unable to break free from the repetitiveness of his daily life. This juxtaposition underscores humanity's yearning for self-determination and independence as we confront the constraints on our ability to shape the world. By integrating these dualities within *Slumberland*, Beatty crafts a stimulating and visually captivating graphic novel that

prompts readers to contemplate the intricacies of their aspirations, fantasies, and actualities (Rudmin). The character seems to be grappling with feelings of alienation and a desire for connection, as evidenced by their longing for physical touch and the descriptions of the women in the bar. The protagonist's internal state seems detached and possibly disoriented, indicated by phrases like "asleep, dreaming, and dead all at the same time. The setting itself, "Slumberland", reinforces this sense of unreality and escapism. However, without more context, it's difficult to ascertain the specific challenges the protagonist faces and how they ultimately cope. The fragmented narrative makes it challenging to trace a clear arc of adjustment or coping mechanisms.

The "Afro-Germans" group of Black Germans, obsessed with American jazz and Black culture, highlights the performative aspect of identity. They embrace a romanticized vision of Blackness, often to comical effect, demonstrating how cultural appropriation can perpetuate stereotypes even as it attempts to celebrate them. Their presence challenges Ferguson to consider the global implications of Blackness and the ways it is perceived and performed across cultures. Wanda, as a Black woman navigating the music industry, Wanda faces a unique set of challenges. She is acutely aware of the ways her race and gender intersect, and she refuses to be confined by the limited roles offered to her. Her relationship with Ferguson is marked by both attraction and tension, as they both grapple with their definitions of Blackness and success. The characters in *Slumberland* cope with their situations through a combination of escapism, self-reinvention, and seeking connection within marginalized communities. The novel highlights the challenges of navigating a world that often feels fragmented and isolating, particularly for those who exist on the margins.

DJ Darky uses music as a form of escapism, immersing himself in the Berlin music scene to avoid confronting his inner struggles with identity and belonging. The dreamlike quality of the narrative itself also contributes to the theme of escapism, blurring the lines

between reality and fantasy. Other characters, like the Schwa, find escapism in anonymity, attempting to blend in and become invisible to avoid the challenges of a world that often feels hostile. DJ Darky's adoption of the "DJ Darky" persona is an act of self-reinvention, allowing him to explore different facets of his identity and project an image to the world that differs from his internal experience. Other characters in the novel also engage in self-reinvention, adopting new names, styles, and identities to navigate their marginalization.

Beatty doesn't offer easy answers to the question of authenticity. Instead, he suggests that Black identity is fluid, multifaceted, and constantly evolving in response to societal pressures. His characters challenge readers to look beyond simplistic notions of Blackness and to recognize the diversity of experiences and expressions within the Black community (Willink and Babin). They demonstrate that the pursuit of authenticity is an ongoing process, one that involves navigating external expectations while also staying true to one's internal compass.

Desertion by Abdulrazak Gurnah is full of compelling dichotomies that enrich its exploration of colonialism, identity, and belonging. The shifting settings of Zanzibar and England are not mere backdrops, but active forces shaping the characters' identities and destinies. Zanzibar represents a complex tapestry of Swahili, Arab, Indian, and African influences. Characters like Yusuf, Rehana, and their families navigate this blend, showcasing how Zanzibari identity itself is a hybrid construct. Gurnah portrays the island's social strata, influenced by both traditional structures and colonial impositions. Class, religion, and ethnicity intersect, impacting characters' opportunities and limitations. For instance, Yusuf's family's relatively lower social standing contrasts with the more privileged position of Rehana's family. While some prosper from trade and colonial connections, others face poverty and limited prospects. This disparity fuels desires for change, pushing some characters to seek opportunities elsewhere, sometimes at a heavy personal cost. Characters

sometimes seek refuge in fantasies, memories, or physical departure to escape their difficult realities. For instance, Rashid's affair with Rehana offers a temporary escape from his mundane life and societal constraints. Similarly, the act of desertion itself can be seen as a form of escapism, a way to break free from oppressive circumstances. Rashid, bound by societal expectations and an arranged marriage, finds solace and excitement in his clandestine relationship with Rehana. This affair represents a form of escapism because it allows him to temporarily transcend the limitations and monotony of his everyday life. He seeks refuge in their passionate connection, creating a secret world where he can experience a different version of himself, free from the constraints of his social obligations. The intensity of their affair highlights his desire to escape the mundane realities of his life and experience a more fulfilling emotional connection.

By presenting both Zanzibari and English perspectives, Gurnah offers a nuanced view of colonialism's impact. He challenges simplistic binaries of "oppressor" and "oppressed," highlighting the complexities and contradictions within both societies. *Desertion* suggests that true escape from the weight of history and social structures is illusory. Even across continents, characters find themselves haunted by the past and the enduring legacies of colonialism. The decision to stay in Zanzibar or venture to England becomes a life-altering choice for many characters. Those who leave often find their paths irrevocably changed, while those who remain grapple with the consequences of those departures. Ultimately, Gurnah uses Zanzibar and England not just as physical locations, but as potent symbols representing the complexities of identity, belonging, and the enduring impact of colonialism on individual lives.

The backdrop of a fading British Empire and a burgeoning independent Zanzibar creates a powerful dichotomy. Even before independence, the presence of British power permeates Zanzibari society. Characters like Yusuf's father, despite their resentment, operate

within a system that privileges Europeans. This creates a sense of inferiority and fuels a desire for change. The allure of European culture and education, while presented as a path to advancement, also contributes to a fracturing of identity. Characters like Frederick, embrace aspects of Britishness, sometimes at the expense of their Zanzibari heritage, leading to internal conflict (Mattin). As independence nears, there's a palpable tension surrounding what it means to be truly Zanzibari. Characters like Abbas and Jamila feel the weight of expectation to embody a particular kind of postcolonial identity, one that rejects colonial influence, which can be both liberating and stifling.

Desertion, as a central theme in the novel, can be interpreted as a broader form of escapism. Characters who desert their homes, families, or communities are often driven by a desire to break free from oppressive circumstances, whether they be social, political, or personal. Desertion becomes a means of escaping difficult realities and seeking a new life, even if that new life is fraught with uncertainty and challenges. It represents a radical act of self-preservation, a way to escape situations that feel unbearable or limiting. Independence brings both hope and uncertainty. For some, like Khalfan, it opens doors to political and social advancement. For others, like Amna, it brings anxieties about the future and their place in a rapidly changing society. Gurnah masterfully demonstrates that independence doesn't erase the past. The legacies of colonialism, particularly economic disparities and social hierarchies, linger. Characters like Hassan struggle to reconcile the promises of independence with the realities of their daily lives. The novel becomes a search for identity in a world where old certainties have crumbled. Characters grapple with questions of belonging, loyalty, and what it means to be Zanzibari in a postcolonial world. Some, like Rehana's daughter, forge their paths, seeking agency and self-definition outside the confines of tradition.

Desertion reveals how colonialism disrupts and fragments the sense of self. Characters are often caught between worlds, struggling to reconcile their heritage with the influences of the coloniser. Despite the challenges, Gurnah's characters also demonstrate remarkable resilience. They find ways to assert their agency, reclaim their narratives, and forge new identities on their terms. The novel reminds us that decolonization is not a singular event but an ongoing process. The characters' journeys reflect the complexities of navigating a postcolonial world, where the personal and the political are inextricably intertwined. Through these characters and their experiences, *Desertion* offers a powerful meditation on the enduring impact of colonialism on individual lives, even as it celebrates the resilience and capacity for self-discovery in the face of historical forces. *Desertion* examines the lasting effects of colonialism on individuals and communities(Cohen). It explores how colonial power dynamics shape social structures, cultural identities, and personal relationships. The novel highlights the complexities of postcolonial identity and the challenges of reclaiming agency in a world still marked by the legacy of empire.

