The Portrayal of Migrants and Liminality in Nadifa Mohamed's *Black Mamba Boy*, *The Orchard of Lost Souls* and *The Fortune Men*

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the characters in Nadifa Mohamed's oeuvre exhibit both vulnerability and agency and that their position in society oscillates as if between two poles, as they cross social and spatial boundaries. There is no existing scholarly research that focuses on child migrants in Mohamed's texts specifically. Here, *Black Mamba Boy*, *The Orchard of Lost Souls* and *The Fortune Men* are analysed and compared with a central focus on the child migrant characters to examine her portrayal of conflict-induced migration and its impact on vulnerable communities.

In *Black Mamba Boy*, Mohamed portrays Jama's exilic journey where he leaves his homeland of Hargeisa and migrates across territorial borders in Northeast Africa to find his father. His quest brings him from Somaliland to Sudan as he walks through countries that are devastated by the war between the British and Italian colonial forces in the 1930s. As Jama attempts to cross the spatial distance between himself and his father he also treads the invisible line between life and death. Along his journey, Jama is exploited and abused by colonial troops and traumatised by the conflict he witnesses. Mohamed revisits her father's precarious journey not to portray him as a victim but to make him "a hero, not the fighting or romantic kind but the real deal, the starved child who survives every sling and arrow that shameless fortune throws at them" (1). Thus, the text is an account of Jama's strength as he miraculously survives the brutalities of war. Similarly, in *The Orchard of Lost Souls*, the child protagonist, Deqo, is a refugee with parents. She internally migrates through Hargeisa at the moment the region breaks out into the Somali Civil War. Deqo attempts to keep herself out of harm's way as the town is destroyed by soldiers and rebel groups who have opened fire against civilians. As a female child migrant Deqo occupies a particularly vulnerable position as she navigates a space where gender-based violence is used as a method of war. Despite the dangers around her, Deqo actively seeks out safety and a path that will free her from the tightening grip of the war. *The Fortune Men* depicts Mahmood's journey of migration as an adult. When he attempts to cross the border into Wales he is ostracised, abused, and dehumanised because of his difference. Jama and Deqo's exilic journeys are compared to Mahmood's unsuccessful migration and the children cross borders that adults cannot cross because they use their vulnerability to seek out opportunities and change their environment. This thesis is situated within the theoretical framework of transnational and diasporic literature with a specific focus on the impact of forced migration on child migrants. Through close engagement and comparison of the three primary

texts mentioned, this thesis demonstrates the vulnerabilities and fluctuating agencies of characters to highlight their liminal positioning.

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NOTES TO THE READER

This thesis and the list of works cited have been formatted according to the Rhodes University Department of Literary Studies in English's Style Sheet for Writers of MA and PhD Theses. The sheet is available at https://www.ru.ac.za/english/coursematerials, under the section titled "MA and PhD Style Sheet 2021."

While I have used UK English as the proofing language, I have retained US English spellings in direct quotes.

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INTRODUCTION

My interest in child migrants started by chance in the second year of my undergraduate degree at Rhodes University. As an English Literature and Geography major, I had a growing curiosity about transnational literature and migration studies. In our Geography lectures, we examined case studies about war and displacement in central Africa. What caught my attention were the ways that conflict placed women and children in a particularly precarious position. These communities encountered abuse from various fronts including their homeland, diasporic home, and the public *and* private domain. Through an analysis of case studies across the African continent, we explored how violence against the bodies of women and children is a strategic method of war. As a consequence of patriarchal authority and the objectification of women, gender-based violence is a tool used to assert ownership over a particular territory or community. For the most part, Human Geography delineated the quantitative information, the shocking numbers of displacement and the death of thousands of civilians. Alongside this, the class read through interviews that were conducted with traumatised women and children who had been asked to recall instances of abuse, loss, and the devastation of their homelands. As a result of the trauma the participants had experienced they appeared numb and withdrawn from the telling of their personal stories of abuse and displacement.

After the Geography lecture, I would then, quite literally, turn on my heel to an English lecture where the class was introduced to the field of transnational literature. The class examined diaspora and migration with a particular focus on themes such as home, belonging, and cultural hybridity. Moreover, as the class unpacked the literature, I came to appreciate the transformative value of transnational literary texts that transport the reader into the minds of characters who are split between their homeland and diasporic home. Thus, the texts allowed for an in-depth analysis of the impact of migration on the characters' identities. Moreover, I was drawn to literary texts that were set within the context of war and portrayed real-life events of vulnerable groups in Africa. The characters lost their homes, families, and all forms of social and spatial structures of support due to conflict in their homelands. In reading these texts, I began to question if children can develop, both physically and psychologically, in times of social and political instability, upheaval and abrupt change. This question is what motivated me to write this thesis.

According to a study by the World Health Organisation in 2022 out of the 84 million forcibly displaced international migrants in the world today, "35 million are children and 1

million were born into refugee life" (para. 2). The exorbitant number of displaced child migrants is particularly problematic because

> refugee and migrant children, especially unaccompanied minors, are more likely to experience traumatic events and stressful situations, such as exploitation and abuse, and may struggle to access health care. (para. 20)

Conflict forces children from their homelands and transnational writers highlight the challenges they face. Therefore, it is important to study transnational literary texts that focus on the lives of forcibly displaced child migrants because the texts function as a form of activism. Accordingly, writers use literature to bring awareness to the atrocities and human rights abuses that vulnerable groups experience. Further, literary texts that are based on real-life events elucidate the experiences of minority groups where instances of oppression and abuse are silenced and go unreported in the media. Additionally, the texts serve an important role in minimising the distance between the reader and the characters in the texts. The reader follows the children's precarious journeys through volatile social and spatial terrains which helps them to identify with the character and the challenges that child migrants come up against. These stories, which may be far away from the reader in terms of spatial distance or personal experience, are quite literally brought home.

This thesis will examine literary texts that delineate the impact of war on vulnerable communities in Africa with a particular focus on the figure of the child. More specifically, Nadifa Mohamed's transnational literary texts will be analysed to bring three characters' personal stories of migration into focus. *Black Mamba Boy* (2010), *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013) and *The Fortune Men* (2021) portray the lives of characters who are displaced by famine, civil unrest, and colonization in the Horn of Africa. In discussing the figure of the child more generally, and in a different context, Lee Edelman (2004) describes the symbolic significance of the child and its influence on the perception of politics. When a child, who represents vulnerability, innocence, and the future of the nation is situated within a political context, then politics is analysed from a different lens. In each of the aforementioned texts, Mohamed uses the figure of the child as a tool for political exploration. Specifically, Mohamed employs child characters to delve into the intricate dynamics of war, displacement, and migration, thereby underscoring the profound implications these experiences hold for the most vulnerable members of society. Thus, the principal aim of this thesis is to describe the impact of conflict-induced migration on child characters through close readings and a comparative analysis of the content and form of Mohamed's oeuvre.

Using the genre of creative non-fiction, Mohamed brings awareness to the characters' stories that are set within pivotal moments in Somalia's history of colonisation and civil unrest. She interweaves fictional elements with non-fiction writing to explore the impact of forced displacement on the characters' identities. Moreover, the child migrant characters are particularly vulnerable in times of war because they are targets of abuse. Yet, through the strategic use of storytelling techniques, Mohamed outlines the complexities within the characters' experiences of migration. Jama, Deqo and Mahmood focalise their journeys and it becomes increasingly evident that they have complex, shifting positionings. They are not passive, inactive victims of war nor are they triumphant heroes. Mohamed pays homage to the children who survived violence in the colonial era and civil war. Thus, the texts outline children's ability to continue in the face of extraordinary acts of violence where, despite the trauma they experience, they are driven forward by their powerful will to live.

Therefore, this thesis highlights the complex positioning of the child protagonists who exhibit both vulnerability and agency. There are various moments in the texts when the characters are ostracised, however, in other instances, they seek out opportunities that will positively influence their diasporic journeys. As such, the concept of liminality is used to highlight the characters' shifting positionings which are exacerbated when they cross spatial borders. Moreover, each chapter examines how factors such as age, gender, race, and social class affect the characters' experiences in the diasporic space. The way that these factors differentiate the characters' journeys and impact the permeability of borders is highlighted through a comparison between *Black Mamba Boy*, *The Orchard of Lost Souls* and The *Fortune Men*. Overall, the thesis demonstrates the intricacies and complexities within each character's personal story of migration.

Jama, Deqo and Mahmood leave their homelands to embark on journeys of survival and self-discovery. When the child migrant characters cross borders in times of war they rapidly oscillate between states of extreme vulnerability and agency because war and displacement exacerbate their unstable positioning. They cross borders in precarious conditions and there are instances when they depend on the hospitality of the host nation for their survival. Correspondingly, the characters' vulnerability leads to discrimination and the tightening of borders. They are abandoned, ostracised, and abused by members of the host nation because they are unable to protect themselves. Furthermore, Jama and Deqo are refugees adding another layer to their vulnerability because there are no social or political structures in the diasporic space that help to enforce their protection.

In other instances, however, the child migrant characters' evident vulnerability elicits compassion from the host. Indeed, the child protagonists use their vulnerability to change their circumstances and actively seek out opportunities to enhance their chances of survival. By outlining the cases when the characters exhibit agency and strength, this thesis rejects the narrative that child migrants are passive victims of the war. Each chapter will explore the instances when the characters oscillate between vulnerability and agency to elucidate the conditions that cause these shifts in their social positioning. An in-depth analysis of the characters' mobility will delineate how power structures position children and restrict their movement through space. Of particular interest is Mohamed's portrayal of the children's adaptive strength and agency as they intentionally subvert and resist dominant cultures when they forge their own paths and attempt to cross both visible and invisible borders.

Mohamed outlines the shifting agencies and vulnerabilities of children to challenge the notion that child migrants are mere victims of war. In an attempt to categorise child migrants, there is a risk of essentializing their experience which denies their journeys of resistance, strength and resilience. Through a close analysis of the primary texts, the thesis will argue that Mohamed portrays the characters as liminal subjects. Jama, Deqo and Mahmood's identities are fluid and ever-shifting as they adapt to changes in their external environment.

Chapter One: Introducing the Argument, Context, and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This thesis analyses Nadifa Mohamed's portrayal of the effects of conflict-induced migration on the characters in *Black Mamba Boy*, *The Orchard of Lost Souls* and *The Fortune Men*. The thesis argues that these characters are liminal subjects and that border-crossing exacerbates their shifting positionalities and complex, hybrid identities. Through a close reading of the primary texts, the ways that forced displacement and factors such as gender, race, social class, and age impact the characters' exilic journeys are examined. The concept of liminality is central to the argument of this thesis. Liminality and the liminal space are explored further in this chapter. For now, the liminal space is defined as a site of transition from one state of being or physical environment to another (Kalua 2009). This notion of transition is evident in the primary texts as the characters cross spatial and social borders when they flee conflict in their homelands.

To emphasise the risks undertaken by the characters when they depart from their homelands, this thesis will now briefly examine the historical context of Somalia. By doing so, the challenging conditions that children face and the bravery they exhibit in leaving their homelands become evident. The primary texts span over four decades of Somalia's history. Therefore, by reading the texts side by side, the reader gains a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between the political, social, and economic factors that perpetuate the ongoing conflict throughout the region. Somalia has a complex social structure that is rooted in kinship ties and traditional clan affiliations. Historically, clan allegiances shaped the distribution of power and resources within the region. This system, while providing a sense of identity and protection for clan members, was also a source of competition and conflict among clans. The conflict between clans was worsened by the colonial rule of Somalia as the British, Italian, and French colonial powers partitioned the region into five parts, disregarding traditional clan boundaries (Atalay, 88). This historical context underscores how political borders have shaped and influenced the conflicts within the region. *Black Mamba Boy*, which spans from 1935 to 1945, outlines the severe impact of colonial rule on the Somali people and the land. The colonial powers exploited the country's resources and denied the Somali people their basic human rights. In *The Fortune Men*, Mahmood's encounter with ideologies of racism in Wales resonates with Somalia's colonial history. Set during the same period as *Black Mamba Boy*,

the text explores how the legacy of colonialism shapes the experiences of migrants who have fled their homeland for Europe. While Somalia gained independence in 1960, economic disparity, competition for resources, and historical grievances destabilised the country and its people. Importantly, the country did not have a single governmental authority which led to a great deal of instability and uncertainty. This created an opportunity for the rise of General Mohamed Said Barre, a military officer, who came to power in a military coup in 1969. Said Barre's regime greatly intensified issues of repression, corruption, and poverty in the region (Atalay, 89). As outlined in *The Orchard of Lost Souls*, which is set from 1987 to 1988 and the start of civil unrest, the text portrays a critical juncture in Somalia's history characterised by widespread displacement and violence against civilians. This period witnessed the resistance of civilians and rebel groups as they confronted the oppressive regime, leading to a tumultuous and volatile socio-political climate within the country. Furthermore, vulnerable communities were targets of violence as women and girls experienced sexual violence and children were forcibly recruited into armed groups. The conflict profoundly disrupted social structures and left vulnerable groups even more marginalised.

In 1991, Said Barre was overthrown which led to a power vacuum leading to a protracted struggle of control between various factions, warlords, and regional entities. The struggle led to the Somali Civil War which spanned from 1991 to 2006. Furthermore, the war was compounded by the economic crisis and famine in the early 1990s. The conflict and drought caused more widespread displacement, the collapse of agricultural systems, and a sharp decline in food production leading to a catastrophic humanitarian crisis (Atalay, 93). It should be noted that Somaliland, a region located in the northern part of Somalia and the homeland of the characters in the primary texts, declared its independence from the rest of Somalia in 1991, following the collapse of the central government. The decision to secede was primarily driven by a desire to escape the prolonged conflict and establish a more stable and peaceful society. Since then, Somaliland has developed its political institutions, including a functioning government, a judiciary system, and security forces. Somalia on the other hand remains deeply impacted by the enduring conflict which hinders economic development and perpetuates high levels of poverty (Atalay, 94). Despite numerous attempts to achieve peace and rebuild the country, the conflict persists. The conflict in Somalia has created a liminal space for Somalis, a space of transition and profound uncertainty. The depiction of Somalia's historical background in the primary texts sheds light on the arduous circumstances faced by the children as they embark on their journeys away from their homelands. The characters are

confronted with an environment characterised by significant instability, requiring them to navigate a precarious realm where the boundary between life and death is blurred.

Jama and Deqo are the child migrant characters in *Black Mamba Boy* and *The Orchard of Lost Souls* respectively. Conversely, Mahmood, who is the protagonist of *The Fortune Men*, is an adult migrant. However, through a series of flashbacks, the text delineates Mahmood's childhood in his homeland and his exilic journey as a child migrant.[1] A similarity between the characters is that they leave their homelands when they are children. Aida Orgocka defines independent child migrants as "children and young people who migrate independently of their immediate family" (2). As such, Jama, Deqo and Mahmood are classified as independent child migrants because they migrate without their immediate families or permanent caretakers. Throughout this thesis, the term 'child migrant' is used to describe characters who cross borders under the age of eighteen. The characters begin their journeys of migration at a very young age: Jama was five, Deqo was nine, and Mahmood was twelve. Despite their youth, they had to navigate extremely dangerous environments without consistent adult care or guidance. As they crossed borders during times of political and social unrest, the child migrant characters were vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They lacked shelter and had no adults to guide them out of the conflict. In some cases, the children even walked directly into the conflict. These circumstances made it difficult for them to find safety and avoid harm. This thesis focuses on the experiences of child migrants who are forced to navigate challenging environments without the guidance and protection of responsible adults. Thus, the dangers and vulnerabilities that child migrants face in times of political and social upheaval are explored. However, despite their precarity, Mohamed does not portray the characters as passive victims of their circumstances[2]. They actively engage with their surroundings and there are occasions when they alter the course of their exilic journeys to better their lives. Therefore, the characters in the texts exhibit both vulnerability and agency. They are liminal subjects because their position in society rapidly oscillates between these poles as they attempt to cross both seen and unseen borders.

[1] Chapter Five will compare Mahmood's memories from his childhood and his life as an adult in the diasporic space. This comparison allows for an in-depth analysis of the effect of age on Mahmood's exilic journey.
[2] The term 'portray' refers to Mohamed's act of depicting an individual or group in literature. It involves capturing the characteristics or attributes of the characters in her texts. The term 'portray' and its resulting 'portrayal' can pose problems in terms of representation. One of the major challenges lies in the potential for misrepresentation or distortion of the subject being portrayed. This can happen due to biases, stereotypes, or incomplete understanding on the author's part leading to inaccurate or unfair representations. This issue of portrayal and misrepresentation is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

As mentioned, the notion of border-crossing is central to the argument of this thesis. Transnational and diaspora studies are interdisciplinary fields of research that analyse border-crossing and its effects. Therefore, this thesis is situated within the fields of transnational and diaspora studies. These fields of study will now be briefly defined and then expanded further on in the thesis. Transnational studies explore the movement and exchange of people, goods, and ideas across national borders. Whereas diaspora studies examine how individuals and social groups establish a sense of identity and belonging in the context of dispersal. Transnational literature explores how border-crossing impacts those who cross national borders and those who stay behind. Diasporic literature portrays the effects of displacement on characters' identities and their sense of belonging. The primary texts share the "theme of displacement and exile from a homeland" (Daswani 40). Accordingly, *Black Mamba Boy*, *The Orchard of Lost Souls* and *The Fortune Men* (hereafter referred to as *Mamba Boy*, *Orchard*, and *Fortune*) are positioned within the fields and literary categories mentioned above because the texts explore the characters' experiences of forced migration and dislocation.

Thus far, Chapter One has introduced the central argument of the thesis. Through a close engagement and comparison between the primary texts, it will be argued that the child protagonists are liminal subjects. The relevant fields of study and literary categories have been briefly outlined. The fields of transnationalism and diaspora will now be delineated to provide further clarification for the thesis. Following this, the Theoretical Framework will be outlined, and the key terms and central theoretical concepts will be introduced. It should be noted that a detailed analysis of each key term will follow in the forthcoming chapters. The instances where these ideas are explained in Chapter One serve as demonstrations of how they will be applied further on in this thesis. Additionally, this chapter will provide an introductory background about the author and offer an overview of the plot for each text. This aims to orient the reader, offering contextual information and insight into the content to follow. Further, existing scholarly work will be discussed and scholars' criticisms of the primary texts will be analysed to provide context for the thesis. Finally, the methodology and the structure of the thesis will be explicated.

The Field of Transnationalism

The field of transnationalism analyses the process of border-crossing between one or more nation-states. Borders and border-crossing are key features in transnational studies and consequently key terms in this thesis. A border defines and separates social and spatial

structures within a country and across national and international land. Border-crossing involves the process where migrants traverse these boundaries. Transnational theorists Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani argue that "transnationalism examines [the] permeability, transcendence, or irrelevance" (5) of borders. Quayson and Daswani's definition highlights the porous nature of borders that are crossed by social, economic, and cultural interactions. Similarly, Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen state that transnationalism implies that "boundaries are being crossed, rather than maintained or negotiated" (xx). As seen in the above definitions, transnational theorists challenge the notion that borders are fixed entities that prevent social and cultural cohesion. Alternatively, they argue that "migrants build transnational social fields that cut across geographic, cultural, and political borders" (Quayson and Daswani 5). As such, connections between migrants stretch across their homeland and their diasporic home. These connections are maintained by those who have left their homeland and those who stay behind despite the "geospatial disjunctures and discontinuities" (Daswani 34) between them. In summary, transnational studies analyse borders and the various ways that borders are crossed by transnational links and connections.

Transnational theorists subvert "the boundaries of the nation-state and the stability of its borders" (Quayson and Daswani 13–4) by highlighting the multi-layered connections between citizens on either side of territorial borders. As transnational subjects create social, economic, and cultural links outside of their country of origin, they establish a sense of belonging and identity in more than one geographical place. Transnational theorists focus on these links and undermine the notion that the nation-state is an entity that binds "territory, identity and belonging" (Cohen and Fischer 2). Importantly, transnational individuals have a range of "place-based identities" (MacDonald 313) rather than a single identity that is bound to their homeland. Thus, transnational theorists interrogate perceptions of place, identity, and home and argue that transnational subjects create a sense of belonging within *and* beyond the borders of their homeland.

As outlined above, transnationalism deconstructs the importance of the nation-state by outlining the connections that are formed between citizens within and beyond territorial borders. This area of study also explicates the consequences of territorial borders and the ways that border regulation impacts migrants' journeys. Transnational studies analyse how political and social bodies of power govern borders. The permeability of borders, which determines the inclusion of individuals within specific environments, is influenced by political, social, and cultural ideologies. A close analysis of the primary texts supports this argument. Thus far, the field of transnationalism has been defined and the importance of borders in this area of study

has been elucidated. In summary, transnational theorists analyse how border-crossing is regulated by multiple systems of power that include and extend beyond the nation-state.

The Field of Diaspora

The link between border-crossing and identity will now be analysed through a diasporic lens. Barzoo Eliassi argues that "diaspora is about dislocation, leaving a specific place and living somewhere else" (120). In other words, contemporary diaspora studies analyse displacement and its effects on those who leave their homeland and aim to establish a sense of belonging in their diasporic home.[3] Home and belonging are defining features of diaspora (Cohen and Fischer 2019). When examined in the context of displacement, home and belonging become complex entities that simultaneously function as devices of inclusion and exclusion (Eliassi 2019). To those who were displaced by conflict, the notions of home enforce their sense of loss as well as "alienation, aloneness and political otherness" (Eliassi 121). In a more generalised context, it is crucial to acknowledge that residing in one's country of origin does not necessarily guarantee a sense of belonging. Similarly, relocating from one's homeland to establish oneself in a different setting does not inevitably lead to a deprivation of belonging or marginalisation. Nevertheless, within the primary texts, the characters' encounters with the host reflect a state of dislocation, as they endure social ostracism and exclusion because they come from elsewhere. Their search for social, cultural, and political inclusion is oftentimes withheld from them by the host precisely because they do not have a home in which to return.[4] Cohen describes diaspora as "the idea of dispersal following a traumatic event in the homeland" (2). Cohen's connection between diaspora and forced dispersal is evident in the primary texts because Mohamed outlines the effect of conflict-induced migration on the characters' identities. To summarise then, diaspora studies analyse how displacement impacts migrants' sense of self, home, and belonging which is sourced from their homeland and diasporic home.

[3] A homeland is defined as a transnational subject's place of origin. A diasporic home is a place where a transnational subject (temporarily or permanently) settles after migration. Those who cross borders can have more than one diasporic home and place of belonging. There are circumstances when a migrant is not able to establish a sense of belonging in a particular space. In such instances, their space of settlement is referred to as a diasporic space (Eliassi 125).

[4] The term "host" refers to the host communities that migrants encounter in a diasporic space. This includes individuals who have lived within a particular area throughout their lives and those who have migrated to the area.

Theoretical Framework

Transnationalism, diaspora, and migration are overarching theoretical concepts that have correspondent qualities and similar meanings. Vertovec and Cohen describe the "triadic relationship" (xiii) between migration, transnationalism and diaspora outlining the interconnected links and theoretical overlaps between these conceptual categories. As a result of the commonalities between diaspora and transnationalism, Daswani states that "these categories tend to bleed into each other" (35) and are used interchangeably. However, he goes on to argue that despite the similarities between diaspora and transnationalism, a variety of distinctions differentiate these conceptual categories. Social groups that cross borders can be classified as diasporic or transnational. Yet these groups have a multitude of internal complexities because the individuals within them are affected by border-crossing in different ways. Daswani explains that

> Just as there are different ways of being diasporic, there are multiple ways of being transnational, since both categories include a multiplicity of historical trajectories and lived experiences that effect people in different ways. (35)

The similarities and differences between migration, transnationalism, and diaspora will be highlighted through the theorisation of each concept. These concepts are used interchangeably across multiple fields of research therefore the definitions to follow provide theoretical clarification for this thesis.

Contemporary Migration

Contemporary migration involves the crossing of local, national, and international borders. Vertovec and Cohen outline six categories of contemporary migration: legal labour migration, illegal or undocumented labour migration, refugee migration, independent female migration, skilled transients and skilled long-term migrants (xv). The characters in the primary texts fit into multiple forms of contemporary migration concurrently. An example of how this occurs is explored in a brief analysis of Jama's exilic journey in *Mamba Boy*. This illustration effectively demonstrates how key concepts will be examined alongside the primary texts in the chapters to come. Jama crosses multiple borders as he walks through Eastern Africa to escape

the conflict caused by the colonisation of his homeland (classified as refugee migration). Despite his young age, Jama works a variety of jobs that vary in social ranking: he is involved in child labour and he later serves as a child soldier (illegal or undocumented labour migration). At the end of the text, when Jama is a skilled adult, he obtains a British passport allowing him to work as a sailor in the United Kingdom (skilled transients and skilled long-term migrants). Jama is marginalised and abused along his journey but he is not a victim of his circumstances. He adapts to various environments to survive the conflict around him. Furthermore, there are instances when Jama actively changes his circumstances to better his chance of survival. Thus, Jama's complex journey of migration highlights the internal complexities and shifting positionalities that a migrant undergoes through the process of border-crossing. Overall, this thesis argues that migrants cannot be classified into a particular social group or category of migration because they have heterogeneous, fluctuating identities.

To this end, Vertovec and Cohen's "compartmentalized approaches and oversimplified structural categories" (Orgocka 1) fail to accurately represent the vast and intricate complexities that merge to form migrants' identities. However, these categories can be used to provide a broad overview of the factors that impact migrants' ability to cross territorial borders. These are socio-economic and political factors that are closely tied to their mobility and agency. Agency is the ability to make choices and act upon them, even in situations where power dynamics and structural violence may seem overwhelming. For those fleeing conflict, there are "varying degrees of force and choice" (Van Hear 131) that prevent or motivate their movement across borders. Further, migrants are situated within a dense and intricate system of "power relationships" (Daswani 33) that affect how they will be perceived and received within their homeland and diasporic home. To expand on this argument, Katy Gardner's theorisation about 'place' and 'emplacement' and how this impacts child migrants' ability to cross borders is explored. Gardner theorises that childhood is a cultural construct and that the way that children are perceived by the host culture impacts children's mobility. An in-depth analysis of the characters' mobility (or lack thereof) will demonstrate how "regimes of power" (Brah 183) in the host nation actively control borders. When migrants attempt to cross physical borders, they come up against various social boundaries that are tied to these complex systems of power. Thus, borders are at once physical and social entities that continuously tighten and loosen according to how a migrant is perceived by the host community.

To summarise, contemporary migration is an over-arching conceptual category that encapsulates multiple forms of migration and border crossing. When migrants cross spatial borders they are confronted with social borders that are enforced by the host culture.

Subsequently, children are ‘placed’ and ‘emplaced’ within social and spatial environments in the diaspora space.

Transnationalism

Transnational theory is drawn from and functions as a continuation of post-colonial studies (Naidu 2006). Transnational literature aims to confront and destabilise power structures that use binary systems as a means to isolate, control, and disempower social groups during the colonial era. As such transnational theorists reject essentialist reasoning and ideologies that presuppose fixed identities based on factors such as nation, ethnicity, culture, or religion. These beliefs contribute to the categorisation and subjugation of individuals from particular racial, ethnic, cultural, or class backgrounds. Instead, transnational theorists underscore the dynamic nature of transnational experiences, embracing their fluidity, diversity, hybridity, and multiplicity. Through this emphasis, they challenge and reshape conventional perspectives on belonging, citizenship, and identity. Scholars in this field celebrate the diverse interplay of locality, identity, and difference. In essence, contemporary transnational literature offers a positive re-articulation of transnationalism and portrays characters’ heterogeneous identities in a favourable manner.

Transnationalism is a site of cohesion, integration, and change. When social groups converge across national borders there is an exchange and entanglement of social, cultural, and economic practices between their homeland and the diasporic home. These interactions impact the lives of citizens on either side of territorial borders. Therefore, the crossing of physical borders can simultaneously involve the crossing and interweaving of multiple conceptual borders that are increasingly blurred as migration continues. Quayson and Daswani argue that “transnationalism focuses on various flows and counterflows and the multi-striated connections they give rise to” (4). These connections consist of multiple strands that join transnational subjects across space. Thus, transnational links involve the physical movement across borders as well as sustained communication between migrants on either side of national borders. These links also include invisible connections to a space of belonging where memory and imagination play a vital role in linking a migrant to their homeland. This is seen when migrants perform socio-cultural practices from their homeland. To sum up, transnational links include the physical movement and exchange of goods across borders as well as invisible or imagined connections between individuals on either side of territorial borders.

An example in *Fortune* will be explored to illustrate how the characters attempt to maintain connections with their homelands. Mahmood remains connected to his mother in Hargeisa through letters. Both mother and son face multiple challenges because "[n]either he nor his mother can read or write but somehow she still finds a way to pour her words into his ears across all that space and time" (36–7). Thus, Mahmood and his mother remain connected through the aid of others who transcribe and read out their letters. Although Mahmood has not returned to his homeland or seen his mother in ten years the "memory of her is like a boulder on his back" (37). Despite the distance between them, Mahmood experiences the memories of his mother and his childhood in Hargeisa as a crushing sensation on his body. Her expectations of him weigh him down and "he slumps forward" (37) as though his back is being crushed by a boulder. This example from the text reveals how migrants' "intimate knowledge is sustained over discontinuous space and time" (Werbner 108). Further, Mahmood is intimately aware of his family's expectations of him. His family believes that he will become one of the "Fortune Men" (Mohamed *Mamba Boy* 238) who leave their homelands to establish a successful life for themselves in the diasporic home and return as an example of wealth and success.[5] The title of the text is ironic because Mahmood has not been able to integrate into Wales and maintain a consistent income that would enable him to send money back to his homeland. Despite the distance between Mahmood and his family, he maintains a connection to his homeland through these letters. Furthermore, Mahmood holds onto his family's defined way of being in the world. He carries the weight of disappointment on his back because he believes he has failed them.

Clifford defines transnational links as "lateral connections" (306) that transgress spatial *and* temporal dimensions. Transnational links and "connections derive not only from the tropes of homeland and return, but also from the ongoing history of displacement and migration, and sequential sites of adaptation and resistance" (Cohen and Fischer 7). Drawing on the description of transnational links above, together with Quayson and Daswani's notion of "multi-striated connections" (4), the concept of transnational links is likened to the layers in sedimentary rock. A few thin lateral layers of rock represent transnational links that are formed between a single social group in one or two generations. Multiple thick layers symbolise a broader view of migration that incorporates the temporal dimension in which multiple connections are formed and layered over generations as migrants move from one place to the

[5] This reference to the "Fortune Men" in *Mamba Boy* highlights the links in Jama and Mahmood's journeys which are pertinent because they cross borders at the same time. As their journeys continue various circumstances beyond their control differentiate Jama and Mahmood's positionings. When Jama obtains his British passport he becomes of the "Fortune Men" where Mahmood is prevented from integrating into the diasporic space. The similarities and differences between Jama and Mahmood will be explored in Chapter Five.

next. This metaphor outlines the ways that connections between transnational individuals, their family members, and other community members are situated within a broader context of migration that includes a multitude of social groups, spanning generations and space.

Transnational links are also formed vertically between individuals who are positioned within alternate socio-cultural groups and separated by social hierarchies. These social ties are interwoven and dynamic, shifting as transnational subjects interact and move across space. This is seen in *Mamba Boy* when Jama and Lorenzo, an Italian soldier, form a short-lived yet mutually beneficial relationship. Despite the racial tension around them, Lorenzo takes an interest in Jama and acts compassionately towards him. When Lorenzo first meets Jama, he is "struck by Jama's self-possession" (141) emphasising Jama's humanity and agency. Lorenzo speaks to Jama in Somali, offers Jama a job, and saves his life when another soldier tries to shoot him. Despite the various forms of conflict that mark Jama's world, he finds companionship in those who share his position in society and in those, like Lorenzo, who occupy a position that is socially, economically, or politically different from his. This example has been used to delineate how transnational literature problematises and undermines binary systems of difference between the coloniser and those who are colonised. It also explores the social ties that exist between transnational subjects despite the socio-cultural dissimilarities between them. Thus, transnational links are formed horizontally across space and time and vertically where these links cut through social hierarchies, revealing that transnational sites can function as areas of social and cultural cohesion.