The term dissonance, commonly associated with music to denote the discordant combination of notes, extends beyond the realm of music to encompass various forms of artistic expression, including literature. Abdulrazk Gurnah's novel, situated in Zanzibar, an East African island, delves into themes such as colonialism, cultural clashes, and the enduring repercussions of historical injustices. The narrative of the novel illuminates the clash between diverse cultural elements in Zanzibar, particularly highlighting the friction between the native African culture and the colonial imprints of Arab and British dominions (Gurnah). This cultural dissonance permeates the characters' journeys and their negotiation of identities within a shifting societal landscape. The novel portrays instances of personal dissonance among its characters as they grapple with the complexities of their cultural and individual identities (Daryl). These individuals may find themselves torn between their ancestral

heritage and the external influences exerted upon them, or they may be ensnared in conflicting allegiances. The novel portrays romantic love as both a source of joy and a catalyst for conflict. Rashid's passionate affair with Rehana exemplifies the intoxicating power of romantic love, but it also leads to betrayal and ultimately, loss. Their relationship transcends cultural and social boundaries, but it also highlights the challenges of maintaining such a connection in a society governed by strict norms and expectations. Other romantic relationships in the novel further explore the complexities of love, including the tensions between individual desires and societal pressures.

The relationship introduces dissonance into Rashid's personal life. He is torn between his passionate feelings for Rehana and his obligations to his family and his arranged marriage. This internal conflict creates a sense of unease and guilt, as he struggles to reconcile his desires with his responsibilities. Rehana, too, experiences a form of dissonance as she navigates the complexities of their forbidden love and the potential consequences it carries (Rosen and Perkins). Their affair challenges the rigid social norms and expectations of their community. Their interracial relationship and the defiance of traditional marriage customs disrupt the established social fabric. Their love, while genuine, clashes with the prevailing societal values and creates a sense of unease and tension. Their relationship highlights the clash between individual desires and societal expectations, creating a dissonance that reverberates throughout the novel.

In Abdulrazak Gurnah's literary work *Desertion*, the central character Hassanali encounters a range of dissonances that mirror the intricacies of his identity and the obstacles he encounters in negotiating diverse cultures and belief systems. Dissonance denotes a condition of discord or contradiction that emerges when multiple elements or concepts collide. Within the narrative of *Desertion*, dissonance is evident in cultural, ethical, and

emotional dimensions, all of which play a role in Hassanali's internal conflict and his journey towards self-realization. (Leitch).

Cultural dissonance is a prominent form of discord that Hassanali encounters in the novel. As a young individual hailing from Zanzibar, Hassanali is deeply immersed in the cultural legacy and Islamic customs of the island. An illustration of this is Hassanali's intrigue with Shakespeare's works, which leads to conflicts with his father who perceives such interests as unmanly and contrary to Islamic principles. Furthermore, Hassanali's interactions with women, notably his marriage to a Christian woman named Sophie, generate tensions within his familial and communal spheres. Cultural dissonance pervades various facets of Hassanali's existence, prompting him to reevaluate his loyalties and sense of identity (Keith). Additionally, *Desertion* portrays psychological dissonance as another form of discord experienced by Hassanali. This occurs as he grapples with reconciling his past and present selves, struggling to accept the stark differences between his current life and his previous experiences. (Mohan).

The sense of displacement and alienation experienced by the protagonist due to the loss of his family, culture, and traditions is a prominent theme in the narrative. Additionally, his complex emotions towards his wife, Sofia, are influenced by his enduring attachment to his first love, Fatuma. The conflicting feelings he harbours contribute to Hassanali's internal conflict and feelings of detachment (Maus).

The novel also delves into the theme of dissonance through Hassanali's interactions with others. His friendship with Rashid, a peer from a similar background, contrasts Hassanali's struggles with his heritage. While Rashid embraces his cultural roots, Hassanali grapples with reconciling his past with his present circumstances. Their dialogues and engagements underscore the challenges that arise when individuals from diverse backgrounds

navigate their identities in a rapidly evolving society (Flannery). Moreover, Hassanali's relationship with his father exemplifies another instance of dissonance within the narrative. The clash between his father's traditional values and Hassanali's aspirations for independence and self-expression underscores the intergenerational discord between those upholding tradition and those striving to liberate themselves from its confines (Jonathan Bruce Brown).

Dissonance, in its many forms, beneath the surface of Paul Beatty's *Slumberland*. It's in the music, the characters' identities, and their experiences navigating a world that often feels out of tune. Ferguson's stage name itself is a jarring chord, a deliberate provocation that highlights the dissonance between Black stereotypes and individual identity. He tells us, "My name is my passport... It allows me to travel the world... but it also means that everywhere I go, I'm representing" (Beatty 46). This burden of representation creates a constant tension between who he is and how others perceive him. Ferguson's quest to find the "anti-melody," the lowest, most dissonant sound, mirrors the social and racial discord he experiences. He says, "I wanted a music that could make the blind see and the deaf break into a spontaneous two-step" (Beatty 105). His music becomes a way to process and express the disharmony he feels around him. The underground Berlin club where Ferguson finds his groove represents a space of temporary escape from the dissonance of the outside world. However, the novel also suggests that true belonging cannot be found in isolation. Without giving too much away, the novel's conclusion leaves us with a sense of unresolved dissonance. Ferguson's journey, while transformative, doesn't offer easy answers or a clean resolution. This ambiguity reflects the ongoing struggle for racial and social harmony in a world still grappling with its dissonances.

Slumberland uses dissonance not just as a theme, but as a literary device. The jarring rhythms of Beatty's prose, the unexpected shifts in tone, and the characters' internal struggles

all contribute to a reading experience that is both challenging and rewarding. It's a novel that forces us to confront the dissonances within ourselves and the world around us.

While worlds apart in setting and circumstance, Ferguson in *Slumberland* and Rashid in *Desertion* find themselves at the heart of compelling dichotomies and dissonance, grappling with identity, belonging, and the legacies of colonialism. Both characters navigate societies where their race marks them as outsiders. Ferguson, as a Black American in Germany, confronts fetishization and prejudice, constantly aware of his "otherness." Rashid, of mixed Indian and Arab heritage in colonial Zanzibar, experiences the social hierarchy imposed by the British, feeling caught between worlds. Both embark on journeys of self-discovery, seeking a sense of belonging and wholeness. Ferguson's quest for the "anti-melody" mirrors his search for an authentic self amidst the expectations and stereotypes thrust upon him. Rashid grapples with his family's past, his mixed heritage, and the changing landscape of Zanzibar as it moves towards independence, seeking to define himself on his terms. Both characters are haunted by the ghosts of the past. Ferguson's musical journey is intertwined with the legacy of Black American music and the ongoing struggle for equality. Rashid's family history, marked by his grandfather's abandonment and his father's resentment of colonial rule, casts a long shadow on his present. The arrival of Europeans introduces new power dynamics, challenging the existing social hierarchy. Traditional authorities and customs are undermined as colonial powers assert their dominance. This shift creates a sense of instability and uncertainty, as characters struggle to adapt to the changing social landscape(Cutchins et al.). For instance, the declining influence of local rulers and the rise of European administrators demonstrate this power shift. The arrival of Europeans also brings about economic changes, disrupting traditional trade routes and economic practices. The introduction of new industries and technologies creates both opportunities and challenges for local communities. Some characters embrace these economic changes, while others resist

them, clinging to traditional ways of making a living. The novel explores the impact of these economic transformations on social relations and individual livelihoods.

Ferguson's story unfolds in the underground music scene of contemporary Berlin, a space of subculture and artistic exploration. Rashid's journey takes place against the backdrop of colonial Zanzibar, where social and political tensions simmer as independence approaches. Ferguson externalizes his dissonance through music, using it as a tool for both protest and self-expression. Rashid's dissonance is more internalized, manifesting in his silence, his withdrawal, and his struggle to reconcile his family's past with his aspirations.