Quayson and Daswani describe transnationalism as a "social field" (45). This is similar to Pnina Werbner's argument that transnationalism is "above all a social and cultural movement that inscribes itself spatially, morally, and imaginatively in the dispersed places where migrants settle" (117). Transnational subjects may attempt to maintain the socio-cultural practices of their homeland. They hold on to physical items that were part of their socio-cultural practices back home because these practices create a sense of continuity. They also connect to their homeland through rituals, prayer, and other socio-cultural practices. However, it is important to note when transnational subjects cross national borders, their identities and the practices they hold onto become hybridised. Furthermore, migration forces adaptation and assimilation. Thus, the practices that connect migrants to their homeland are altered or lost when they cross borders.

In *Fortune*, Mahmood teaches his two sons and his Welsh wife, Laura, the cultural practices in Somaliland. With "a bedsheet wrapped around his shoulders in place of a *shaal*, a biscuit tin drum in his hand he taught Omar and David how Somali nomads danced" (159).

This example depicts how migrants attempt to establish and share connections to their homeland with those in the diasporic home. If they are successful, migrants can locate their identities and a sense of belonging outside the constraints of specific territories and spatial boundaries. As such, Mahmood performs the dance in an attempt to pass down his memory of Somali culture. Yet his attempts are undermined by his family who cannot remember the name of the dance. Mahmood tries to help Laura pronounce it: "'*Dhaanto*, it's called dhaan-to.' Trying to make the simple word even simpler" (160). Mahmood's experience with his family reveals that one culture does not seamlessly merge into the next. Further, when Mahmood and Laura get divorced he can no longer connect his family to his homeland. Additionally, Laura becomes increasingly aware that Somali culture is perceived to be less desirable than the English culture in Wales. Consequently, as a means by which to establish a sense of belonging in Wales, she pulls herself and her children away from Somali culture and Mahmood. Laura becomes "alert to status and all its tiny degrees: she keeps the boys away from the Qur'anic school, uses their Welsh names, wants them baptized and raised just like their cousins" (77). This example from the text is used to explore how migrants are perceived as different and how they are prevented from integrating into their diasporic home by "multiaxial fields of power relations" (Brah 205). Accordingly, Mahmood is ostracised by the host and his wife alienates him because of his difference. His sense of belonging and identity is increasingly eroded as he loses his connection to the people and the practices that tie him to his homeland.

As outlined above, various connections are lost and social ties are ruptured in the process of migration. Werbner argues that transnationalism is not a "continuous and homogenous" (109) social field. Instead, transnational connections are "ruptured to create new configurations and clusterings" (109). This notion of rupture is particularly evident for those fleeing conflict because their experience of being split and fragmented is severe. Displaced individuals' experiences of rupture, dislocation, and disjunction of the self are particularly extreme because the social and spatial structures in their homeland are destroyed. In this thesis, the concept of transnationalism is used to analyse how border crossing affects the characters in the texts. The instances in the texts when the characters attempt to cross social and spatial borders are of particular concern. When borders tighten they are prevented from integrating into their diasporic home. In other instances, they cross borders and come across new environments that alter their identity and sense of belonging. When the characters successfully cross borders they can reform their identities. Thus, the process of piecing their identities together may result in a positive re-articulation of their identities. The theory of diaspora will

now be defined and applied to the primary texts to unpack the effects of border-crossing on the characters in more detail.

Diaspora

Diaspora initially described the forced dispersal of Jews from their homeland. Therefore "diaspora was originally situated within a negative discursive field characterised by destruction of the homeland" (Eliassi 120). Contemporary diaspora has expanded to include a variety of social groups. Further, Cohen and Fischer argue that contemporary diaspora has expanded "beyond its original inflections concerning the self-dispersal of religious communities and forced dispersal of certain peoples, diaspora studies also now covers mobility of all sorts" (8). Thus, the term diaspora has expanded to include multiple social groups who migrate due to various circumstances. However, the notion of displacement remains at the heart of the concept of diaspora. In her book *Cartographies of Diaspora*, Avtar Brah emphasises the multi-faceted nature of diaspora which includes multiple social groups who share a theme of dislocation from a place of belonging. Brah argues that contemporary diaspora "overlaps and resonates with meanings of words such as migrant, immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker or exile" (185). There is an evident link between Brah's list above and Vertovec and Cohen's categories of contemporary migration. The similarity between the theorists' conceptualisation of diaspora and migration shows how these conceptual categories intersect.

An analysis of the etymology of diaspora illustrates how this term is linked to dispersal and the effects that displacement has on migrants' identity construction. Brah delineates the term 'diaspora' stating that it originates from "Greek - *dia*, 'through', and *speirein*, 'to scatter'" (181). Paul Gilroy expands upon the link between diaspora and dispersal, as he employs the image of scattered seeds to describe those within the diaspora. Gilroy argues that diaspora "posits important tensions between here and there, then and now, between seed in the bag, the packet, or the pocket and seed in the ground, the fruit, or the body" (208-9). Gilroy's description highlights how the external environment alters a migrant's exilic journey. The seeds start out the same, yet the conditions in which they grow significantly affect what is produced (Naidu 2006). If the soil is impenetrable, in this case the soil represents socio-cultural and territorial borders in the diasporic home, and then the seeds will not be able to take root or bear fruit. The process of rooting into the soil and producing fruit represents migrants' integration into and contribution to their diasporic home. Therefore, Gilroy's metaphor adequately describes how

external conditions affect migrants' ability to become functioning members in their diasporic homes.

Additionally, Vertovec and Cohen expand on the concept of diaspora and deduce that there are three meanings of diaspora: diaspora as a social form, diaspora consciousness, and diaspora as a mode of cultural production (xvii). As a social form, diaspora is defined as a social category that joins migrant groups who share common traits. This creates a perceived or real "collective identity" (Vertovec and Cohen xviii) between diasporic groups who share an identification with an "imagined homeland" (Daswani 36).[6] Importantly, the concept of diaspora as a social form involves the external analysis of diasporic groups. In other words, it is the process of looking *at* and categorising social groups from the outside. Alternatively, diasporic consciousness is an awareness from *within* a diasporic group. It involves a "variety of experience, a state of mind and a sense of identity" (Vertovec and Cohen xviii) that is shared by individuals who have established a sense of belonging in more than one space. Therefore, diaspora consciousness is defined as a felt experience marked by the "awareness of multilocality" (xviii). In summary, transnational subjects are the point of convergence between alternate social groups and spaces. Their identities are a "sum of 'parts of difference'" (Bhabha 1995, 2) that are formed by their exposure to diverse social and spatial structures in their homeland and their diasporic home.

Over time diaspora studies have moved away from "group solidarity to recognize internal complexities" (Vertovec and Cohen 5). Diasporic individuals' identities are made up of a variety of experiences that result in an amalgamation of inner complexities, convergences, and contradictions (Eliassi 2013). Further, diaspora consciousness is "marked by a *dual or paradoxical nature*" (Vertovec and Cohen xviii; emphasis in original). Migrants experience discrimination and exclusion because of their differences from the host. However, as cultural hybrids, they can form and reform their identities to develop a positive sense of self (Vertovec and Cohen 2001).

Finally, Vertovec and Cohen define diaspora as a mode of cultural production that involves:

> the world-wide flow of cultural objects, images and meanings, resulting in variegated processes of creolization, back-and-forth transferences, mutual influences, new contestations, negotiations and constant transformations. (xix)

[6] Diasporic subjects may not necessarily identify with and relate to the diasporic groups who share the same traits or homeland as themselves.

Therefore, diaspora as a mode of cultural production involves the movement of people and socio-cultural goods across borders.

Furthermore, Brah defines diaspora as a conceptual category. She argues that diaspora is "an interpretive frame referencing the economic, political and cultural dimensions of these contemporary forms of migrancy" (185). Using Brah's theory that diaspora is an interpretive frame that can be used to analyse migration, this thesis argues that the diasporic experience is made up of various overlapping dimensions that continuously influence a migrant's positionality. As such, a migrant exists in a liminal state: a state of continuous renegotiation of the self as their social, economic, political and cultural environments change. Alongside the notion of diaspora as an interpretive frame, Brah proposes the concept of the 'diaspora space'. The 'diaspora space' is "the intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location as a point of confluence of economic, political, cultural and psychic processes" (208). The characters in the primary texts are vulnerable because their experiences of migration are filled with instances of economic exploitation, political exclusion, and social manipulation. Thus, the concept of diaspora is used to analyse the instances in the texts when the characters' identities are altered by displacement as they aim to navigate a sense of belonging in more than one space.

Precarity and Precariousness

Mamba Boy, *Fortune*, and *Orchard* share the thematic context of socio-political instability and conflict. The characters are displaced and forced to migrate, internally and externally, where they seek refuge from the conflict in their homelands. Deqo migrates internally and it is only at the end of the text that she crosses the national border from Somalia to Ethiopia where she seeks safety from the conflict in a refugee camp. Jama and Mahmood migrate beyond the borders of Somalia. Jama migrates across Northeast Africa; he also sails to Europe during the Second World War and finally settles in Eritrea. Mahmood migrates from Somaliland to South Africa where he then sails across the world and finally attempts to settle in Wales. Their hope of finding safety and a sense of belonging outside of Somaliland depends (at least temporarily) on external aid. In an analysis of refugees who are displaced by conflict, Divya Tolia-Kelly states that a "new *homeland* rests on the generosity and humanitarian goodwill of other nations" (215, emphasis in original). Therefore, there are various instances in the primary texts when the characters depend on others for their survival. In her book *Frames of War,* Judith Butler argues that:

> Precariousness implies living socially, that is, the fact that one's life is always in some sense in the hands of the other. It implies exposure both to those we know and to those we do not know; a dependency on people we know, or barely know, or know not at all. Reciprocally, it implies being impinged upon by the exposure and dependency of others, most of whom remain anonymous. (*Frames*, 14)

Accordingly, the characters live socially because they are exposed to new cultures when they cross spatial borders. They move between the households of strangers who feed and clothe them because it is evident that without the hosts' intervention the children will not survive the war.

The notion of depending on another for protection and shelter is closely linked to vulnerability, a central term in this thesis. Vulnerability refers to the state of being exposed or susceptible to harm, whether physically, emotionally, or socially. It can stem from various factors, such as social norms, power dynamics, and personal circumstances (Butler 2009). In essence, vulnerability denotes a state of being at risk, where an individual lacks the ability to protect themselves adequately. This lack of protection can leave them more susceptible to exploitation and abuse. This experience of dependency and vulnerability is extreme for child refugees who have lost structures of support in the war.[7] The child migrant characters are repeatedly torn from the social and spatial structures that give them a sense of safety and belonging. In *Mamba Boy*, eleven-year-old Jama is exposed to the devastating effects of conflict as he migrates from Eritrea to Palestine, alone and on foot. During this journey, he witnesses the destruction of Northeast Africa as the Italian and British colonisers go into battle to obtain control over the area. In *Orchard*, Deqo aims to find a sense of community and structure in Hargeisa at the very moment her country collapses into a violent revolution. *Fortune* delineates Mahmood's childhood where he leaves his homeland and travels through Africa without his family's knowledge of where he is or what has come of him. As an adult, Mahmood's diasporic journey is brought to a sudden end when he is wrongfully accused and convicted of murder.

Consequently, the characters are vulnerable to social, economic, and political oppression. They migrate without support from the state because of the unrest and lack of governance in their homeland. These characters represent "those traversing borders of the

[7] Structures of support are both social and spatial. Social structures include a child migrant's family and the surrounding community. Spatial structures of support include their home, school, church or other places of social interaction like the market square in *Orchard*.

world in a situation of *precarity*" (Tolia-Kelly 215, emphasis in original). Interrogating the link between precarity and conflict-induced displacement Tolia-Kelly states that:

> For migrants, precarity is about 'rights' being constantly re-made, reinterpreted and played out without compassion towards others struggling to escape bombardment, the erasure of cities and societies. Forcibly displaced peoples, despite there being no guarantee of settlement, risk death, disconnection and indeed a loss of a 'liveable life' in the process of migration. (214)

All three characters occupy a precarious position: Jama and Deqo are refugees and because of the conflict in their countries, they rely upon others for help and safety. As a child, Mahmood relies upon the compassion of others as he crosses spatial borders without connection to, or support from, his family. When he is an adult, Mahmood's rights are stripped away from him when he is denied the right to a fair trial. As a result of their real or perceived dependency on help, the characters are forced onto the social and spatial peripheries of their diasporic home. The various ways that migrants are dehumanised and ostracised in the host nation will be outlined throughout the thesis. Through a close analysis of the texts, it will be argued that the characters use their perceived vulnerability to seek out opportunities and better their lives (Orgocka 2012). This thesis highlights the characters' heterogeneous identities and shifting positionalities to confront the portrayal that child migrants are only victims of their circumstances.

Liminality

The concept of liminality is used to highlight the characters' complex positionalities. Fetson Kalua describes the liminal space as "the middle 'state', a stage of transition or the border zone" (23). Kalua links liminality to a border zone because a border is an interstitial space that exists between two territories. A border is a paradoxical entity because it is a site of division that simultaneously consolidates areas of difference (Brah 1996). Left uncrossed, the border enforces the segregation of alternate social groups, cultures, and ideas. Once crossed, however, it transforms into a site of integration, contact, and change. This highlights the unfixed state of the border zone: in one moment it is a site of separation and in the next, it acts as the threshold that joins alternate social and spatial environments.

Brah argues that the "question is not simply about *who travels* but *when*, *how, and under what circumstances?*" (182, emphasis in original). Brah's questioning suggests that a

border exists in a state of flux because it is continuously influenced by socio-cultural and political factors that determine who *can* and who *cannot* belong in a particular space. Mahmood, Jama and Deqo are liminal subjects because their positioning within an environment is repeatedly influenced by these factors. Brah defines "relational positioning" as the "manner in which a group comes to be 'situated' in and through a wide variety of discourses, economic processes, state policies and institutional practices" (179). Her definition of "relational positioning" (179) shows how individuals are perceived to be more or less desirable according to their social, economic, and political attributes. Factors that differentiate migrants' exilic journeys include "gender, ethnicity, race, class and other axes of difference" (Amelina and Barglowski 32). As mentioned, the characters are refugees who have been displaced by the conflict in their homeland. Despite the similarities in the characters' journeys, a multitude of factors differentiate how they are perceived and received in their homeland and diasporic homes. Significantly, the difference in the characters' experiences reveals that diaspora is a "heterogeneous category differentiated along the lines of class [and] gender" (Brah 196) as well as other factors such as age.

Paradoxically, it is often due to the child migrant characters' perceived vulnerability that they are able to transverse social boundaries that adult migrants are not able to cross. This will be highlighted in a comparison between *Mamba Boy*, *Orchard* and *Fortune*. In *Fortune,* Mahmood, who is a twenty-four-year-old man, is seen as a threat by the host community in Wales. As a result of Mahmood's alienation, he is prevented from becoming part of the diasporic home and the preconceptions about him lead to his conviction. In contrast, there are various instances throughout Jama and Deqo's exilic journey when they are incorporated into the intimate spaces of the host. In these instances, the child migrant characters and the host move beyond the ideological boundaries that cause the othering and dehumanisation of migrants, refugees, and street children. However, Mahmood's journey reveals that certain social groups are prevented from integrating into the diasporic home. The concept of liminality is utilised in this thesis to highlight how structures of power alter the characters' exilic journeys.

The 'Third Space', Diaspora Identity and Cultural Hybridity

Stuart Hall's theory of diaspora identity and cultural hybridity will now be examined and applied to the texts in the chapters to follow. Hall's research is used to analyse how border-crossing contributes to the characters' liminal positioning and complex, hybrid identities. The characters are cultural hybrids because their cultural identities are an amalgam of the borders

that they cross, the spaces they interact with, and the cultures they stumble upon. The characters exemplify how "the refugee identity is one of many identities" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed et al. 4). Hall states that cultural identity is "not an essence but a positioning" ("Cultural Identity" 226). Accordingly, Jama, Deqo, and Mahmood's cultural identities continuously shift in response to their external environment. Therefore, identity is "a 'production', which is never complete, always in process" (222). The characters are both similar and different from those that they meet along their diasporic journeys. Their identities are made up of "Difference [that] persists - in and alongside continuity" (227). The shifting nature of their identities disrupts or "ruptures" (225) their sense of stability and belonging. Yet, their liminality also gives them adaptive strength and helps them to change their circumstances in a positive way.