Slumberland ends on a note of ambiguity, leaving Ferguson's journey open-ended. We see his growth but also the ongoing struggle for racial harmony. *Desertion*, while also offering no easy answers, provides a sense of closure through Rashid's eventual acceptance of his family's past and his place within it. By placing these characters side-by-side, we gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of dissonance and the search for identity in a world shaped by colonialism and its aftermath. While their paths diverge, Ferguson and Rashid's journeys offer a powerful testament to the enduring human search for meaning, belonging, and a place to call home in a world often characterized by discord and displacement.

Desertion explores the tension between traditional ways of life and the forces of modernity. The arrival of European influences disrupts existing social structures and cultural practices, creating a sense of unease and uncertainty. Characters struggle to reconcile their traditional values with the changing world around them, leading to both opportunities and challenges. *Desertion* examines the cultural encounters and clashes between East and West. The novel explores the complexities of colonial relationships and the impact of Western influence on Eastern societies. It highlights the power dynamics inherent in these encounters

and the challenges of navigating cultural differences. Characters grapple with questions of identity and belonging in a world fragmented by cultural change and displacement. They experience a sense of dissonance as they try to reconcile their identities with their social and cultural contexts. The novel explores the challenges of finding one's place in a world that often feels alienating and uncertain (Campelo et al.).

Characters experience a sense of dislocation and alienation as their traditional ways of life are disrupted. They feel like outsiders in their communities, caught between two worlds. For example, Rashid's movement between cultures leaves him feeling like he doesn't fully belong in either. Similarly, Hassanali's experience in England highlights the challenges of adapting to a new and unfamiliar environment. The imposition of new cultural norms and values leads to a loss of traditional identity.

Characters struggle to reconcile their cultural heritage with the pressures to assimilate into the dominant culture. It also explores how this loss of identity can lead to feelings of confusion, insecurity, and self-doubt. Despite the challenges they face, characters also demonstrate resilience and adaptability. They find ways to navigate the changing environment and create new identities for themselves. The novel highlights the human capacity for survival and the ability to find meaning and purpose in the face of adversity (Apaydin).

The psychological toll of colonialism is passed down through generations, impacting family relationships and individual identities. The past traumas continue to haunt the present, shaping the characters' perceptions of themselves and the world around them (Identities). *Desertion* subtly touches upon the mental health implications of colonialism and cultural change. Characters experience anxiety, depression, and a sense of rootlessness as they struggle to cope with the psychological pressures of their changing world. The novel suggests

that the psychological toll of colonialism can have long-lasting and profound effects on individual well-being.

Chapter – III

Assimilation and Integration in *The Sellout* and *Pilgrims Way*

Every society's literature is shaped by its distinct challenges and characteristics, which must be acknowledged. African American literature is heavily influenced by the historical interactions between Africans and the Western world. The social, political, and economic experiences of African Americans have played a significant role in shaping this literary tradition. Nasrullah Mambrol, in her article "*African American and Post-colonial Studies*", states that ". . . the African source cultures and their adopted societies, as they interacted with other influences in the new regions to which Africans were taken." Through its unique history of racial segregation and its profound effects on culture, politics, and psychology, African American literature often explores the tensions and conflicts between White and Black communities (Kemph).

The pursuit of belonging and the negotiation of identity lies at the heart of both Paul Beatty's *The Sellout* and Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Pilgrim's Way*. This chapter explores the intertwined themes of assimilation and integration as they unfold within these two distinct yet resonant narratives. While separated by geography and cultural context, both novels delve into the challenges faced by individuals seeking to find their place in societies marked by cultural diversity and social stratification. Through their respective protagonists, *The Sellout* and *Pilgrim's Way* offer poignant reflections on the complexities of cultural adaptation, the search for meaning in unfamiliar surroundings, and the enduring human desire for connection and belonging. This chapter will analyze the diverse strategies employed by characters in both novels as they navigate the often-turbulent waters of assimilation and integration.

In the context of post-colonialism, the novel no longer functions solely as a literary work. Post-colonial literature delves into the challenges and outcomes of a country's

decolonization and the political independence of previously oppressed colonial populations. This genre of literature explores the intersection of literature and politics in the process of shaping a new cultural identity. Post-colonialism also interacts with globalization by incorporating elements of hybridity, alternity, and themes of Empire and imperialism (Baumeister et al.). It serves as a bridge between traditional and modern forms of globalization. Post-colonial literature is viewed as a global literature that embodies a structure of connections and repetitions, showcasing endless variations rooted in specific local contexts (Kagai). Post-colonial, postmodern, and post-structuralist perspectives in English literature view the world through a lens of decolonization. Post-colonial literature portrays the cultures and societies shaped by the post-colonial experience. During the postcolonial era, writers had a significant impact (Schmitz and Schmitz). Numerous influential postcolonial works were written from the 1950s to the 2000s. Although drama and poetry were significant in postcolonial literature, it was primarily the novels that characterized this period.

Africa is recognized as one of the most culturally diverse regions globally, with a population exceeding 1.2 billion spread across 58 countries and encompassing between 1,200 and 3,000 ethnolinguistic groups. Despite this rich diversity, the continent is also characterized by political instability, poverty, and ethnic conflicts. However, Africa has shown promising signs of economic growth, with emerging economies contributing to increased participation in regional and global markets (Choy et al.). Despite these economic advancements, socio-political challenges continue to persist in African nations. A significant issue faced by these countries is how to effectively manage and leverage the cultural richness stemming from ethnic diversity to foster a national identity that is inclusive of all citizens (Schwartz et al.).

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, in *The Social Construction of Reality*, stated that "the individual is not born but becomes a member of a society. The formation and

adaptation of one's identity are influenced by the surrounding environment and the social groups to which the individual belongs." The individual plays an active role in shaping their social identity, which is developed through interactions with society and internalized within a symbolic framework that holds different levels of legitimacy for each person (Kagai). From a Cultural standpoint, the African cultural environment appears to be undergoing a transitional phase where individuals are actively engaged in defining their own identities and the roles they aspire to fulfill within their societies, as well as shaping the national cultural identity of their countries (Coatsworth et al.). They are striving to establish, negotiate, and uphold a national identity that embraces the diverse cultural landscape within their borders. African settings are characterized by complexity, with countries often being highly multicultural, and lacking a single dominant group across social, political, economic, and cultural spheres. Further research is required to explore the processes of acculturation, with a primary focus on conceptualizing the cultural identity of individuals within the African context (Göttsche). Cultural Identity holds a central and crucial position in this context, not only for the nation as a whole but also for every individual who seeks significance within the boundaries of their respective country (Duffy).

The initial stage in achieving integration is the process of adapting to the new society. In the context of migration, adaptation involves the migrant's capacity to assimilate into the established frameworks of the host society, encompassing adherence to its norms and values, as well as acquiring an understanding of the operational aspects of the new economic, political, social, cultural, and particularly political-institutional milieu (Benet-Martínez and Haritatos). Proponents of adaptation during migration contend that individuals contemplating migration carefully assess various adaptation strategies to mitigate risks and opt for those that align most effectively with their circumstances.

According to Furkan et.al in *Assimilation in Multiculturalism: The European Union Sample"* emphasised Culture, a concept that impacts norms, identities, economies, various art forms, and numerous other areas, evolves at a slow pace. However, cultural transformation is now occurring more rapidly due to factors such as globalization, nation-states, and the collective unawareness of societies (Haste). This is why the idea of "assimilation" is widely recognized and extensively studied. In academic circles, multiculturalism has often been viewed as a solution to the assimilation issue. Nevertheless, some scholars do not see multiculturalism as a remedy for assimilation; in fact, they believe it can contribute to further assimilation. Consequently, during the era of globalization, the discourse of multiculturalism, the promotion of a dominant culture, and the decline of subcultures are evident worldwide.

Caroline Howarth says in her recent article *It's Only Other People Who Make Me Feel Black": Acculturation, Identity, and Agency in a Multicultural Community* that "developing one's cultural identity involves a process of creating meaning that occurs at the intersection of personal life experiences and external perceptions (Dionne). It is more complex than simply choosing to identify as British or foreign and instead is an ongoing journey that encompasses various representations".

Kinga Bierwiaczonek and Jonas R. Kunst, in the article *Revisiting the Integration Hypothesis: Correlational and Longitudinal MetaAnalyses Demonstrate the Limited Role of Acculturation for Cross-Cultural Adaptation,* assert that, " Integration (or biculturalism), which involves engagement in both one's heritage culture and the dominant mainstream culture, is considered the most beneficial acculturation strategy.

Due to globalization and increased immigration rates worldwide, most modern societies are now ethnically or racially diverse. Immigrants and their descendants living as

minority-group members in these diverse societies often face the decision of how to navigate their heritage culture and the dominant mainstream culture (de Dios). Research from various fields of psychology indicates that the strategies individuals choose for acculturation can impact their psychological well-being and sociocultural functioning. Embracing both their heritage culture and the mainstream culture (known as integration or biculturalism) has been seen as beneficial, according to experts and policymakers. However, recent meta-analyses suggest that the direct impact of acculturation on adaptation may be limited. Therefore, to enhance the adaptation of immigrants, it may be more effective to focus on external factors like discrimination rather than individual cultural approaches.

As a postcolonial writer, Gurnah is recognized for his insightful and profound storytelling that centres on the consequences of war and imperialism. His narratives explore the inner struggles and challenges faced by characters as they adapt to new environments, cultures, and identities while seeking to control their futures (Valsiner). Gurnah's works differ from the typical loss of memory associated with the imposition of new languages and cultural norms. Instead, his characters embark on a journey to find a sense of belonging in unfamiliar territories, navigating new social norms and ultimately forming complex identities. Erik Falk's analysis in *Subject and History in Selected Works by Abdulrazak Gurnah, Yvonne Vera, and David Dabydeen (2007),* notes "Gurnah's fiction evokes a transnational Indian Ocean and British world that emphasizes the subject's involvement in familial and economic networks, which channel the circulation of property and determine social identity" (9).

His work often focuses on Tanzanian history, emphasizing cultural interactions that occurred before Western powers intervened. Gurnah's stories ". . . of migration or exile are part of the grand-scale demographic movement initiated by British imperialism, and yet Gurnah's fiction shows that they also belong to a multi-faceted past that predates the intrusion of Western powers" (Falk 25). They not only provide insights into the social

instability of East African coastal civilizations but also underscore the complexity of overlapping identities in the region. Influenced by Tanganyika's and Zanzibar's colonial past, Gurnah's narratives carry the weight of history. Gurnah contends, "Power forgets the past and constructs a new one" ("Idea of Past"). Gurnah's writing skills became well-known after his fourth book, *Paradise*, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 1994. The novel was also nominated for the Whitbread Book Awards (now the Costa Book Awards) and the Writer's Guild of Great Britain Prize. The ALOA Prize was awarded to the Danish translation of *Paradise*.

Abdulrazak Gurnah's literary works frequently delve into the themes of integration and assimilation within the framework of migration, displacement, and intercultural interactions. As a Zanzibar-born British author, Gurnah draws from his personal experiences to shape his narrative explorations of these subjects. Within his novels, protagonists frequently grapple with the challenges of assimilating to unfamiliar cultural environments while endeavouring to preserve aspects of their identities.

Choy et.al, in *Systematic Review: Acculturation strategies and their impact on the mental health of migrant populations* State that, "Of the four acculturation strategies, integration was identified as the approach that has the most positive impact on migrant mental health"

The global trend of increased immigration has resulted in a notable growth in population diversity and intercultural interactions across various regions worldwide. The process of transitioning between cultures and relocating to a new society entails a range of psychological adjustments that are particularly pertinent to the development of one's identity (Chambers). Immigrants are often faced with the challenge of navigating unfamiliar values and social norms, communicating in a foreign language, and engaging with members of the

host culture, all of which can prompt introspection and self-evaluation. Instances of identity crises frequently emerge during phases of active identity exploration, necessitating a thorough approach to managing one's identity (Han and Ren). Despite this, there remains a dearth of research focusing on the examination of identity management strategies among first-generation adult immigrants. Henry Ivry in his article "Unmitigated Blackness: Paul Beatty's Transscalar Critique" (Ivry, 2020) examines how Beatty's experimental use of language challenges traditional notions of Black identity.

Migration plays a significant role in driving social change, closely linked to social mobility, which reflects shifts in an individual's or group's status due to various economic, technological, organizational, and social factors. These changes impact the social structure and composition by facilitating movements within social spaces, leading to transitions between different social positions. Change is evident across all aspects involved in migration, whether it stems from population movements or reactions within established systems. It is a natural and normal aspect of life that shapes social reality, prompting adjustments at various levels for individuals and groups (Ray and Herskorits).

Paul Beatty is not the first African-American author to depict experiences of racial discrimination through fictional works. However, his approach differs significantly from his predecessors. Early African-American writers such as Olaudah Equiano, William Wells Brown, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Solomon Northup, and others shared their experiences of slavery in autobiographical or fictional narratives during the early nineteenth century in America. These works were characterized by anguish, simplicity, helplessness, and pathos against the backdrop of slavery and the American Civil War (Rommetveit).

In the twentieth century, writers like Alice Walker, W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Richard Wright continued this tradition by

narrating the African-American experience through polished fictional narratives and non-fictional works. These later writers are praised for their narrative techniques, technical skills, storytelling abilities, and fearless opposition to racial oppression.

Beatty's work contributes significantly to literary tradition, shedding light on centuries of atrocities committed against people of colour in the United States. Critics and peers alike commend Beatty for his stark realism and direct exposure to the prevailing structures of racial discrimination in American society. He exposes the hypocrisy of white racist Americans who uphold the Western Anglo-Saxon Protestant hegemony (WASP) and confronts right-wing forces promoting the idea that America belongs exclusively to white individuals (Ying and Han).

Paul Beatty recognizes that the process of acculturation is multifaceted, and influenced by various factors including race, socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. His characters frequently confront multiple layers of prejudice and exclusion, illustrating the complex obstacles individuals encounter as they navigate various societal structures (Jacob et al.). Through exploring these intersections, Beatty prompts readers to contemplate the interconnected nature of identity components and their effects on the acculturation journey.

The unnamed narrator in *The Sellout* employs satire and subversion to challenge societal norms and expectations. He uses outrageous acts, like reinstating slavery and segregation, to expose the hypocrisy and absurdity of racial relations in America. This strategy, while provocative, highlights the complexities of assimilation and the narrator's struggle to find his place in a society deeply marked by racial prejudice. The narrator attempts to reclaim his identity and community by reviving outdated social structures (Ramírez). This paradoxical approach underscores the difficulty of defining one's identity in a

society that often dictates and confines racial and social categories. His actions, though extreme, can be interpreted as a desperate attempt to assert agency and control in a world that seeks to define him. Despite his satirical methods, the narrator's actions are also driven by a desire to create a sense of belonging and community. He seeks to foster a sense of pride and identity among the marginalized members of his community, even if his methods are unconventional and controversial.

In *The Sellout* Beatty tackles the theme of assimilation with his signature satirical bite, exposing its complexities and contradictions within the context of American racial dynamics. The narrator's attempt to reinstate slavery and segregation is a satirical exaggeration that lays bare the fallacy of a "post-racial" society. By taking assimilation to its most extreme conclusion, Beatty forces us to confront how systemic racism persists even when overt forms of discrimination are deemed unacceptable. The psychological experiments conducted on the narrator as a child, designed to measure his self-hatred, expose the psychological toll of assimilation. The pressure to conform to white norms can lead to a rejection of one's own identity and a sense of internalized racism.