Homi K. Bhabha's (1995) theory of the 'Third Space' is applied to the characters' journeys to emphasise the link between liminality and migration further. Bhabha argues that the 'Third Space' is the "site of experience and empowerment" (4) because migrants actively piece their identities together and achieve a sense of belonging in more than one space. When migrants cross social and spatial borders their identities and sense of belonging become increasingly layered because they are changed by the socio-spatial environments that they discover. As mentioned, Jama, Deqo, and Mahmood are alienated by the host because they come from elsewhere. Thus, they develop a paradoxical sense of belonging because they are simultaneously a part of and yet not part of their homeland and diasporic home. However, there are various instances where their hybridity is "a source through which their agency may be channelled" (Hajdukowski-Ahmed et al. 4). The characters' hybrid cultural identities contribute to their liminal positioning. They are alienated and seen as the 'other' because of their hybridity. In this thesis, the 'other' refers to the way migrants are often perceived as different or even threatening by the host community. It is a social construct that is used by the host to justify the exclusion, discrimination, or hostility towards migrants. Despite the instances of exclusion, there are moments in the texts when the characters have the agency to choose who they will become and where they will belong.

In describing child migrants in the twenty-first century, Aida Orgocka outlines this paradox by arguing that "vulnerability and agency are not mutually exclusive" (3). She explains that "young people can exercise their agency to identify and seek solutions to situations of vulnerability" (3). Orgocka states that children's "agentic capacities emerge and interact across a spectrum of contextual influences that may undermine or promote these" (1). The child migrant characters oscillate from one pole to the other in response to how they are perceived by the host in their diasporic home. Jama and Deqo occupy a particularly complex positioning:

as child refugees who are homeless, they are dehumanised and ostracised. Yet, in other instances, they are brought into the intimate spaces of the host and afforded the opportunity to better their circumstances. Jama and Deqo's liminality will now be explicated through a close engagement with the texts.

Jama survives the slaughter and cruelty of the war because he is brought into the homes and close social circuits of those within his diasporic home. Jama is supported by distant relatives and strangers. When he is caught up in the war in Northeast Africa, he is made the "communal little brother" (Mohamed 125) of the *askaris* who protect him from the brutalities of the war. As an orphan and a child migrant, he is vulnerable because his autonomy is dependent on how the host receives him. This reveals that "children's actions are shaped and respond to particular social contexts in which they find themselves as they migrate" (Orgocka 7). When he receives compassion, Jama is protected from danger and he slips through boundaries that could have prevented the continuation of his journey. Therefore, Jama's exilic journey is a portrayal of how "children and youth navigate systems of power" (Orgocka 7). Furthermore, if child migrants successfully integrate into their socio-political environment, they become an active part of the diasporic home and influence the power structures that affect the permeability of borders.

Deqo occupies a position of extreme liminality because her origins are unclear. Deqo's pregnant mother arrived at the camp from an unknown destination on foot. It is important to note that the camp is situated on the border of Ethiopia and her mother may have crossed national borders to reach it. After giving birth, she abandons Deqo without a name, lineage, or nationality. When Deqo is nine years old she leaves the camp to Hargeisa where she is brought into the homes of strangers and cared for by them. However, there are various moments when Deqo's vulnerability and innocence are used against her. There are two occasions men attempt to rape her. Yet, the exploitation and objectification of Deqo's young body do not stop with men. Filsan, a female soldier, takes advantage of Deqo's innocence when she tells her to enter an abandoned villa. Armed rebels are hiding in the area and Filsan is aware that they will shoot Deqo upon entering the building. This example highlights how marginalised individuals are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Deqo is failed by the state not only because of the war but also because an officer, who is bound to legally protect civilians, has intentionally placed Deqo in the line of fire. It may be presumed that Filsan perceives Deqo's life as dispensable and that she will not be mourned or missed by the community. Deqo's vulnerability is highlighted in this example because the value of her life is disregarded for the supposed 'greater good' of the war.

As outlined above, the characters share experiences of alienation, dehumanisation, and abuse. Jama and Deqo are particularly vulnerable to abuse because they do not have permanent caretakers and they migrate during times of extreme violence and terror. Paradoxically, it is because of their obvious vulnerability that those in the host nation bring the children into spaces that would otherwise be cut off from them. They are also shown solicitude that causes them to feel a sense of inclusion in the diasporic home. In contrast, Mahmood is constrained by the social borders imposed upon him by the hosts' preconceived notions about black male migrants from Somalia. When Mahmood arrived in Wales as a stoker on a European ship, he could not speak English. In an effort to bridge this divide between himself and the host, Mahmood frequents the cinema in Adamsdown, Cardiff. By watching the films, Mahmood learns "how to talk real English" and he examines how his "neighbours see themselves and how they see him" (25). In these films and on the streets of Cardiff, he is confronted with the racist and xenophobic ideologies of the host. He comes to realise that the people of Adamsdown will

> only ever see him like one of those grimy coolies in loincloths, or jungle savages, shrieking before their quick, unmourned deaths – or at best, a tight lipped houseboy proudly taking punishment in place of his white master". (25)

The films expose the enduring legacy of colonialism and its impact on the racialised subject. It is ironic that Mahmood left his homeland of Somalia to seek a better life in Wales. Mahmood faces constant discrimination and violence from the dominant white society that views him as an inferior and threatening outsider. The analysis of the text will illustrate how Mahmood's experiences of racism and xenophobia are shaped by the historical, political, and cultural forces that construct and maintain racial hierarchies and boundaries. This thesis argues that all three of the characters are abused and oppressed. They are perceived as undesirable, different and in some cases, subhuman. However, Jama and Deqo overcome the physical and social borders they encounter. They integrate into new social groups where they can grow their identities and sense of belonging. Alternatively, Mahmood cannot settle in Wales because the community actively prevents him from becoming a part of the diasporic space, hindering his ability to establish a deep sense of belonging and cultural connection.

To conclude, Bhabha and Hall's theories have been explained and will be applied to the primary texts in the forthcoming chapters to argue that the characters' positionalities exist in a state of flux. The factors that affect the characters' liminality have been delineated through a close reference to the primary texts. These factors include the characters' age, gender, and

class as well as the socio-political conditions of their homeland at the time that they crossed borders. Importantly, the child protagonists use their perceived vulnerability as a source of agency which allows them to cross borders that adults cannot pass.

Simultaneity and Rupture

The characters' liminality is amplified by the continuous fluctuation between rupture and simultaneity. For those who are displaced by conflict, simultaneity represents their attempt to maintain their sense of self that was previously affirmed by their familiarity with social and spatial environments in their homeland. The characters attempt to establish a cohesive sense of self and belonging while at the same time they are being pulled between multiple locations. As a consequence, tension arises within the characters as they attempt to rebuild their identities in a volatile and violent external environment. Thus, the characters are torn between simultaneity and rupture. When analysed through the lens of conflict-induced displacement, transnational links are prematurely and abruptly severed. Thus, rupture is marked by "the sense of incompleteness, loss, and alienation" (Werbner 117). Rupture occurs when the characters' connection to their homeland can no longer be maintained. They cannot return home because it is under attack and nor can they identify with their past selves before the conflict and trauma they have experienced. Rupture is an internalised experience that is catalysed when their inner sense of self and identity is destroyed by loss and trauma. Rupture also occurs when a migrant is prevented from crossing physical or psychic boundaries in their homeland or diasporic home. There are cases when migrants successfully cross spatial borders yet they are excluded and ostracised because of their difference. This sense of rupture is particularly traumatic when they return to their homeland only to find that they no longer belong and they are out of place in the environment that previously enforced their sense of belonging. Rupture involves the process of physically moving from one place to the next as well as the psychological uprooting of the self which is then followed by the process of repeatedly piecing oneself back together again and resettling into a re-formed sense of self.

Migrants attempt to re-make their identities and sense of self while being exposed to new intersecting social, cultural, and geographical spaces. Rupture is consequently tied to adaptation and identity construction. This thesis argues that transnational subjects perpetually experience rupture and simultaneity as the permeability of social and spatial borders loosens and tightens. Quayson and Daswani argue that "integrity is not a pre-given condition of being […] but rather unfolds as a restless (re-)production of an account of one's self" (17–8). A

migrant's identity is made up of instances of exclusion and inclusion as they are repeatedly incorporated or pushed out of intimate social circles. The "oscillatory relationship between integrity and discontinuity" (18) is the defining feature of a diaspora's liminal identity because this "oscillatory movement is never supposed to be fully resolved in favour of one or the other pole but only creatively contained as defining a realm of open possibility" (18). Using the theoretical concepts of rupture and simultaneity diasporic identity is viewed as existing in a continuous state of becoming.

Ruptured Narrative Structures

The narrative form of *Mamba Boy*, *Orchard* and *Fortune* is analysed to highlight the effect of conflict-induced migration on the characters. The process of migration consists of a series of interruptions –the separation from the homeland and the familiar, the phase of transition, and then settlement into a new place of belonging (Schwartz-Salant and Stein 1991). There is a mirroring between the structure of war narratives and the structure of transnational texts. Migrating during war consists of a series of stages that follow a cyclic pattern: rupture, transition, and resettlement. This occurs each time a migrant comes up against a social or spatial border. This cycle involves the external and internal shifts and transformations that alter a migrant's diasporic identity. The temporal dimension of the texts oscillates between the past, to the characters' homeland, and the present, to their diasporic home, as the third-person omniscient narrator delineates the processes that led to them being displaced. The fractured temporality of the texts mimics the characters' multifaceted identities. As a result of the shifting temporality of the texts, the reader is made to piece together the text to construct a coherent narrative in the same way the characters attempt to piece their identities together after their lives have been ruptured by displacement.

The Author and Her Plots

Nadifa Mohamed is a Somali-British novelist who was born in Hargeisa, Somalia in 1981. Fleeing the conflict in her homeland, Nadifa and her family migrated to London in 1986. In her novels, Mohamed explores the history, culture, and politics of Somalia and its diaspora, drawing inspiration from the stories passed down from her family members and her own experiences. Through her rich storytelling, Mohamed encapsulates the struggles and triumphs of Somali civilians as they navigate migration, forced dispersal, identity, social justice, and resilience. Mohamed's oeuvre includes *Black Mamba Boy* (2010), *The Orchard of Lost Souls* (2013), and *The Fortune Men* (2021). Each text encompasses a unique narrative that captivates readers, transporting them into the characters' personal journeys of migration.

Black Mamba Boy, Mohamed's first novel, outlines the life of her father, Jama Mohamed. Set against the backdrop of the 1930s and 1940s, the story follows Jama, a young Somali boy growing up in Yemen during the tumultuous colonial era and the harrowing years of the Second World War. When his mother dies, Jama begins his quest to reunite with his father, who left him as an infant to seek employment in Sudan. Jama embarks on an arduous

journey back to his homeland Hargeisa then through East Africa and the Middle East. Along the way, he encounters hunger, extreme violence, racism, and the devastating consequences of war. Through the vividly portrayed characters that Jama meets along his journey, the reader witnesses his gradual discovery of his Somali heritage and his involvement in the struggle for independence from colonial oppression. Ironically, he fights for his country's freedom while still searching for his own identity, grappling with the absence of family and a place to call home.

The Orchard of Lost Souls, Mohamed's second novel, delineates the destruction of Hargeisa, during the late 1980s, just before the eruption of the civil war that brought an end to Siad Barre's dictatorship. The narrative weaves together the lives of three women from different generations and backgrounds. Kawsar, a widow, is confined to her bed after a brutal encounter with the police. Deqo, a young refugee, struggles to survive on the streets amidst the chaos and hardships of a society on the brink of collapse. Filsan, a determined young female soldier sent from Mogadishu, is caught up in the rebellion in the north. Their paths cross for the first time at a government parade. Deqo is brought in from a nearby refugee camp to perform a dance, but she forgets the steps and is pursued by the *Guddi*, the regime's local watch. Kawsar intervenes to shield Deqo from harm, after which Deqo flees, finding herself alone in an unfamiliar city with nowhere to turn. Meanwhile, Kawsar is taken to a police station, where she is viciously beaten by Filsan. As their stories converge, Mohamed sheds light on the brutal realities of the regime, the resilience of the Somali people, and the role of women in times of war. Drawing from her own childhood memories of Hargeisa, Mohamed infuses the narrative with personal authenticity, enhanced by extensive interviews with war survivors and historical research.

The Fortune Men, Mohamed's most recent novel, unveils the true story of Mahmood Mattan, a Somali sailor who was wrongfully executed in Cardiff, Wales in 1952. Within the gripping tale of Mahmood's wrongful conviction for a murder he did not commit, Mohamed exposes the flaws and prejudices embedded within the British justice system. The novel confronts the racial discrimination faced by the Somali community, portraying the impact of the injustice on Mahmood as well as his family and friends. Against the vibrant backdrop of Tiger Bay, a multicultural district in Cardiff during the 1950s, Mohamed portrays Mahmood's character, his dreams, his love for his wife and children, and his unwavering hope for justice. *The Fortune Men* is the culmination of extensive research, including interviews with Mahmood's relatives and individuals who met him. By retracing Mahmood's footsteps and

evoking the atmosphere of the time, Mohamed captures the essence of historical injustice, compelling readers to confront the legacy of discrimination and its enduring impact.

Through her novels, Mohamed gives voice to the civilians of Somalia and the diaspora, challenging stereotypes and prejudices about migrants while celebrating their resilience and strength.

Situating the Primary Texts: Scholarly Context

Thus far, there is no scholarly research that examines *Mamba Boy*, *Orchard* or *Fortune* comparatively. Additionally, there is no published scholarly work that examines *Fortune*. While scholars analyse *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard* separately, there are evident similarities in their criticisms about the content and form of the texts which further points to the commonalities in the texts themselves. In different articles, Tina Steiner (2016) and Christine Matzke (2013) address the generic conventions of *Mamba Boy*. Similarly, Nick Tembo discusses the semi-autobiographical nature of *Orchard*. These scholars argue that Mohamed uses literature to re-articulate history. Further, the scholars argue that the texts have a hybrid narrative form because Mohamed has interwoven fiction with non-fiction writing. Therefore, the primary texts are classified within the genre of creative non-fiction. Additionally, Lynda Gichanda Spencer (2015) discusses the role of women in the Somali civil war. To follow, the scholars' criticisms about the structure of the texts will be analysed and expanded upon. Of particular importance is the notion that changes in the narrative form in the texts signal a change in the characters' positionality as they shift from a position of vulnerability to agency.

Black Mamba Boy

Mamba Boy is a semi-biographical text that Mohamed uses to portray, Jama's, exilic journey. Steiner argues that the text is a fictional representation of Jama's personal experiences of "migration, loss and survival" (176). Steiner's description of Jama's journey points to his liminal positioning. Jama occupies a particularly precarious position when he loses those close to him because they formed part of the transnational social network that he relied upon for survival. Despite the violence he witnesses, Jama has the strength to adapt to his environment and he creates new social ties with characters who then bring him into their homes helping him to survive the brutality of the war.

Mohamed utilises the literary node to function as her "father's griot" (Mohamed 1) where she preserves and articulates her father's life history. The link between Jama's real life and fiction is analysed by Matzke who states that the text "grew out of an oral history project and was initially conceived as her father's biography, yet Nadifa Mohamed found herself gradually moving from life history to writing fiction" (207–8). This allowed Mohamed to expand upon her father's telling of his story to emphasise the psychological impact that migration and trauma had on him as a child (Matzke 208). Mohamed portrays the atrocities that occurred during the colonisation of Northeast Africa and the war and how the conflict-induced displacement contributes to Jama's ever-shifting positioning in his environment.

Of equal importance, is that the hybrid nature of the text allows Mohamed to move beyond her father's personal experiences to portray the lives of those in similar circumstances, including those who did not survive the colonisation of Somaliland or the war (Steiner 176). Matzke explains that "Mohamed has created an alternative narrative of history that not only encompasses her father's personal journey in times of political struggle but also embraces the wider collective memory of the Somali people" (208). *Mamba Boy* simultaneously represents "the young Somali men who fought for Mussolini and perished during the Second World War" (176). Mohamed reaches beyond her father's journey to bring to light (and to life) the "spirits of the nine thousand boys who foolishly battled on the mountains of Eritrea for Mussolini, who looked like my father, lived like him but had their lives cut off" (1). She tells the story of Jama and those like him "because no-one else will" (1). Mohamed employs the genre of creative non-fiction to offer an alternative perspective of history where the experiences of marginalised groups during the war are brought to the forefront.