The narrator's girlfriend, Marpessa, initially embraces her blackness and challenges societal norms. However, as she climbs the social ladder, she begins to distance herself from her roots, highlighting the pressure to assimilate to succeed in a white-dominated world. The narrator's efforts to revive his hometown, Dickens, a forgotten and neglected Black community, represent a rejection of assimilation and a reclaiming of Black identity and agency. He seeks to create a space where Blackness is celebrated, not erased. The narrator's decision to grow watermelons and display a "nigger" sign on his property is a deliberate act of provocation, a refusal to play by the rules of a society that demands Black people assimilate on white terms. He reclaims these symbols, subverting their racist connotations and asserting his right to define his own identity. "This is how we lost the bus boycott. No

more coloured people at the back of the bus. Now there are just no more bus stops in coloured neighbourhoods" (Beatty 74). This quote encapsulates the insidious nature of assimilation as presented in *The Sellout*. It suggests that while overt segregation may be a thing of the past, systemic racism persists in ways that are less visible but equally damaging. The absence of bus stops in Black neighbourhoods becomes a metaphor for how Black communities are still marginalized and denied equal access to resources and opportunities.

Beatty uses satire and social commentary to expose the hypocrisy of a society that claims to value diversity while still upholding systems of racial inequality. The novel challenges us to confront how assimilation can be both a tool of oppression and a burden for those expected to conform, while also acknowledging the desire for belonging and acceptance that can make assimilation a tempting, if ultimately hollow, promise.

Integration in *The Sellout*, Beatty gives a straightforward approach and dissects its failures, its satirical extremes, and the raw emotions it evokes in a society grappling with racial inequality. The dilapidated, forgotten state of the narrator's hometown, Dickens, serves as a potent symbol of failed integration. Once a thriving Black community, it's been erased from the map, highlighting how Black communities have been marginalized and left behind. The "Dum Dum Donut Intellectuals", a group of ageing Black intellectuals, stuck in endless debates about race and representation, embodies the disillusionment and frustration that can arise from the unfulfilled promises of integration. Their intellectual sparring, while humorous, underscores the lack of tangible progress. The narrator's shocking act of bringing back slavery and segregation is a satirical exaggeration that lays bare the absurdity of seeking integration on white terms. By taking it to this extreme, Beatty forces us to confront how true equality cannot be achieved through mere assimilation or forced proximity. The initial success of the narrator's segregated world, with its improved schools and sense of community

for Black residents, highlights the deep-seated inequalities that persist in a supposedly integrated society. It begs the question: why do things seem to improve only when separated?

The narrator himself grapples with the complexities of integration. He desires connection and belonging, yet he also recognizes how integration has failed to deliver on its promises of equality and justice. Marpessa's journey, from embracing her Blackness to seeking success in the white world, reflects the conflicting pressures and desires that many Black individuals face in navigating a society that claims to value integration while perpetuating inequality. "Integration is not a gift bestowed upon the oppressed by the benevolent but the necessary element for the survival of the whole" (Beatty 98). This quote, delivered by the narrator's father during a mock trial, encapsulates the novel's subtle perspective on integration. It's not simply about Black people being "allowed" into white spaces; it's about recognising the interconnectedness of society and how true progress requires a dismantling of systemic barriers, not just superficial gestures of inclusion.

In Gurnah's second novel, *Pilgrims Way*, published a year after his first, the story follows Daud, an African immigrant living in Canterbury, England. The plot centres on Daud's complicated romantic relationship with Catherine, a white woman, as he deals with the painful memories of traumatic events in his African homeland that led him to flee to England. Seeking to leave his past behind, Daud instead encounters new challenges in a foreign country, experiencing isolation in a society marked by hostility (Zamboanga et al.). The novel represents Gurnah's examination of themes such as racism and migration, exploring the difficult realities faced by individuals navigating an unfamiliar cultural environment. Isabel Quigly's review emphasizes the novel's shocking portrayal of British racism. Andrew Sinclair, writing for The Times, praises Gurnah's writing style, noting "Mr Gurnah has a wry humour that is pungent and acerbic, sparing no assumption." Sinclair highlights Gurnah's ability to confront ". . . exaggerated black militancy as to illiterate white

hooliganism." Regarding the character Daud, Sinclair notes, "… Daud is not marginal or weak as so many, English comic heroes are. He is both defiant and deprecatory: his sting is sharper than his sneer."

Pilgrims Way by Abdulrazak Gurnah delves into the theme of cultural assimilation through the story of Daud, an immigrant from Tanzania living in England in the 1970s. Daud faces racism and discrimination while working as an orderly in Canterbury, which leaves him feeling fearful and disheartened (Raeff et al.). Named after the biblical David, Daud gradually learns to integrate into his new surroundings and forms a romantic connection with Catherine, a young woman who becomes enamoured with him. The novel examines the struggles of adapting to a different culture and the toll that racism and prejudice can take on an individual's mental and emotional state (Gurnah). Daud exhibits only minor pangs of nostalgia for Eastern Africa and shows little desire to return:

With what relish he would then recall the hypnotic throbbing of the jungle drums and the scratchings of the shrill cicadas in the tropical night. How fulfilling would seem those endless, dreary afternoons in a tropical hell-hole, where men were still men and knew the potency of rank and power. The main character in *Pilgrims Way* experiences mixed feelings towards his new life in England. While he values the opportunities and freedoms of living in a Western nation, he remains connected to his Zanzibari roots and feels a sense of displacement. This ambivalence underscores the complexity of the migrant journey, where individuals often grapple with conflicting cultures, identities, and loyalties (117).

The protagonist's migration from Zanzibar to England in *Pilgrims Way* symbolizes the migrant experience, touching on themes such as cultural displacement, language barriers, homesickness, identity development, and ultimately, personal growth. The novel portrays the

obstacles and joys of leaving one's homeland to start afresh in a foreign land, while also emphasizing the intricate nature of the immigrant narrative.

Transplanted from Zanzibar to a cold and often hostile England, Daud faces the constant pressure to assimilate. He encounters racism, cultural misunderstandings, and the expectation to shed his Zanzibari identity to fit in. This pressure is particularly evident in his interactions with racist colleagues and the subtle ways he's expected to downplay his cultural background. Gurnah subtly portrays how the dominant culture can be alluring, even for those who are marginalized by it. Daud observes his friend, Lloyd, who embodies a particular type of working-class Englishness and grapples with his feelings of inadequacy and desire to belong. One of the most poignant ways Gurnah depicts the cost of assimilation is through the gradual loss of Daud's connection to his mother tongue and Zanzibari traditions. As he spends more time in England, he finds it increasingly difficult to communicate with his father, symbolizing a growing distance not just geographically but also culturally.

The novel depicts how the material possessions and lifestyle associated with the dominant culture can be attractive to those who are marginalized. Characters may be drawn to the perceived wealth, comfort, and opportunities offered by the dominant society. This allure can be particularly strong for those who come from less privileged backgrounds. The dominant culture often represents social status and acceptance, which can be appealing to those who feel excluded or marginalized. Characters may seek to assimilate into the dominant culture to gain social acceptance and avoid discrimination (Debnath and Chatterjee). This desire for belonging can be a powerful motivator, even if it means compromising one's cultural identity.

The dominant culture often controls the media and representation, shaping perceptions of what is desirable and acceptable. Characters may be influenced by these

portrayals, internalising the values and aspirations of the dominant culture. The novel subtly explores how media and representation can contribute to the allure of the dominant culture, even for those who are marginalised by it (Fishman). The dominant culture often offers access to education and opportunities that may not be available to marginalized communities. Characters may be drawn to the dominant culture in pursuit of these opportunities, seeking to improve their social and economic standing. This desire for advancement can be a strong motivator for assimilation.