Using Mikhail Bhaktin's notion of the chronotope, Steiner argues that *Mamba Boy* has two interwoven narrative strands: the adventure tale and the historical narrative. According to Steiner, Mohamed employs the chronotopic genre of the adventure tale to emphasise Jama's story of survival, resistance, and adaptive strength. The adventure tale, which is also referred to as the hero narrative, "foregrounds space and the protagonist's movement through space" (176). This narrative strand depicts Jama's ability to surpass social and spatial borders. Alongside this, Mohamed situates Jama's journey of survival and triumph within the broader history of Somalia to depict the effects "of Italian occupation, oppression and war" (178) on the characters. Steiner further argues that Mohamed interweaves the adventure tale with the historical narrative "to avoid idealising and romanticising [her] father's story and the history of the regions" (178). As outlined above, Jama has moments of agency and resilience however there are various instances in the text where his journey is ruptured due to his experiences of

psychological abuse, ostracisation, and alienation. When this occurs, there is a shift in the historical narrative to reflect the effects of trauma on Jama's psyche. The historical narrative "shows how the characters are altered by their experiences and encounters with the colonisers: the characterisation of Jama, [and his friends] Shidane, and Abdi shifts to a more interior perspective, as their suffering marks them in profound ways" (178). Steiner's reference to the "interior perspective" (178) links back to the internalised experience of rupturing that migrants experience when they are forced from their homeland. The characters attempt to re-establish their sense of identity after a traumatic event or exposure to new and vastly different environments. This thesis applies Steiner's argument to all three of the texts. The form of the primary text mirrors the characters' liminality because these narrative strands continually shift when the characters cross (or are prevented from crossing) social and spatial borders.

Steiner and Matzke argue that Mohamed portrays Jama's personal story of conflict-induced displacement alongside the history of Northeast Africa during the Italian and British colonisation of the region. Of particular concern is Steiner's argument that the text is made up of two interwoven narrative strands. Steiner's argument is used to argue that the form of the text mirrors the characters' liminal positioning.

The Orchard of Lost Souls

Tembo describes *Orchard* as "a fictional representation of the impact of the Somali Civil War on a civilian population" (2). Tembo delineates the history of Somalia, and he describes how the region's colonial past is linked to the key moment in history in which the text is set: the end of the military dictatorship and the beginning of the Somali Civil War. Under colonial rule, Somalia was divided into five sections. This division "became the source of conflict first between Somalis and the neighbouring countries and, later, among the Somalis themselves" (4). Tembo's description reveals how Somalia's history of violence and socio-spatial division during the colonial era led to the civil unrest that began in 1987. This thesis draws on Tembo's analysis of *Orchard* to argue that the notion of rupture and division is evident in the content and the form of the text.

Tembo argues that *Orchard* is a "postcolonial wartime narrative" (1) that represents the effects of war and displacement on the characters in the text. An analysis of the form of the text reveals similarities between *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard*, particularly in terms of the narrative structure of the texts. In describing the narrative form of *Orchard*, Tembo argues that:

> Two narrative tapestries are embedded in Mohamed's novel: the public – the narrative capturing the (historical) devastation wrought on Somalia by the Civil War, and the revolution in its wake – and the private: a story of individual trauma, isolation and loss. (3)

Mohamed interweaves these narrative strands to portray how the boundary between the public and the private space is blurred during times of unrest. Spencer demonstrates this further, stating that wars "inevitably spill over into the private space of the homestead and the repercussions are felt widely within and beyond the home" ("Visible Wars" 110). The characters' private lives are intrinsically connected to, and influenced by, the socio-political power structures and oppression in the external environment.

Another similarity between *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard* is that in both texts, Mohamed portrays the lives of individuals on the social periphery who are displaced and made particularly vulnerable by conflict. *Orchard* is concerned with the effects of war on the private lives of women. Spencer argues that in nationalist narratives "women are elided from the arena of action and denied any direct relation to national agency" (111). Of particular interest is the effect of war on Deqo's positionality. Deqo and Jama both occupy the margins of society, however, in the militarised state of Somalia, young women like Deqo are expected to adopt a passive role in society and occupy social peripheries in the public space or remain hidden behind the walls of the private space (Spencer 2015).

Deqo experiences marginalisation. As mentioned, she is vulnerable to abuse and there are two instances in the text where she is nearly raped. However, the text simultaneously portrays her agency, resilience, and active participation in the outside world and the war. Deqo does not have a home, therefore, she does not have a private space of her own to seek safety. By default, she actively participates in the public space, even when it is perilous, which subsequently disrupts dominant narratives about gender roles. Mohamed portrays Deqo's strength on the one hand while representing the devastating realities of war in which gender-based violence is used as a method of war on the other. Tembo argues, "Deqo may be a mere underaged child, but she is ready to fight for her rights and keep herself safe" (15). Deqo obtains her agency from her ability to enforce boundaries and protect her body from harm. Deqo is also portrayed as an agentic and resourceful character at the end of the novel when she leads Filsan and Kawsar to safety. Mohamed's revisionist narrative outlines "the various roles played by women and in doing so disrupt[s] the dominant narratives on war" (Spencer 110) because the women in the text actively participate in the public space. This thesis agrees with Tembo's argument that of "the three female protagonists in the novel, Deqo stands out as someone who

is given a bigger form of agency" (14). She attempts to take control of the situation she is in, and she actively changes the circumstances around her when she leads the other two women to a refugee camp. Deqo has a complex positionality: she is more than a passive victim of her circumstances, yet she functions within a complex system of power that can significantly affect her exilic journey and her life because she is vulnerable to physical abuse, psychological trauma, and death.

In their examinations of *Orchard* Tembo and Spencer pay particular attention to the roles played by women in war. The scholars problematise how literature portrays women as inactive in times of war. The characters in *Orchard* are active participants in the war. Of particular concern is Deqo's resilience where, despite her evident vulnerability, she changes the trajectory of her journey by leading herself, Kawsar and Filsan to the refugee camp across the border.

The Fortune Men

Fortune was published in 2021 and when I commenced writing this thesis, no accredited scholarly articles analysed the text. In the absence of published critical scholarly work, I will critically engage with book reviews and interviews with the author. In discussing the role of history and fiction in *Fortune*, Mohamed stated that the "line between fiction and history is much blurrier than it seems" (Mohamed and Hassan n.p.). The text outlines the true story of Mahmood Hussein Mattan who was wrongfully convicted of murder and subsequently executed in Cardiff in 1952. Mahmood's story is an example of how "history is often as we know very selective, biased, sometimes outright lies" (Mohamed and Hassan n.p.). *Fortune* is a hybrid between history, fiction and "living memory" (Medlicott 1). Mohamed rearticulates Mahmood's life history and the text is told primarily from his perspective (Medlicott 2). *Fortune* is an example of how transnational literature and the genre of creative non-fiction are used to rewrite history so that it is told from the perspective of those who were marginalised and silenced by the socio-political structures of power in their diasporic home.

In all three of the primary texts, Mohamed emphasises the personal experiences of the characters rather than the injustices and oppression that inevitably shape their journeys. This humanises the characters revealing that they are multidimensional: they are not simply victims of their circumstances, but the characters are affected by the socio-cultural and political structures of power around them. Caragh Medlicott argues that Mohamed purposefully does not dwell on the "police conspiracy which condemned Mattan to death, instead, Mohamed

focuses her attention on the rich inner life of an outwardly taciturn Mahmood" (2). Mahmood is a complex character: he gambles, and is involved in petty crimes. David Lloyd states that Mohamed "paints a portrait of a man who is far from perfect" (1). Similarly, Michael Donkor describes Mahmood as a "shape-shifting character, variously positioned as a rakish antihero, plucky picaro, petty thief, charismatic dreamer, prideful gambler, doting father, anti-colonial firebrand and speaker of truth to power" (1). Therefore, Mohamed highlights Mahmood's multi-faceted and liminal identity. She uses creative non-fiction to portray Mahmood in a fair light when he is subjected to life-shattering prejudice in the diasporic space.

This thesis has built upon the work of scholars who have analysed the primary texts. Based on existing scholarship, it has been argued that the primary texts are classified as creative non-fiction because each text is a fictionalised account of key moments in history in the Horn of Africa and, in Mahmood's case, Britain. Mohamed uses this fictional mode to outline the effects of displacement on the characters and this is mirrored in the content and the form of the texts. Further, an examination of both the vulnerabilities and fluctuating agencies of characters has the potential to offer a positive and original contribution to the field of transnational and migration studies. However, the scholarly work that has been analysed does not examine the child migrants in Mohamed's texts specifically. Therefore, this thesis will analyse Mohamed's oeuvre with a central focus on the child migrant characters to examine her portrayal of conflict-induced migration and its impact on vulnerable communities.

Methodology and Structure

Methodology

The central argument of the thesis is that border-crossing and displacement exacerbate migrants' shifting positionalities and hybrid identities. This argument will be developed by analysing the literary texts with a specific focus on the link between liminality and borders. This theoretical framework, which is drawn from transnational theory and diaspora studies, is used to analyse the primary texts. These theoretical concepts and terms, outlined at the beginning of this chapter, will be used to delineate the characters' liminal positioning, the motif of the border, and the effect of conflict-induced migration on the characters' identities. Each text will be addressed in a separate chapter and the instances in which a character oscillates from a position of agency to vulnerability will be outlined. In the final chapter, the primary texts will be compared to explore how children experience migration differently from adults.

Structure

Chapter Two will analyse the narrative form of *Mamba Boy*. It will be argued that the text is a postcolonial *Bildungsroman*. Additionally, the text is read as war *Bildung*. Thus, the similarities in the structure of the traditional *Bildungsroman* and the postcolonial and war *Bildung* will be analysed. Through an analysis of Jama's journey, the chapter aims to ask what type of subjectivities are produced in the setting of a violently disrupted and unstable environment. Jama's identity is continuously ruptured when he is traumatised by his surroundings. When this occurs, he enters a cyclic pattern of rupture and reconstruction. This oscillation between rupture and vulnerability to reconstruction, resilience, and agency is mirrored in the narrative structure of the text. In Chapter Three, a transnational feminist approach is employed to analyse the interconnections among women, vulnerability, and conflict-induced displacement in *Orchard*. Overall, the chapter focuses on gender and how perceived gender roles affect Deqo's ability to cross social and spatial borders. More specifically, Patricia Pessar and Sarah Mahler's theoretical concept of "gendered geographies of power" (818) is explored to delineate this relationship between gender ideologies and power. These scholars examine the ways that culturally produced ideologies about gender are embedded within "hierarchies of power and privilege" (Glenn 5) that regulate women's lives as well as migration flows (Pessar & Mahler 2003). They have developed a three-part framework to "analyse gender agency" (818). These three structures include "geographic

scales", "social locations" and "power geometries" (815) which will be defined and applied to the text, respectively. Using examples, the thesis argues that Deqo is resilient and resourceful, and she is much more than a victim of her circumstances. Chapter Four analyses Mahmood's exilic journey in *Fortune*. The unstable border between fact and fiction will be analysed as it is shown that factuality is evident in non-fiction texts. Mohamed uses the genre of creative non-fiction to expose the impact of misrepresentation on Mahmood's identity. She re-represents Mahmood using fictional devices revealing his inner consciousness and humanity in a space where he is denied the right to a fair trial because he is seen as the 'other'. Chapter Five compares the characters' experiences of migration in *Mamba Boy, Orchard,* and *Fortune*. The content and the form of the texts are analysed. Through this analysis the chapter seeks to analyse the characters' liminal positioning, focusing on how social factors alter the exilic journeys as borders tighten and loosen according to how they are perceived. Of specific focus is the impact of age on the characters' journeys and Jama and Deqo's experiences of migration as children as well as Mahmood's memories of migration as a child will be compared to Mahmood's experience as an adult to show how children surpass borders that adults cannot cross.

Conclusion

Mamba Boy, Orchard and *Fortune* are situated within the literary category of transnational literature and diasporic literature. This thesis argues that Mohamed utilises the characters' exilic journeys as a deliberate fictional strategy to portray the type of subjectivities that war-torn and unstable environments produce. Those who are forced to cross borders to escape the conflict in their homelands experience an internal rupturing because their familiar world is torn apart by war. Jama, Deqo and Mahmood are split between their homelands and diasporic homes. They cross borders in times of socio-political upheaval and they are forced to walk through areas of conflict without shelter or parental guidance. When the child protagonists cross spatial borders they are alienated and become targets of abuse because they come from elsewhere and they are different from the members in the host nation. Despite the barriers they face, the characters display a resilience that helps them to continue their journeys. The thesis argues that the characters rapidly shift between positions of agency and vulnerability when they cross borders, highlighting the central role of the concept of liminality in its theoretical framework. If they successfully cross these borders, they form social connections that help

them to survive and become a part of the community. Yet there are other instances in the texts where the characters cross spatial borders but they are marginalised and abused. Through close analysis and comparison of Mohamed's oeuvre, this thesis will demonstrate the conditions that exacerbate their unstable positioning, catalysing a shift from a vulnerable to an agentic state of being.

Chapter Two: Deconstructing Conflict - Analysing the Impact of War in the Content and Form of *Black Mamba Boy*

Introduction

This chapter investigates the various ways that Jama's development is destabilised by conflict in *Mamba Boy*. With a close reference to the text, the chapter demonstrates how a violent environment disrupts a child migrant's ability to establish a cohesive identity and a stable sense of belonging. As such, socio-political turmoil ruptures Jama's psychological growth. The impact of conflict on his identity is investigated by analysing the features of the *Bildungsroman*. While *Mamba Boy* shares certain features of the traditional *Bildungsroman*, there are various instances where Mohamed purposefully veers away from the conventional structures of the genre. Consequently, Mohamed reconfigures the generic elements of the *Bildungsroman* to portray the journeys of marginalised social groups who were pushed onto the socio-spatial peripheries of their homeland during the colonial era. Thus, *Mamba Boy* is a post-colonial *Bildungsroman* and like other novels of this genre, it is used "to reclaim lost identities/cultures or to challenge the historical record" (Hoagland 43). Moreover, *Mamba Boy* is set during a time of war and displacement and the text has features that are commonly associated with the war *Bildung*. The conflict that Jama is exposed to profoundly disrupts his development as he adapts to new social and spatial environments to survive. Further, as an orphan and a child migrant who crosses national borders during a time of war, Jama's experiences of migration are extreme. When Jama encounters Italian and British colonisers he is discriminated against and abused. While the effects of colonisation and war are a central focus of this chapter, it is important to note that Jama is exposed to instances of ostracisation *before* his life is entangled within the colonial project. The hostile environment that Jama came from will now be briefly delineated to reveal that Jama was discriminated against from a young age.

Ambaro, Jama's mother, left him in Hargeisa to seek work. When he was six years old, Jama undertook the journey across the Red Sea from Hargeisa to Aden, Yemen, to reunite with her. Jama and Ambaro live with the Islaweyne family who are "distant relatives, members of his mother's clan" (Mohamed 7). This shows how migrants make use of their transnational connections in an attempt to improve their quality of life and escape the social, economic or political pressures in their homeland. Ambaro migrates in a situation of precarity as she flees

increasing political tension in her homeland. She crosses the border in the 1930s when Somalia is under the control of the British and Italian colonial empires. The simmering conflict in the region erupts into war when Mussolini invades surrounding territories. Despite her familial tie to the Islaweynes, Ambaro is mistreated by the family. When she arrives in Aden the family expect "their country cousin to be their servant" (7). While she lacks resources, Ambaro refuses to work for them. Consequently, she and later Jama are made to live "like phantoms on the roof, leaving as few traces of their existence as possible" (8). Ambaro and Jama are treated as the 'other' by their extended family and they are made to live on the peripheries of the household. Upon Jama's arrival, Mrs. Islaweyne is hostile towards him and she dehumanises him.