The novel explores how romantic relationships can be a pathway to assimilation into the dominant culture. Characters are drawn to individuals from the dominant culture, seeking acceptance and belonging through these relationships. These relationships can be complex and fraught with tensions, as individuals navigate cultural differences and power dynamics. Through these subtle portrayals, Gurnah reveals how the dominant culture can exert a powerful pull on marginalised individuals, even as it simultaneously marginalizes them. The novel highlights the complexities of cultural adaptation and the often-conflicting desires for belonging, identity, and opportunity (Lindsey et al.).

Daud internalizes the prevailing view of colonialism that positions Zanzibari culture as inferior. He feels a sense of shame about his upbringing and struggles to reconcile his past with his present, further complicating his sense of self. While Daud grapples with the pressures of assimilation, his relationship with Catherine, an English nurse, offers a glimpse into the possibility of connection and understanding across cultural divides. However, even this relationship is fraught with challenges, as their different backgrounds and perspectives sometimes lead to misunderstandings and tensions. Despite the prevalence of racism and isolation, Daud finds solace and a sense of belonging in the small community of immigrants in Canterbury. These connections, though imperfect, provide him with a space to share

experiences, preserve cultural traditions, and resist the complete erasure of his Zanzibari identity. "He spoke English well enough now, but he knew he would never speak it like them, without that slight hesitation, that careful articulation which marked him out" (Gurnah 117). This quote encapsulates the struggle for belonging that defines Daud's experience. Despite his efforts to assimilate, he remains aware of the subtle ways in which his accent and mannerisms mark him as different, highlighting the enduring barriers to true integration.

Pilgrims Way offers a melancholic exploration of assimilation, revealing its complexities and the high cost it can exact on individual identity and a sense of belonging. Gurnah reminds us that assimilation is not a simple equation of fitting in; it's a process fraught with compromises, internal conflicts, and the constant negotiation of one's sense of self in a new and often unwelcoming world.

Gurnah doesn't shy away from depicting the harsh realities faced by immigrants like Daud in 1970s England. He encounters overt racism, subtle prejudice, and systemic barriers that limit his opportunities and reinforce his status as an outsider. This underscores the idea that true integration cannot occur without addressing the root causes of inequality (Raitis et al.). Integration in *Pilgrims Way*, Daud encounters individuals who show him kindness and acceptance, such as Catherine and some members of the immigrant community, these moments are often overshadowed by the pervasive sense of otherness that he experiences. Gurnah suggests that integration cannot be achieved through individual acts of goodwill alone; it requires a societal shift in attitudes and structures. Language becomes a significant barrier to integration in the novel. Daud's gradual loss of fluency in Swahili, coupled with the challenges of fully grasping the nuances of English culture, creates a sense of distance between him and both his Zanzibari heritage and his adopted home.

Gurnah highlights the complexities of maintaining one's cultural identity while also adapting to a new environment. Daud grapples with the expectations of English society, sometimes feeling pressured to conform, while also trying to hold onto the values and traditions that are important to him. Despite the challenges of integration, Daud finds solace and a sense of belonging in the small community of immigrants in Canterbury. This community, though far from perfect, provides a space for shared experiences, cultural preservation, and mutual support in the face of adversity. Throughout the novel, Daud grapples with the question of where he truly belongs. Is it Zanzibar, a place he can no longer fully connect with, or England, a country that often feels cold and unwelcoming? Gurnah suggests that integration is not about erasing one's past but about finding a way to bridge different parts of oneself and create a sense of belonging in the present. "He lived in the spaces between things, in the silences that followed his awkward pronouncements" (Gurnah 63).

This poignant observation about Daud captures the sense of displacement and the struggle for belonging that often accompanies the experience of integration. He exists in a liminal space, never fully comfortable or at ease, highlighting the ongoing negotiation and compromise that integration demands. *Pilgrims Way* offers a perspective on integration. Gurnah acknowledges the systemic barriers and personal challenges that make true integration elusive, yet he also suggests that finding a sense of belonging is an ongoing process, one that requires resilience, a willingness to bridge cultural divides, and the creation of communities of support and understanding.

Daud and Unnamed Narrator, both accept the necessity of assimilation but struggle with its cost. Seeks belonging but encounters systemic barriers. Rejects integration as a flawed concept. Employs satire and extreme measures to expose its failures. Tied to his Zanzibari heritage but experiences a gradual erosion of language and cultural connection.

Feels the weight of colonial legacies. Rooted in his Blackness but disillusioned by the limitations of a society that claims to value equality. Adopts a satirical persona to critique racial dynamics (Museus and Jayakumar). Both the characters endure subtle and overt racism with a mix of resignation and quiet resistance. Finds solace in the immigrant community. Confronts racism head-on through satire, provocation, and a social experiment that exposes hypocrisy. They are haunted by a sense of displacement and the loss of their homeland. Seeks to reconcile his past with his present. Informed by a legacy of racial injustice but seeks to rewrite the narrative on his terms. Uses history as a tool for social commentary. They yearn for connection and acceptance but often feel like an outsider. Finds moments of belonging in unexpected places. Questions the very notion of belonging in a society built on inequality. Creates his sense of community through satire and subversion.

While Daud and the unnamed narrator occupy vastly different fictional worlds, their journeys offer a powerful commentary on the complexities of race, identity, and belonging in societies grappling with the legacies of colonialism and racial injustice. Daud embodies the quiet struggles of many immigrants navigating cultural differences and systemic barriers. In contrast, the unnamed narrator explores the very notion of integration, using satire to expose its limitations and demand a more radical reimagining of social structures. Despite their contrasting approaches, both characters highlight the enduring human need for belonging, the complexities of identity formation in the face of oppression, and the ongoing struggle for equality in a world where true integration remains elusive.

Through their contrasting approaches, *The Sellout* and *Pilgrims Way* offer powerful social commentaries on the complexities of assimilation and integration in contemporary society. *The Sellout* satirical lens exposes the absurdity of racial classifications and the enduring legacy of discrimination, while *Pilgrims Way* offers a more nuanced exploration of the challenges faced by immigrants navigating new cultural landscapes. Taken together, these

novels provide valuable insights into the ongoing struggles for identity, belonging, and social justice in a world grappling with issues of cultural diversity and social inequality.

Despite the challenges they face, the characters in both *The Sellout* and *Pilgrims Way* demonstrate agency in navigating their respective journeys of assimilation and integration. Whether through acts of rebellion and subversion, as in *The Sellout*, or through the quiet resilience of maintaining cultural ties while forging new connections, as in *Pilgrims Way*, these characters demonstrate the human capacity to shape their own identities and find meaning in complex and often-turbulent circumstances. Their stories serve as a testament to the enduring human spirit and the ongoing pursuit of belonging in an increasingly interconnected world.

Conclusion

The comparative study of the novels of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah sheds light on the complex dynamics of acculturation and assimilation. Through the analysis of their works, it is evident that both authors skillfully depict the challenges and nuances of acculturation, illustrating the impact on individuals and communities. By delving into the themes of identity, displacement, and the clash of cultures, Beatty and Gurnah offer compelling insights into the human experience within the context of cultural change and adaptation. Their narratives provide valuable perspectives on the intricacies of acculturation, and their nuanced portrayal serves as a reflection of the broader societal dynamics at play (Hong et al.). This comparative study not only highlights the literary prowess of Beatty and Gurnah but also offers a deeper understanding of the complexities and consequences of acculturation in a rapidly changing global landscape. Upon further exploration of Beatty and Gurnah's novels, it becomes apparent that their depictions of acculturation extend beyond individual experiences to encompass broader societal implications. The characters in their works are not mere representatives of personal struggle but also embody the larger societal shifts that accompany the process of cultural assimilation. Through their narratives, Beatty and Gurnah paint a vivid picture of the intricate webs of power, privilege, and marginalization that shape the acculturation experience (McAllister and Irvine).

This comparative analysis of acculturation in the works of Gurnah and Beatty highlights that identity is shaped through cultural interactions and power dynamics. Utilizing Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, the study demonstrates how both authors portray acculturation as a fluid and often unsettling experience that defies simple assimilation. Gurnah's narratives are rich in historical context and emotional depth, showcasing characters who confront the effects of colonial disruption and displacement. In *Paradise*, Yusuf's journey illustrates a hybrid existence caught between tradition and colonial influence, while *Desertion* and P*ilgrims*

Way explore the personal and communal rifts within East African and diasporic identities, characterized by feelings of longing and alienation. In contrast, Beatty employs sharp satire to critique acculturation in multicultural America. His works, ranging from the absurd reworking of racial norms in *The Sellout* to the cultural confusion experienced by Gunnar Kaufman in *The White Boy Shuffle* and the expatriate uncertainty in *Slumberland*, feature characters navigating hybrid identities that challenge societal norms.

Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony enhances this analysis by revealing the underlying power structures that influence acculturative experiences. In Gurnah's narratives, hegemony appears as a subtle yet powerful force—colonial power in *Paradise* shapes social hierarchies, while in *Desertion* and *Pilgrims Way*, it persists in the cultural memories and relationships of postcolonial societies, prompting both compliance and quiet resistance. In contrast, Beatty directly confronts hegemony with irreverence. In *The Sellout*, the protagonist's radical rethinking of segregation dismantles the illusion of a post-racial society, while *White Boy Shuffle* and *Slumberland* reveal the coercive standards of racial identity in America, employing humour to reveal the consent that sustains cultural dominance. Together, these perspectives illustrate acculturation as an active site of conflict, creativity, and resistance, rather than merely a process of adaptation.

The distinct styles of Gurnah and Beatty enrich this exploration. Gurnah's lyrical prose, imbued with historical detail, invites readers to witness the gradual disintegration of identity amid colonial and postcolonial turmoil, emphasizing the emotional significance of hybridity. In contrast, Beatty's vibrant satire dismantles cultural myths with humour and provocation, transforming hybridity into a weapon against hegemonic absurdity. This contrast—Gurnah's reflective seriousness versus Beatty's subversive wit—illuminates the diverse experiences of acculturation and resistance, from East Africa to America. Ultimately, both authors converge

on a shared understanding: hybridity, shaped by encounters with power, challenges authority and redefines the concept of belonging.

By integrating Bhabha's concept of hybridity with Gramsci's notion of hegemony, this research establishes a nuanced methodological framework for examining acculturation in literature. This dual approach effectively captures the dynamics of cultural blending and power struggles, providing a model that can be applied to other comparative literary analyses, particularly those focused on postcolonial and diasporic themes.

As we delve deeper into their respective novels, it is witnessed that Beatty and Gurnah's exploration of acculturation serves as a mirror reflecting the intersections of race, class, and power dynamics within society. Their storytelling not only captures the individual struggles of their characters but also offers a profound commentary on the broader societal paradigms at play, shedding light on the complexities of cultural adaptation and its far-reaching consequences. negotiating their identities within a changing cultural landscape.

In the novels by Abdulrazak Gurnah, the characters are portrayed as individuals grappling with the challenges of acculturation and negotiating their identities within a changing cultural landscape (Bhatia and Ram). They navigate the complexities of diaspora, seeking to balance their cultural heritage with the influences and expectations of their new environment. Through the examination of these characters, it becomes evident that acculturation is a deeply personal and transformative experience. In Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels, *Paradise*, *Pilgrims Way* and *Desertion*, the characters vividly portray the reflection of acculturation through their nuanced experiences and identity negotiations. Gurnah portrays the complexities of cultural assimilation, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of acculturation and its profound effects on individuals and communities (Hong et al.).

The characters in *Paradise* navigate the intersections of cultural change and adaptation, grappling with the tensions between tradition and modernity as they strive to carve out a sense of belonging in a rapidly transforming world. Their experiences mirror the psychological and emotional turmoil of acculturation, offering a poignant portrayal of the quest for self-discovery amidst shifting cultural landscapes. Similarly, in *Pilgrims Way*, Gurnah's characters confront the challenges of assimilating into unfamiliar cultural contexts, contending with the pressures of fitting into a new societal framework while grappling with the preservation of their cultural heritage. The novel skillfully portrays the resilience and agency of individuals as they navigate the complexities of cultural assimilation, illuminating the profound psychosocial effects of acculturation on their sense of self and belonging (Chen et al). Furthermore, *Desertion* delves into the impact of historical and colonial legacies on the characters' experiences of cultural adaptation, highlighting the enduring legacy of colonialism and the persistent struggles for autonomy and cultural preservation. Gurnah significantly captures the intergenerational trauma and resilience of communities, offering a poignant commentary on the far-reaching consequences of historical forces on contemporary acculturation experiences.

Shifting the focus to Paul Beatty's novels, *The Sellout*, *The White Boy Shuffle*, and *Slumberland* also represents the process of acculturation and assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation. Through the characters' experiences in these novels, Beatty illuminates the multifaceted nature of cultural adaptation and its impact on individual and collective identities (Gobel et al). In *The Sellout*, Beatty provocatively explores the complexities of assimilating into a society that perpetuates systemic racism and marginalisation. The protagonist's navigation of cultural assimilation highlights the power dynamics at play, as he grapples with the imposition of dominant cultural norms and the erasure of his own identity and traditions. The novel serves as a profound commentary on the enduring legacy of colonialism and its impact on contemporary experiences of cultural adaptation within

the context of American society. Similarly, *The White Boy Shuffle* delves into the process of integration and assimilation, as the protagonist navigates the complexities of being a black man in America while confronting the pressures of societal expectations. Beatty's portrayal captures the psychosocial effects of acculturation and reflects the protagonist's internal struggles and identity negotiation as he seeks to reconcile conflicting aspects of his identity within a predominantly white cultural landscape (Ferguson and Bornstein). Finally, *Slumberland* offers a unique perspective on the process of separation and marginalization, as the protagonist immerses himself in the intricacies of German culture while grappling with his sense of belonging and self-worth. Beatty skillfully delves into the existential dilemmas faced by the protagonist, offering poignant insights into the human experience of cultural adaptation and the quest for self-discovery amidst the dynamics of acculturation ("In Conversation With Paul Beatty of the US Census Bureau").

Furthermore, a deep exploration of the psychosocial effects of acculturation is warranted in understanding the internal struggles and identity negotiations depicted in Beatty and Gurnah's works (Mills et al). The psychological toll of navigating multiple cultural influences, confronting prejudices, and reconciling conflicting aspects of one's identity is a central theme that permeates their narratives.

The psychological dimensions of acculturation encompass the internal conflicts, anxieties, and existential dilemmas faced by the characters as they navigate the complexities of cultural adaptation. The authors skillfully delve into the emotional turmoil and cognitive dissonance experienced by individuals caught between the pull of tradition and the pressures of assimilation (McAllister and Irvine). Their works offer poignant insights into the human experience of grappling with questions of belonging, authenticity, and self-worth amid cultural change and societal expectations.

The novels of Beatty and Gurnah invite readers to contemplate the profound psychological impact of acculturation on individuals, elucidating the intricate layers of identity negotiation and the quest for self-discovery within the context of cultural assimilation. The incorporation of historical context, psychosocial effects, and theoretical frameworks within the analysis of Beatty and Gurnah's novels enriches our understanding of the intricate dynamics of acculturation. Their narratives transcend the individual and familial dimensions of cultural adaptation, offering profound insights into the far-reaching consequences of cultural assimilation within the broader societal and historical context (Nunn).

In exploring acculturation within the novels of Paul Beatty and Abdulrazak Gurnah, it is imperative to acknowledge the theoretical frameworks of Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity and Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony. Bhabha's notion of hybridity provides a lens through which to understand the fluid and dynamic nature of cultural identity within the context of acculturation (Marmodoro). The interplay of different cultural elements and the emergence of new, hybrid forms of expression can be seen in the characters' negotiations of their identities in response to cultural assimilation.