> Mrs Islaweyne had fumed at the inconvenience and made a show of checking him for diseases that could infect her precious children. Her gold bangles had clanked around as she checked for nits, fleas, skin diseases; she shamefully pulled up his ma'awis to check for worms. (7)

This is Jama's first interaction with the host in the diasporic location.[8] From the start of his exilic journey, Jama is ostracised and made to feel that he does not belong. As he is not allowed to interact with the other children in the Islaweyne household and is made to live on the roof, Jama is pushed to the outskirts of Aden both socially and spatially. Therefore, Jama and Ambaro are vulnerable because of their lack of resources, their evident need for help and because they are migrants. Throughout Jama's five years in Aden, Mrs Islaweyne, and other members of the community, mock Jama because he is a migrant. This is seen when Mrs Islaweyne describes Jama as the "boy from nowhere" (8) and warns her children against playing with him, increasing Jama's alienation. Despite the ill-treatment he faces, Jama displays resilience when he attempts to form a connection with other children in the streets of Aden. There are moments when he is successful and he establishes friendships with other street children and Somali child migrants. Jama befriends Shidane and Abdi and their presence in his life gives him a sense of belonging. Yet the nature of their friendship is precarious because "friendships between boys of different clans tended to form and collapse like constellations of new stars forged in the heat of Aden, never lasting" (15). Subsequently, it is difficult for Jama to form secure transnational connections with other children in the diasporic location. He is

[8] Aden is described as a diasporic *location* as opposed to a diasporic *home*. The use of the word 'home' implies that Jama has effectively established a sense of belonging in Aden. In the instances where Jama is ostracised in a place that he has migrated to, the term diasporic location/space will be used.

mistreated and alienated in Aden and he feels that he does not have a place in the world or a "real family" (12) where he belongs.

On the whole, the host alienates and marginalises Jama because he is different. Jama matures from a child to a teenager in an environment where he feels that he does not fit in. From a young age, Jama practices resilience because he attempts to form a harmonious sense of self despite the rejection he faces in Aden. The features of the *Bildungsroman* and the Post-colonial *Bildungsroman* will now be outlined and compared. Following this, the war *Bildung* will be analysed to examine how trauma affects Jama.

Features of the Traditional *Bildungsroman*

The traditional *Bildungsroman* is rooted in the European novel and it is specifically connected to the genre of German Romanticism (Ilmonen 2017). In its early form, the *Bildungsroman* had fixed characteristics in both thematic and structural elements.[9] In defining the common features of the traditional *Bildungsroman* M.H. Abrams states that:

> The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist's mind and character, in the passage from childhood through varied experiences—and often through a spiritual crisis—into maturity, which usually involves recognition of one's identity and role in the world. (192)

As it is seen in Abrams' definition, the protagonist's development is a central concern in the traditional *Bildungsroman*. The genre follows a "model of progressive maturation" (Frow et al. 1905) in both content and form. Thematically, the *Bildungsroman* is concerned with the development of a protagonist who is "*in the process of becoming*" (Bakhtin qtd in Golban ix; emphasis in original) where growth and development are essential to the protagonist's identity formation (Golban 2018). Moreover, the narrative structure develops in a linear manner. The linear plot of the traditional *Bildungsroman* is intertwined with the protagonist's development because it "traces the chronological growth from childhood to maturity" (Treagus 21). The plot "moves towards closure" (21) at the same moment that the protagonist achieves self-realisation. Importantly, the notion of development, which involves a protagonist's progression from childhood into adulthood, is a central feature in the traditional *Bildungsroman.* The manner

[9] The term 'traditional *Bildungsroman*' is used to describe the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* (Hoagland 2006). This thesis does not have the scope to outline the various ways that the genre has changed over time however it should be noted that the *Bildungsroman* has undergone various transformations since the late nineteenth century, and it continues to evolve. An example of the evolution of the traditional *Bildungsroman* is the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* which will be explored further in this chapter.

through which post-colonial writers utilise the genre of the *Bildungsroman* to reveal how colonisation disrupts the protagonist's development will now be examined.

Challenging Tradition: Comparing the Traditional *Bildungsroman* and the Post-colonial *Bildungsroman*

Post-colonial writers alter the conventions of the traditional *Bildungsroman* to reveal the rupturing effects of colonisation on marginalised groups. The elements of the traditional *Bildungsroman* are reworked and the genre "becomes dislocated beyond its rules of recognition" (Ilmonen 64). These "rules" include the genre's definitive thematic and structural elements. The most significant adaptation to the traditional *Bildungsroman* is the shift in perspective where the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* is told from the colonised subject's point of view.[10] The protagonist of the traditional *Bildungsroman* has a particular frame of reference that most commonly portrays a "European, masculine, and class-privileged experience" (Frow et al. 1906). The European protagonist is ironically displaced and replaced by the colonised subject who was denied such privileges and marginalised by the ideologies that place the protagonist of the traditional *Bildungsroman* in an advantageous position. This fundamental shift in perspective allows post-colonial writers to speak back to the colonial project and expose the imperialist ideologies that the traditional *Bildungsroman* was founded upon (Ilmonen 2017). Thus, the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* portrays the other side of colonial history. Subsequently, the genre of the *Bildungsroman* "becomes dislocated from its context" (Ilmonen 64) of imperialism. In short, post-colonial writers employ and then reconfigure the conventions of the *Bildungsroman* to problematise the imperial values of racism, sexism, and classism that are embedded within and perpetrated through the genre (Hoagland 2006).

The conventions of the *Bildungsroman* in its traditional form fail to effectively represent the rupturing effects of colonisation on the post-colonial subject's internal and external world. Accordingly, the thematic and structural elements of the genre are altered, commonly fragmented and hybridised, by post-colonial writers who portray the destructive effect of colonisation on the protagonist's development. This is an example of how a "literary

[10] Ericka Hoagland argues that while "rite of passage stories or tales of development and maturation are themselves not exclusive to the West, for almost two hundred years, the genre which was the official "representative" of such stories and tales, the *Bildungsroman*, was identified as a purely Western genre, largely because the genre was steeped in western values, and the genre sought to promulgate and defend those values to its readership" (9).

genre, too, can be interpreted as mobile and displaced, becoming a medium that describes the colonised experience of fragmented identities" (Ilmonen 72). The thematic and structural differences between the traditional *Bildungsroman* and the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* will now be delineated in more detail.

As outlined above, the principal thematic concern in the *Bildungsroman* is the protagonist's development. In the traditional *Bildungsroman*, the protagonist attempts to construct a cohesive sense of self while matching their identity with Western ideologies by the end of the text (Ilmonen 2017). The genre portrays the journey of an emancipated individual (usually a male character) who attempts to find his purpose in an environment in which he *already* belongs. From this place of familiarity and security, "the protagonist chooses, accepts and discards viewpoints or values on his way to a harmonious self" (Ilmonen 72). Thus, the protagonist navigates the world from a position of autonomy. Hoagland outlines how factors such as race, gender, and class are intertwined with the protagonist's agency:

> The traditional *Bildungsroman*, specifically in its white, male, heterosexual, middle-class articulation, presupposes a sovereign subject, a protagonist who has not been marginalized, and retains an inherent sense of self. Most importantly, he retains the right throughout his journey to determine what he does and what happens to him, even when he is at his most vulnerable. (32)

To reiterate Hoagland's argument, the protagonist in the traditional *Bildungsroman* remains in a position of power throughout his journey, even in moments of crisis. The protagonist exists in a transitional or liminal state as he matures from childhood to adulthood. However, he does not reach a point of precarity where he loses his rights or his ability to control and manipulate his external environment and his place in the world. Hoagland argues that the protagonist in the traditional *Bildungsroman* "retains the right of choice, which includes whether or not he will follow the laws set before him" (33). Thus, the protagonist retains his human rights. The notion of rights is particularly important in the context of colonisation and forced migration because colonised subjects and migrants experience a loss of rights and citizenship when they cross borders. Overall, the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* problematises "the 'givens' of the *Bildungsroman* and explore[s] how they interact with and affect both the trajectory of the text and the trajectory of its protagonist" (Hoagland 36). These 'givens' are determined by "axes of identity" (Ilmonen 71) that place the protagonist in a privileged social position. As a "white, male, heterosexual, middle-class" (32) *citizen* the protagonist exists in an emancipated state of being where he maintains his agency and ability to determine his trajectory.

The protagonist in the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* similarly attempts to form a cohesive sense of self in a time of change. However, this transformational process occurs in the context of colonisation in an environment that is entrenched with imperial ideals where the protagonist is treated as the 'other' (Ilmonen 2017). Hoagland argues that the "relationship between society and the individual becomes much more complex when race, class, and sexuality are introduced, and when the individual is female" (33). Moreover, if there are parts of the protagonist's identity that are perceived as infelicitous through the colonial gaze, then they are exposed to "multiple mechanisms of marginalization" (Ilmonen 70). Therefore, the protagonist in the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* is confronted with the task of constructing an identity despite instances of alienation and ostracisation that repeatedly rupture their developing sense of self and belonging.

The relationship between society and the individual is explored further by Hoagland who states that:

> The choice to separate from society, a maneuver which normally triggers the beginning of the *Bildung* process in the traditional form of the genre, is often not a choice at all in the post-colonial *Bildungsroman*: the protagonist is "always already" separate from the dominant society, beginning at birth, and the separation typically lasts the protagonist's entire life. (31)

As Hoagland suggests, the process of separating from society is an important part of the protagonist's journey in the traditional *Bildungsroman*. It is the notion of choice that differentiates the two genres and the protagonist's position in society. Significantly, the protagonist in the traditional *Bildungsroman* voluntarily and temporarily withdraws from society to explore new spaces. He crosses multiple social and spatial boundaries without restriction on his way to self-realisation. Conversely, in the post-colonial context, the protagonist does not decide to separate from society. Marginalised social groups are born into social hierarchies where they are forced onto the peripheries of society by the dominant society. Importantly, the post-colonial protagonist is marginalised by the systems of power that offer the protagonist of the traditional *Bildungsroman* unconditional freedom. However, despite the challenges the post-colonial protagonist encounters, they may also obtain autonomy through their journey of migration. Analysing the *Bildungsroman* through a post-colonial lens offers insights into the liminality of child migrants. In the context of forced migration, the notion of choice is linked to rights, citizenship, and mobility. Therefore, those who are displaced by conflict at a young age often have minimal choice in leaving their homeland or being ostracised

from society. In certain instances, child migrants are forced to navigate new environments without rights or protection. From this precarious position, there are moments in their exilic journeys when they have no control over what will happen to them. However, these children are also highly adaptable to new social and spatial environments. Departing their homelands, whether forced or voluntary, could nurture their personal growth and maturation. Thus, the journey of solitary migration accentuates the inherent potential of child migrants for self-discovery and empowerment.

Post-colonial writers disrupt and fragment the traditional linear form of the *Bildungsroman* in various ways. Multiple narratives replace the single, grand narrative that is typical of the genre. Consequently, a range of perspectives emerges to portray a particular moment in colonial history in a manner that represents marginalised groups in a fair light (Hoagland 2006). Hoagland argues that a singular History that was told from a Western point of view is replaced by a "collection of 'histories' which offer alternative visions, versions, and voices" (44). By incorporating multiple perspectives into one text, post-colonial writers celebrate the multiplicity of identity and simultaneously steer away from a single, authoritative narrative which is used to disempower and subjugate particular social groups. Thus, post-colonial writers destabilise the structural conventions of the traditional *Bildungsroman* by fragmenting the linear temporal progression of the genre. Further, the temporal structure of the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* is non-linear and scattered across time to portray episodic segments that shift from past to present. This is an example of how post-colonial writers use literature to resist imperial structures of power because the genre allows a "repressed or manipulated past to be reprocessed using narrative elements of bildungsroman" (Ilmonen 65). To conclude, the genre of the traditional *Bildungsroman* is reconfigured by post-colonial writers who manipulate the thematic and structural conventions of the genre to highlight the links between the traditional *Bildungsroman* and colonialism.

Crossing the Borders of Time and Tyranny: *Black Mamba* Boy as a Post-colonial Bildungsroman

A central thematic concern in the traditional *Bildungsroman* is the protagonist's development as he matures from a child to an adult. Jama's development, which is both psychological and physical, occurs while he crosses vast distances into volatile regions. Jama's "inner condition" (Golban 8) is examined to explore how his identity is altered by the new environments that he encounters over the ten years of his exilic journey. As previously mentioned, borders are

unstable and there are instances when Jama is not able to cross social or spatial borders. Thus, an important consideration in this chapter is the impact of impenetrable borders on the progress of Jama's development.

At the beginning of his journey of migration, when Jama departs from his homeland for a second time at the age of eleven, he surpasses multiple physical borders without being stopped. When he encounters a checkpoint in Djibouti he slips past without being noticed. "Jama eased his way around the checkpoint behind the backs of armed legionnaires" (Mohamed 81). Jama successfully crosses multiple borders because "No-one paid any notice to the market boy, this was a town accustomed to a constant tide of newcomers […] but there was also just plain indifference" (81). As a migrant and a market boy, Jama is invisible to those around him and he seemingly effortlessly crosses the borders within Northeast Africa. At this point in the text, borders have little impact on Jama's journey. He crosses the "artificial border between Somaliland and Djibouti" and no "border or sign alerted Jama to the fact that he was in a new country" (78–9). The omniscient narrator refers to the border between the two nation-states as an "artificial border". This is an example of how Mohamed undermines political borders, their legitimacy outside of policy-making, and their impact on Jama's mobility. Jama's journey carries a sense of momentum at this point in the text because he is driven forward by "his hunger to see his father" (82) who awaits him in Sudan.

As Jama's journey of migration continues, his ability to cross social and spatial borders becomes increasingly more difficult. Jama embarks on a journey at the young age of sixteen, leaving Gerset, Eritrea with the goal of finding employment in Egypt. His aim is to save enough money to pay for his wife Bethlehem's dowry. He attempts to cross British territory into Egypt and muses over the fact that he:

> had never needed identification before, he had no paper saying who he was and where he belonged but from this point on, it would become a priority for him. In this society you were nobody unless you had been anointed with an identity from a bureaucrat. (212)

Imperial structures of power began to regulate Jama's freedom of movement. Consequently, the forward momentum that was evident at the start of the text is interrupted. Jama's internal development and growth, which are essential to his maturation into an adult, are similarly disrupted by these power structures. His identity is affected by colonisation and his exposure to Italian and British soldiers. As seen in the quote above, Jama's sense of belonging is brought into question by the British colonisers' implementation of identity documents and border

regulations. Jama gains his sense of belonging from his clan and familial connections that stretch across space and are not confined to colonial borders. However, in the eyes of the coloniser, Jama's identity and belonging are bound to identification documents that tie him to his homeland and prevent him from entering (or belonging to) the territories outside of the border of Somaliland. Thus, Jama's attempt to cross borders is interrupted by the increasing presence of imperial powers in the region.

Mamba Boy outlines Jama's journey from childhood to adulthood. He exists in a liminal space as he navigates his way between these two stages of his life. Unquestionably, Jama's transition from childhood to adulthood is neither seamless nor linear. As outlined by Abrams previously, a common feature of the traditional *Bildungsroman* is that a crisis catalyses the protagonist's transformation from a child to an adult. The passage from childhood to adulthood is never seamless because it involves internal conflict and struggle. However, for child migrants like Jama, this transformational time in their lives is profoundly destabilising. Jama attempts to form a sense of self at the exact moment that he loses social and spatial structures of support as a result of the war. Therefore, Jama's passage from childhood to adulthood is non-linear because a series of crises rupture his life. Instead of catalysing growth, these crises arrest Jama's development. Moreover, his identity is repeatedly ruptured when he loses those close to him and he is ostracised by those in his diasporic home and colonisers. He is also traumatised by the conflict that he witnesses in the war-torn areas of Northeast Africa. Accordingly, Jama must find a way to mature from a child to an adult despite the trauma that he experiences during his migration through the region.

The text prioritises Jama's psychological development rather than his physical growth and this reveals the impact of war on his identity. This is a common thematic element of the *Bildungsroman* where the focus of the genre is "development – spiritual, psychological and moral, rather than physical – leading to the formation of personality" (Golban 18). Jama's psychological development is of particular interest to examine how displacement impacts his identity. Jama adapts to new environments to integrate into the communities in the diasporic space and survive. There are various moments when he has to take care of himself and he endures harrowing experiences that force him to act beyond his age. Yet, in other instances in the text, he is treated with compassion by the host because he is seen as a vulnerable child who requires care. Consequently, Jama shifts between the roles of child and adult as he adjusts to a variety of diasporic locations.

Jama's liminal positioning will now be delineated through a close engagement with examples in the text. First, the significance of the title of the text and its connection to liminality

and migration will be explored. Subsequently, an analysis of the text will delve into Jama's encounters upon this return to Hargeisa. In the eighth month of her pregnancy carrying Jama, Ambaro took rest below an acacia tree in the savannah. During this moment, a black mamba coiled around her belly and briefly paused on her womb before disappearing into the sand. To Ambaro, this incident foreshadowed Jama's extraordinary destiny. Furthermore, Jama's birth coincided with "the year of the worm" (13) when large worms emerged from the earth, devouring vegetation, trees, and even straw houses. While seen as a plague by some members of the community in Hargeisa, the elders recognised it as a precursor to the rains. A Prophet informed Ambaro that her child was to be born in the thick of the plague and that "he would have the most beautiful luck as if he had been born with the protection of all the saints and he would see the four corners of the world" (13). The black mamba and the worms are liminal entities. On one hand, they hold the capacity to bring substantial loss and danger to the people. While on the other hand, they serve as symbols of prosperity and abundance. Thus, the imagery and the title of the text foreshadow Jama's liminal positioning. He navigates unchartered territories where he may encounter profound suffering and deprivation. Yet his life is filled with instances of exceptional fortune, affording him to opportunity to traverse the globe as a young boy under the guidance and protection of others.

After living with Ambaro in Aden for five years, she died of a severe respiratory infection. At just eleven years old, Jama is expected "to look after himself" (Mohamed 48) and he is abandoned by the Islaweyne family. Without his mother or his friends, Jama finds himself in an incredibly precarious situation. He eats "fitfully and badly, sometimes picking up food from the dirt and giving it a casual clean before swallowing it in a few untasting bites" (48). He also "fought with stray cats and dogs over leftover bones" (48). Jama is discovered in an alley by a woman from his mother's ethnic group. After three days, "a human telephone network of clansmen and women" locates his great aunt Jinnow, and he is brought back to her in Somaliland with a chaperone, like "a faulty parcel" (47). As a result of exhaustion from his journey, Jinnow finds Jama lying defenceless on the ground. She "bent down to wipe drool from his sleepy face and held him to her bosom, filling his nose with her sour milk smell" (49). This image of a maternal figure and child emphasises Jama's youth and his vulnerability. She holds Jama against her body as though he is an infant. Jama's obvious need for care and his familial connection to Jinnow allow him to bypass social borders and he is brought into the intimate space of her home. However, Jinnow's compassion is placed alongside instances of hostility from the larger community of Hargeisa. Jama is hardened by his experiences in Aden and he quickly earns a "bad reputation within the compound" (52) as a result of his "filthy

mouth" (52) and violent behaviour towards the other children. Although Hargeisa is his homeland, Jama is seen as "a strange silent boy from a foreign land" (53) and he is ostracised by the women and the children around the compound. Jama is unable to pass the intimate social borders in his homeland and from his viewpoint, everywhere he "looked there were closed doors and empty streets, all the towns' dramas were played out by figures hidden behind high walls and drawn curtains" (51). Jama is "[t]wice diasporized" (Hall "Negotiating" 28) because his cultural hybridity has made him an outsider in the homeland *and* his diasporic home. Jama is motivated to earn an income so that he can leave Hargeisa. While he is only eleven, Jama promptly finds work in a slaughterhouse that uses child labour to "ferry the carcasses of freshly killed animals to eating houses" (Mohamed 57). Jama is exploited as a result of his evident need for work. He works amongst a group of "bewildered little children" where the "smallest were barely five years old" (58). In this part of the text, Jama acts beyond his age, taking on the role of an adult so that he can earn money to continue his journey. "Jama saw the sweaty, smelly work as a kind of test that entitled him to his father, a trial of his worth as a son and as a man" (65). The economic exploitation in the slaughterhouse highlights Jama's vulnerability yet his ability to take on the work to alter his circumstances simultaneously portrays his adaptive strength. Jama continuously shifts from the role of a child to an adult in response to how he is perceived by those around him and to better his opportunities. Therefore, Jama's path from childhood to adulthood is non-linear because it is connected to his circumstances rather than his physical age.

Navigating Unstable Ground: The War *Bildung* and Child Soldiers

The genre of the war *Bildung* will now be defined. This will be followed by a brief description of the common thematic and structural features of the genre. The war *Bildung* conventionally depicts a character's personal discovery of the self and society however this occurs within an unstable and violent environment. War and socio-political instability impact the protagonist's life to the extent that the external public environment and the protagonist's private world begin to merge and fragment simultaneously. In other words, the protagonist's internal and external worlds are unwoven and ruptured when their lives are taken over by war. Hoagland defines the war *Bildung* as "a form of education and development specific to novels in which war is a prominent feature" (180). The learning process is integral to the development of the protagonist's character. The protagonist learns about themselves while also learning about the war and their role in a destabilised, violent world (Hoagland 2006). If the protagonist in the

war *Bildung* is conscripted into the war, education involves the process where they learn to identify as a soldier. For child soldiers, war and civil unrest are particularly confusing and devastating. At first, becoming a soldier offers them the opportunity to be a member of a group. For those like Jama who have been ostracised for most of their lives, being a part of the army gives them a sense of purpose and belonging. The sense of community and security that child soldiers gain from being a part of the army is ruptured when they enter battle. The children internalise this contradiction where they feel that they are part of a social group possibly for the first time while at the same time they contribute to the destruction and horrific violence of war. Child soldiers who join the colonial army are made to destroy their homelands and communities. A prominent theme in the war *Bildung* is an "anti-war rhetoric" (Hoagland 180). The protagonist is disillusioned by war as they realise that war is not what it seems from the outside. After this realisation, the protagonist attempts to leave the war and reform their sense of self after being a functional part of the war and experiencing traumatising events on the battlefield (Hoagland 2006).

The structure of the war *Bildung* mirrors the protagonist's learning process and discovery of self, war, and society. The structure is cyclical in nature to represent the effects of conflict on the protagonist's identity which is ruptured by instances of trauma and abuse. Tobey Herzog describes the "recurring three-part structure in war literature of innocence, experience, and consideration" (8). In his book *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussel delineates the three-part structure of the war narrative:

> first, the sinister or absurd or even farcical preparation [for battle]; second, the unmanning experience of battle; and third, the retirement from the line to a contrasting (usually pastoral) scene, where there is time and quiet for consideration, meditation, and reconstruction. (130)

Drawing on Fussel's theory, the three-part structure of war literature can be applied to transnational literature. The protagonist begins their journey in a state of innocence and naivety as they prepare to leave their place of belonging to enter an unknown environment (Herzog 2005). Civilians who are forced from their homelands because of war must prepare for the loss and destruction of their homeland. Those who are conscripted into battle, either by force or choice, must prepare to witness the devastation caused by the war on the frontline of battle. In the second phase, the protagonist's identity is ruptured by violent events caused by colonisation and civil unrest. Those who flee their homeland to escape the conflict experience instances of hostility, alienation, and abuse because they are seen as the other in the diasporic space. In the

third phase, the protagonist withdraws from the environment (this can include physical or psychological withdrawal) as they re-evaluate the ideologies of the war and attempt to reform their sense of identity. The pattern of "innocence, experience, and consideration" (Herzog 8) occurs throughout the protagonist's journey as they attempt to cross social and spatial borders in new environments. Those who are part of the war as well as those who are fleeing conflict in their homeland experience extreme violence and trauma. Their sense of self and belonging in the world is ruptured. As a consequence of the traumatic events they witness, they may withdraw from the world as they attempt to internalise what has occurred and reconcile their identities.

The thematic and structural conventions of the war *Bildung* have been outlined. The cyclical, three-part structure of war literature has been applied to the *Bildungsroman* genre and transnational literature. The protagonist experiences this cycle of "innocence, experience, and consideration" (8) during the war. After the war, the protagonist may not be able to develop a singular, coherent sense of self because their identity has been repeatedly ruptured and altered by the instances of violence they have witnessed. They cannot harmoniously align their selves within a society that has been destabilised by war. Those whose identities are ruptured by war become stuck in a state of permanent disruption. They cannot settle into their homeland where the abuse took place or their diasporic home where they feel they do not belong. The various ways that border-crossing and war affect Jama's development will be explored further below.

Transforming in a Time of Terror: *Black Mamba Boy* as a War *Bildung*

Violence and forced displacement as a result of war have a profoundly destabilising effect on Jama's identity. Multiple crises alter the trajectory of Jama's diasporic journey. Despite the conflict that surrounds him, Jama is driven forward by his quest to be reunited with his father, Guure. As Guure left to seek work in Sudan when Jama was an infant, they do not have a relationship. Still, Jama holds to an idealised version of his father, anticipating that their meeting would reaffirm his sense of belonging. While working for Italian soldiers in Keren, Eritrea, along with other Somali askaris, Jama asks them to let his father know that he is stationed nearby and searching for him. On his way to meet Jama, Guure is killed at a military roadblock, shattering Jama's hopes for a relationship with his father and a renewed sense of belonging in the world. Jama experiences extreme psychological trauma when his father is

killed and his friend Shidane is tortured and killed by Italian soldiers.[11] This is the "unmanning experience of battle" (Fussel 130) where Jama's childhood is brought to a premature and sudden end by the shattering effects of the war. The structural development of the text and the purpose of Jama's journey are concurrently destabilised and changed by conflict. After he learns about his father's death, Jama feels as though his journey has reached its end. As a result of the rupturing effects of trauma, Jama withdraws from his surroundings. "In grief, Jama felt cut off from life, as if there was cotton wool in his ears, in his mouth, in his mind, around his heart" (Mohamed 130). He does not have the ability to physically retreat from battle to a place "where there is time and quiet for consideration, meditation, and reconstruction" (130). The war surrounds Jama and he cannot escape without walking through the line of fire. Without the ability to leave, Jama occupies a liminal space where he is *in* but not *part* of the world. Jama feels as though he exists in "a universe where he was just debris floating in starless obscurity" (127). Thus, Jama occupies an incredibly precarious position as he is left, alone and orphaned, at the height of the conflict.

After Guure's death, Jama "fully apprehends the precarity of his situation" (177). Jama feels as though "death is inescapable […] he wondered at how he had never taken heed of it before" (129). This is a far cry from the child who, just three months before, declared: "I can do anything […] I walked across the desert by myself" (90). When Jama is still in shock from his father's death and recovering from malaria, an Italian soldier strikes Jama with a karbaash causing the skin on his palm to curl "like a leaf in a fire" (148). After this incident, the omniscient narrator states that it "is hard to avenge yourself on someone you fear, when everything about them […] imposes your own inferiority. Even a child's imagination shrinks in the presence of terror" (149). Having agreed to work for the Italians, Jama cannot escape their abuse. Thus, Jama is hopeless as his life appears to be encompassed by the violence and cruelty of the war. However, shortly after he is struck, a Somali clansman attends to Jama's wound, he speaks blessings over Jama and tells him that "we will get our time" (149). In this moment of compassion, Jama is given the strength to carry on and he returns to the soldier feeling "proud and brave as he endured the stinging in his hand, he kept his chin up like a soldier" (149). This example reveals Jama's resilience. His life has been devastated by the violence around him yet he attempts to piece his identity back together. Thus, Jama's journey is marked by rupture and simultaneity because he continues along his path of migration.

[11] The abuse that is inflicted by foreigners upon local children and child migrants is a central concern in the text. Mohamed problematizes this by portraying the abuse that the Italian soldiers inflict upon Jama and his friends Shidane and Abdi. This is particularly evident in the life of Shidane who is killed by Italian soldiers.

Furthermore, he comes to accept that his life contains both "lightness and darkness" (115) and that it will not be free from suffering and pain. Therefore, Jama is a liminal subject because he oscillates between vulnerability and agency, particularly in more vulnerable or dangerous circumstances. This oscillation intensifies when Jama is in danger and his vulnerability becomes visible to the host. The hosts' response to Jama's vulnerability is marked by its unpredictable nature. In certain instances, the precarity of Jama's predicament, a young boy travelling alone during a time of war, is exploited and he is a target of the hosts' abuse. In other instances, however, his vulnerability is the reason he is protected and cared for by strangers.

When Jama is in Keren, Eritrea he is conscripted into the war to fight in the Italian army. Jama is only eleven years old and at this point in his journey, there are no adults in his life who could warn him against the brutalities that he will experience in battle. "At his tender age he could not imagine grown men sending him to his death; neither could he imagine the kind of mechanised, faceless slaughter the Italians would bring to Africa" (157). Jama still trusts the goodwill of adults because he has been taken in and cared for by strangers along his journey. Jama does not understand that the Italian soldiers who enlist him in the army do not value his life. "Jama was exactly the kind of illiterate boy they were looking for and he put his thumbprint where they told him, for once neither knowing nor caring where they sent him" (157). The Italians willingly send Jama to his death because he is seen as the 'other' and he is of no value to them. Jama is disillusioned by the war because he has

> never seen war; the only battles he could imagine were the sporadic feuds that nomadic Somalis engaged in, played according to a strict set of courtly rules that forbade the killing of women, children, old men, preachers and poets. (157)

Jama's innocent perception of the war where vulnerable communities are protected is shattered when the battle of Keren begins. "Ten thousand shells an hour were fired by the British and Italian guns, and even a mile behind the front, Jama's bones were rattled by explosions" (165). Jama is overcome by the magnitude and brutality of the war. Jama hears stories from the frontline as every "askari returned from the frontline with a horror story, the daily carnage, the lack of sleep, dead bodies exploding in the heat, men going mad with shellshock, the evil ways in which the Italians humiliated their black comrades" (168). Eventually, Jama is sent near to the frontline of the war and he witnesses these horrific acts of violence for himself. In an attempt to hide away from British rockets, Jama takes refuge in a cave alongside other soldiers. Shortly after Jama enters the cave a rocket smashes into it. Jama is the only survivor of the explosion and as he crawls out of the cave he comes across dismembered bodies. "They were

all dead, but they looked like they were playing, their legs splayed in dynamic poses, their shirts ripped open, their limbs entangled without care of race or rank" (177). As a means by which to protect his psyche from the trauma of the situation, Jama disassociates himself from the soldiers before him as he thinks they are pretending to be dead. Jama returns to Keren to tell his friends about his miraculous survival. Any remnants of Jama's innocence are ruptured when he learns of Shidane's brutal murder. Jama's identity is torn apart by the violence and abuse of the war. Subsequently, the trauma of Shidane's death, together with the instances of cruelty that Jama witnesses and experiences at the hands of the Italian soldiers, causes him to withdraw from society. Jama decides to leave Keren, remembering the words that Ambaro said throughout his childhood, "'The only thing that comes to you if you sit around is death' This was his family's only philosophy" (181). Before Jama leaves the war zone of Keren "he tied weights to the images of corpses, burning men and lost eyes lodged in his mind, and plunged them to the bottom of the river" (184). This shows Jama's resilience and strength as he attempts to let go of the violence that he has witnessed to continue his journey. Jama steps away from the conflict, venturing alone through the desert. He conceals himself from convoys and pursues traders and their camels, hoping to secure a ride away from the turmoil.

To summarise, *Mama Boy* is classified as a war *Bildung* because the text outlines Jama's vulnerable condition as he attempts to develop in a fractured and dangerous environment that repeatedly ruptures his sense of self and security. Jama is profoundly traumatised by the violence that he witnesses in battle. The war leaves him without a purpose and destabilises his identity. However, he decides to leave the war zone and he is willing to start over and establish a new life for himself. This act reveals that while his life has been profoundly destabilised he has the ability to settle into a new environment away from the conflict.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the effects of conflict on Jama's development in *Mamba Boy*. The thesis argues that the text has thematic and structural features of the *Bildungsroman*, particularly the post-colonial *Bildungsroman* and the war *Bildung* because the text portrays Jama's growth from childhood to adulthood during colonisation and war. The rupturing effects of war are represented in both the content and the form of the text. Jama is also conscripted into the Italian army where he experiences the merciless slaughter of the Italians first-hand.

Jama loses his father when he is killed at a military roadblock by Italian soldiers. Shidane is tortured and killed for stealing from a military supply depot. Despite the trauma and abuse the Jama experiences he continues his journey. Therefore, Mohamed breaks down the notion that child migrants are, and are only, the victims of their circumstances. Jama possesses "a strange kind of liberty; if he [outwits] death then his life [is] to be completely, perfectly his own (2). Jama leads a precarious life, yet there are various instances in his migration where, despite his vulnerability, he is able to influence the trajectory of his journey. Thus, Jama has a liminal positioning because he continuously oscillates from a position of vulnerability to a position of agency. Jama's journey is an example of successful migration not only because he survives but because he has the adaptive strength to continue even when his initial quest comes to a premature and traumatic end.