Furthermore, Gramsci's concept of hegemony offers a critical perspective on the power dynamics at play in the process of acculturation (Williams and Gilbert). The novels of Beatty and Gurnah illustrate how dominant cultural forces impose their values and norms on marginalized communities, shaping their experiences of assimilation and resistance (Paradies). Gramsci's framework allows for an examination of the broader societal power structures that influence the acculturation process, shedding light on the complexities of cultural dominance and subordination.

By integrating the concepts of Bhabha and Gramsci into the analysis of Beatty and Gurnah's novels, we gain a deeper understanding of the intersections of culture, power, and

agency within the dynamics of acculturation. These theoretical frameworks enrich the comparative study by providing a comprehensive lens through which to explore the complexities and consequences of cultural adaptation, offering a significant understanding of the character's struggles and the broader societal implications of acculturation (Tonui and Mitschke). Their works not only offer a deep understanding of the psychological and emotional impact of acculturation on individuals but also provide profound insights into the systemic and structural dimensions of cultural assimilation. In addition to the theoretical frameworks of Bhabha and Gramsci, it is essential to consider the historical context and colonial legacies that permeate the novels of Beatty and Gurnah. The process of acculturation depicted in their works cannot be fully comprehended without an examination of the historical forces that have shaped the cultural landscapes within which their characters exist.

The lasting effects of colonialism, imperialism and globalization play a fundamental role, in grasping the process of acculturation. The authors skillfully incorporate these elements into their stories depicting the prolonged impacts of colonial rule and the ongoing battles for independence and preservation of cultural identity. The generational trauma and strength displayed by communities, in confronting powers bring a rich complexity to the character's journeys of adapting to new cultures.

The findings illuminate acculturation as a universal yet context-specific phenomenon, bridging Gurnah's East African diaspora with Beatty's African American experience. This comparative lens reveals how hybridity and hegemony shape identity across geographies and histories, offering timely reflections on migration, multiculturalism, and power in today's world.

Moreover, the examination of historical context allows for a deeper understanding of the power dynamics at play in the process of cultural assimilation. The exploitation and

subjugation of colonized peoples, the imposition of dominant cultural norms, and the erasure of indigenous traditions are recurrent themes that underscore the character's negotiations of identity and belonging. By delving into the historical dimensions of acculturation, Beatty and Gurnah's novels offer a profound commentary on the enduring legacy of colonialism and its impact on contemporary experiences of cultural adaptation.

In essence, the comparative study of Beatty and Gurnah's novels unveils a profound understanding of the intricacies of acculturation, highlighting its relevance in understanding the evolving dynamics of cultures and communities in a globalized world. Upon further exploration, it is evident that both Beatty's and Gurnah's novels provide a deep understanding of the psychological and emotional impact of acculturation on individuals. Through their skilful portrayal of characters navigating the complexities of cultural change, the authors offer a rich and nuanced perspective on the internal conflicts and dilemmas that arise in the process of assimilation. The narratives go beyond surface-level examinations and delve into the intricate layers of identity negotiation, belonging, and the quest for self-discovery within the context of cultural adaptation.

Gurnah and Beatty, through their distinct literary styles, enrich our understanding of the struggle for identity, belonging, and self-expression in a world marked by cultural diversity and historical power imbalances. Their characters often inhabit spaces between cultures, embodying Bhabha's concept of hybridity. This highlights the fluidity and complexity of identity formation in a globalised world, challenging simplistic notions of cultural purity or fixed belonging. Gurnah and Beatty delve into the psychological and emotional consequences of marginalisation, showing how historical power imbalances affect individuals' sense of self and their ability to express themselves authentically (Gurnah) (Sindu 105-16).

Moreover, the comparative analysis also reveals how the authors utilise language, symbolism, and narrative structure to convey the multifaceted nature of acculturation. Beatty's use of satire and humor, and Gurnah's lyricism and poignancy, add layers of complexity to their portrayal of acculturation, making their works a rich tapestry of human experience. These novels highlight the importance of intercultural understanding and dialogue in navigating the challenges of acculturation (Geva-May et al.). They remind us that while acculturation can be a transformative process, it is important to approach it with sensitivity and empathy for the diverse experiences and perspectives of those going through it. By examining the novels of Beatty and Gurnah, we gain insight into the complexities of acculturation and its impact on individuals and communities (Simmons and Smith).

The distinct stylistic approaches of Gurnah and Beatty enhance this exploration. Gurnah's elegiac prose, rich in historical significance, invites readers into the gradual unravelling of identity amid the colonial and postcolonial upheaval, emphasising the emotional weight of hybridity. In contrast, Beatty's frenetic satire dismantles cultural myths with wit and provocation, transforming hybridity into a weapon against hegemonic absurdity. This juxtaposition of Gurnah's introspective gravity versus Beatty's subversive levity highlights the diverse ways in which acculturation is experienced and resisted, from the shores of East Africa to the streets of America. Ultimately, their works converge on a shared insight: hybridity, forged in the crucible of hegemonic encounters, presents both a challenge to power and a redefinition of belonging.

Additionally, the novels, by Beatty and Gurnah provide an examination of how cultural values and traditions are passed down through generations. They explore how adapting to a culture impacts family dynamics and influences the passing on of heritage over time. Through their exploration of these topics, the authors shed light on how people and

communities navigate the balance between holding onto their identities and adapting to the demands of assimilation, integration, and marginalisation in an evolving society (Levings). Comparing the works of Beatty and Gurnah essentially enables us to better understand the process of acculturation as well as opens up a whole new realm on what goes inside personal, familial or societal factors within cultural transitions. These novels reflect various aspects of the human experience when it comes to acculturation and offer readers a chance for self-reflection on what it means that legacy(s) like assimilation have on individuals as well as other communities in the larger global environment.

Despite their contrasting approaches, both authors highlight the enduring human need for belonging, the complexities of identity formation in the face of oppression, and the ongoing struggle for equality in a world where true integration remains elusive. Beatty and Gurnah challenge us to move beyond simplistic notions of acculturation, urging a critical examination of the power dynamics that shape individual and collective experiences. Their novels serve as a powerful reminder that achieving a just and equitable society requires not just the accommodation of difference, but a fundamental transformation of the systems perpetuating inequality.

Gurnah and Beatty, through their distinct literary styles and narrative strategies, offer compelling explorations of the human experience within the context of postcolonial societies and racialised identities. This thesis has analysed how these authors employ satire, irony, and subtle character development to expose the workings of Gramscian hegemony and the complexities of Bhabha's hybridity. By examining the characters' diverse acculturation strategies, as outlined by Berry, this study has revealed the profound psychological and social impact of cultural adaptation and resistance. Ultimately, the works of Gurnah and Beatty provide a deeper understanding of the ongoing negotiation of identity, belonging, and self-

expression in a world characterised by cultural heterogeneity and the enduring legacies of historical power imbalances. By juxtaposing Beatty's provocative, contemporary American voice with Gurnah's elegiac, historically rooted perspective, this study highlights the universality and particularity of acculturation. While Beatty engages with the absurdities of race and identity in a postcolonial superpower, Gurnah reflects on the lingering echoes of empire in the margins of the Global South. Together, their works affirm that hybridity is not merely a byproduct of cultural contact but a dynamic force that disrupts hegemonic narratives and reconfigures belonging.

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LIST OF PUBLICATION

SCOPUS (Research Paper)

Title: Library Progress International The Necropolitical Order: Indigenous Marginality and Sovereign Power in Settler Colonialism.

CONFERENCES

- 1st International Conference on English Language, Literature and Culture, December 2022

- Cluster University of Jammu, School of Humanities and Liberal Arts, Department of Linguistics and Literature. Three-Day International Conference on Language, Literature and Folklore (ICOLLAF) 2023

- Two Days National Seminar on Roadmap for Revamping Higher Education Through NEP – 2020. Organised by the School of Teacher Education in collaboration with the Government College of Education, Jammu 2025