Chapter Three: Navigating Gender, War and Childhood in *The Orchard of Lost Souls*

Introduction

This chapter analyses *Orchard* through a transnational feminist lens to investigate how patriarchal ideologies[12] about gender impact women in times of conflict and forced displacement. In her second novel, Mohamed portrays the shattering effects of the Somali Civil War on the lives of three women who are caught in a violent revolution that ruptures and reshapes their lives. The text portrays Kawsar, Filsan, and Deqo's perspectives and lived experiences of the war. The split focalisation of the text represents the far-reaching effects of violence that encroach upon the public and private lives of the characters who vary in age, class, and agency. This chapter will discuss how gender affects migration generally with a specific focus on the impact of conflict-induced displacement on Deqo. Culturally formed beliefs about gender impact Deqo's liminal positioning, her mobility, and her ability to alter her circumstances in an increasingly unstable socio-political environment.

Socio-political Background of the Text

Orchard is set in 1987 at the moment in history that marks the end of Siad Barre's military dictatorship and the beginning of the Somali Civil War. The regime uses political dominance and violence as a means of control. The text portrays a variety of human rights abuses that are committed by the state against civilians that lead to student protests, unrest, and the formation of opposition groups:

> First the doctors in Hargeisa hospital were arrested for trying to improve conditions for their patients, then the student demonstrations broke out following their death sentences, and finally the National Freedom Movement, formed by Somalis living in London, began military action to remove the dictatorship. (135)

The Somali National Movement, called the National Freedom Movement in the text, is an opposition group that uses armed force in an attempt to overthrow the military regime (Spencer

[12] In the context of this chapter, the term 'ideology' is used to describe culturally formed beliefs that influence human behaviour.

2021). In response to the increased presence of opposition groups in Hargeisa, the state imposes greater control and regulation of civilians' movement through curfews and military checkpoints. As a result of the curfew, "hours of darkness have been stolen and made dangerous. People are made to scuttle about in the daytime, trying to live full lives in half their allocated time" (Mohamed 150). The night is dangerous because civilians are abused by soldiers who assert their control through violence. Furthermore, the state has failed to protect civilians from rebels who use brutal acts of violence, including gendered violence, as a strategy of combat against the regime. Spencer explains how women and children are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence in times of war: "Gendered violence is widely used to intimidate and brutalise women and children, by institutions such as the military, rebel forces and, as recent reports have indicated, even peace-keeping forces" (150). Spencer outlines how women and children are encircled by violence from various fronts. The laws imposed upon civilians by the state limit their mobility and increase their precarity rather than protect them from violent oppression. Thus, Mohamed portrays the effects of the Somali Civil War on women who are confronted with corporal and institutionalised violence from the state and rebel groups.

The socio-political background of the text delineates the disintegration of the regime's control as well as the effects of structural violence on civilians. Additionally, the title of the text alludes to the far-reaching impact of the war on the Hargeisa such as forced migration, displacement, and loss. The concept of an orchard traditionally symbolises growth, fertility, and nourishment. However, the orchard in the text grows over the graves of Kawar's unborn children. While the orchard produces an abundance of fruit, Kawsar allows the fruit to drop and rot as she believes that consuming it would be a form of cannibalism. Thus, the orchard symbolises the lives that were cut short by the war and the destruction of land. The soil that once offered nourishment and growth is now haunted by destruction and death. The duality of the traditional symbol of the orchard and what it represents in the text encapsulates the tension between aspiration and dislocation that characterises the experiences of migrants. Furthermore, the notion of 'lost souls' alludes to children, like Deqo, who have been uprooted from their homeland and are forced to navigate unfamiliar territories without a family or a home.

Thus, Mohamed portrays the lives of refugees who "live in the shadow of political oppression and militarization [where] the state cannot deliver democratic order, social security and rule of law" (Eliassi 124). As previously mentioned, *Orchard* is a semi-autobiographical

text.[13] Mohamed states: "I was inspired by the experiences of my own family, particularly my grandmother, who saw and felt the effects of the dictatorship and war" (340). When the Somali National Movement seized control over Burao and Hargeisa in 1988 "the Somali government responded by heavy shelling and aerial bombardment" (Spencer, "Strange Combination" 147). Thus, political instability and conflict were the cause of the country's collapse. As a result of the civil war, "thousands of civilians lost their lives and thousands were forced to flee to Ethiopia" (147). Moreover, *Orchard* outlines how Somalia's unstable socio-political environment is entrenched in patriarchal ideologies. Without structures of support and safety, the characters are left with no option but to actively engage with and navigate through, an environment where violence against women is used as a method of war.

This chapter will examine how gender impacts the female characters' subjectivities in times of war and forced displacement. Through a close engagement with the text, the analysis reveals that women shift between a place of vulnerability and agency as they navigate unknown social and spatial terrains in times of conflict. Deqo is the female child migrant character in the text, and this chapter analyses how culturally formed gender ideologies affect her agency. The background of the text has been delineated to portray the precarious environment that Deqo encounters when she migrates through worn-torn Hargeisa. Deqo's journey of migration is analysed through a gendered and transnational feminist lens. The term 'gendered analysis' is used to elucidate how the text will be examined, with a particular focus on how gender is used as a method of control and border regulation. Following this, the roles that women occupy in times of war are explored. Of particular interest is the ways that the destructive nature of war alters women's positionalities when conflict breaks down the boundaries between the private and the public domain. Overall, analysing border-crossing through a gendered lens helps to shed light on the ways that culturally formed ideologies create boundaries that challenge the characters' mobility and infringe upon their agency.

Gendered Transnational Migration

Gender and its role in migration will now be explored. To start, it is important to define gender. It is also necessary to provide a definition for biological sex as a means in which to illustrate

[13] *Orchard* is classified within the genre of creative non-fiction. The genre of the text will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

the difference between gender and sex.[14] Sex pertains to the biological anatomy, specifically the sex organs and chromosomal expression, of an individual. This leads to the individual being classified as biologically male, female, or intersex. Pessar and Mahler define gender as a socio-cultural process, a definition that debunks the myth that gender is "natural, inevitable and immutable" (813). Gender is a culturally formed and performed construct that "involves the ways in which cultures imbue this biological difference with meaning such as demarcating between male and female domains in activities, tasks, spaces, time, dress, and so on" (813). Pessar and Mahler's definition of gender reveals that gender roles and ideologies are produced, reproduced, and maintained by socio-cultural practices, beliefs, and understandings. The formation of male and female domains and activities places men and women in separate social and spatial environments where they have different roles, responsibilities, and access to opportunities. Therefore, gender roles and ideologies are culturally constructed and used by socio-cultural and political power structures to regulate individuals' ability to cross into social and spatial environments that are perceived to be male or female domains.

Border-crossing gives migrants the opportunity to reconstruct the ways that they perform gender and establish a new sense of belonging in the diasporic space. When migrants cross borders, they encounter environments that have new cultures and cultural practices. Accordingly, migrants are separated from the social communities and cultural ideologies that determine how gender is performed in their homeland. As previously discussed, border-crossing can have an alienating and rupturing effect on migrants' identities. They are separated from the intimate social connections and familiar spatial environments that affirm their identity and sense of belonging. Werbner argues that "Migration initiates a process in which such intimacies are shattered" (107). She goes on to argue that transnational social networks are ruptured and recreated to form "new configurations and clustering" (109). Migrants establish new social networks with those who have different cultures and gendered ideologies from themselves. Leaving the familiar can have a profound impact on migrants' identities. However, the distance that is formed between migrants and their homeland can lead to their emancipation because traditional gender roles are reconsidered and reconstructed. To this end, gendered transnational migration studies examine the complex positionalities and shifting identities of migrants as they navigate their role in the world as they are exposed to alternate socio-cultural environments.

[14] This distinction is made because gender and sex are occasionally used interchangeably in migration studies (Pessar & Mahler 2003).

Gender ideologies are used by power structures to regulate migration flows and migrants' positionalities. When migrants are separated from the culture in their homeland, they realise that the ideologies and practices that they live by are culturally formed. After experiencing alternate ways of functioning in new social environments the "migrant suspects reality: having experienced several ways of being, he understands their illusory nature. To see things plainly, you have to cross a frontier" (Rushdie 125). Importantly, the frontier that migrants cross is social, spatial, and psychic in nature. Once this frontier is crossed, migrants can question and challenge the cultural ideologies about gender in their homeland. Furthermore, when they leave their homeland, migrants are not surrounded and unquestionably controlled by the power structures that enforce these ideologies in their homeland. This is not to suggest that migrants are entirely liberated from their community's shared beliefs about gender when they leave their homeland. Gender is also self-imposed and migrants may continue to practice and perform gender roles in the diasporic space. Additionally, gender ideologies are perpetuated by other migrants as well as those who stay in their homeland who remain connected through transnational networks. Thus, migrants may attempt to rid themselves of gender ideologies back home but there are ideologies about gender in the diasporic space that can be equally dominant and oppressive. In summary, analysing transnationalism through a gendered lens can help to reveal the ways that socio-cultural and political structures create and maintain gendered ideologies that affect migrants' agency.

Pessar and Mahler's concept of "geographic scales" delineates how gender is performed and perpetuated in and across spatial and social terrains. Said in another way, gender ideologies affect the organisation of physical space. Alongside this, individuals and social groups arrange themselves in space according to culturally appropriate gender roles and activities. An example of "spatial and social scales [include] "the body, the family, the state" (815). Pessar and Mahler's concept of geographic scales reveals that gender is performed at and beyond the level of the individual. Therefore, an individual's perception of the female or male body is defined by the same gender ideologies that determine the hierarchical structure of the family unit and the organisation of the state. The ways gender ideologies are imposed upon the female body are evident in *Orchard*. Deqo attempts to establish her sense of self and her role in the world in an environment that is steeped in patriarchal ideologies where the female body is associated with shame and vulnerability. Deqo does not have a family or a stable home where she would typically be taught how to perform gender. Despite this, she is confronted with gender ideologies by women in the Saba'ad refugee camp who teach her that her body is shameful. Deqo believes that shame

> grows and widens with [girls'] breasts and hips and follows them like an unwanted friend. Deqo has long been aware of how the soft flesh of her body is a liability; the first word she remembers learning is 'shame'. The only education she received from the women in the camp concerned how to keep this shame at bay: don't sit with your legs open, don't touch your privates, don't play with boys. The avoidance of shame seems to be at the heart of everything in a girl's life. (66)

Deqo does not have a biological family or an intimate home environment, yet she is exposed to cultural ideologies about the female body that serve to oppress women. A refugee camp can be considered a liminal space due to its transitional nature. It exists as a temporary shelter for displaced individuals who are not originally from the camp itself. This example illustrates that individuals perpetuate patriarchal beliefs about the female body within and outside of familial and social structures.

The concept of "geographic scales" delineates the merging and crossing-over of multi-layered social and spatial terrains. Power structures determine who can and cannot enter these terrains according to culturally formed and maintained ideologies. Gender ideologies are used by institutions such as the nation-state to position men and women in roles that are perceived to be culturally appropriate. Kawsar is forced to attend a governmental parade and she describes how:

> The mothers of the revolution have been called from their kitchens, from their chores, to show foreign dignities how loved the regime is, how grateful they are for the milk and peace it has brought them. It needs women to make it human. (7)

The example from the text highlights the instrumental role of women in shaping and reinforcing the image of a political regime. It underscores how gender ideologies are manipulated by institutions like the nation-state to advance certain narratives. In this context, women are summoned from their domestic roles to participate in orchestrated displays of loyalty, projecting an image of unity and contentment under the regime's rule. Spencer argues that "the nation begins to construct a history that creates particular kinds of masculinities and femininities of its citizens" ("Strange Combination" 149). As it is seen in Spencer's argument, the nation-state actively assigns gender roles to its citizens to achieve their political aspirations. While men are portrayed as active participants of the war, "the same narratives celebrate iconic images of women in their symbolic roles as mothers, wives and custodians of the nation. In

such representations, women are elided from the arena of action and denied any direct relation to national agency (Spencer, "Visible Wars" 111). Kawsar and the other "mothers of the revolution" (Mohamed 7) are forced to attend the ceremony because they symbolise safety and a sense of normality in extraordinarily violent times. Therefore, the state uses their presence to cover up the gross human rights abuses committed against civilians by the state and rebel groups. Thus, gender ideologies are used as a political strategy that is actioned by the state to control civilians and obtain their political objectives. This example from the text demonstrates how gender can also be examined "as a *structure*, this is, a latticework of institutionalized social relationships that, by creating and manipulating the categories of gender, organize and signify power at levels above the individual" (Ferree et al. xix, emphasis in the original). Gender ideologies are manipulated by "mechanisms of power that work to control their movement" (Daswani 42) so that men and women have varying degrees of agency. The characters in the text are caught within socio-political structures of power that perpetuate patriarchal gender ideologies to control civilians and achieve political aims.

This leads to Pessar and Mahler's concept of "social locations" where an individual is influenced by and positioned within socio-political hierarchies of power. A "social location" is determined by attributes and social factors such as race, class, and gender (Pessar & Mahler 2003). Pessar and Mahler "imagine a social location continuum from most disadvantaged to most privileged and locate people in different sites along it" (816). Importantly, they argue that "Social locations must be viewed as fluid, not fixed, for people's social locations can and usually do shift over time" (816). From this definition, a link may be drawn between the concept of "social locations" and the notion of a spectrum of liminality where a migrant continuously shifts from a space of vulnerability to a space of agency. Sam Naidu (2006) explains how ideologies about gender affect women's positionalities in different cultures:

> The status and treatment of women varies from culture to culture, and within cultures class, caste, education, marital status, sexuality, fertility, religion, skin colour - to mention just the obvious factors - further determine the position of women within that specific context. (34)

Thus, it may be seen that ideologies about gender, as well as a variety of other factors that have been stipulated by Naidu above, affect migrants' positionalities within different environments. Kawsar, Filsan, and Deqo occupy a particularly precarious position. Their homeland is founded upon patriarchal ideologies that are used to oppress and abuse women. They differ in terms of their class, education, and marital status. Despite the factors that differentiate Kawsar, Filsan, and Deqo, they share experiences of sexualisation, abuse, and political dominance. This reveals

the encompassing nature of patriarchal gender ideologies in Somaliland. Therefore, the characters' lives are dominated by patriarchal ideologies about women that determine how they should and should not engage with their environment.

Lastly, Pessar and Mahler incorporate Doreen Massey's concept of "power geometry" into their theoretical framework. "Power geometry" includes "the types and degrees of agency people exert over their social location" (816). Said in another way, "power geometry" explores the degree of agency that migrants exert over their social positioning as they shift between a place of vulnerability and agency. Ideologies about gender impact migrants' mobility and regulate their ability to cross borders. Thus, analysing power geometries shows "how gender controls options available to individuals and to groups, determining who stays and who moves – how often, when, where and why" (823). Massey's concept of "power geometry" explores how structures of power control the permeability of social and spatial borders. Migrants function as "initiators, refiners and transformers" (817) of the locations they encounter. While migrants are affected by power structures, they play an active role in determining their social positioning. Migrants also determine who is permitted to cross social and spatial borders and who is excluded from certain areas according to various social factors. To illustrate this, the concept of "power geometry" is explored further in Deqo's journey of internal migration. Deqo is a female child migrant, a refugee, and a street child. These factors place her in a disadvantageous position because she is seen as less desirable and thus vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Despite this, Deqo determines her social location. At the end of the text, Deqo crosses the national border into Ethiopia and leads Kawsar and Filsan to safety. In this decisive act, Deqo shifts from a vulnerable positioning to an agentic positioning where she determines where she belongs and with whom.

Gender and Power in the Context of War: Insights from Transnational Feminist Theory

Further insight into the effects that conflict-induced displacement has on women's liminal positions will now be examined through a transnational feminist lens. Elleke Boehmer argues that the transnational feminist approach:

> involves making constant negotiations between and across boundaries, and between the particular and the universal, in order to address the dyssymmetries of power that impact on women's lives. (191)

Drawing on Boehmer's definition, power structures in local and global spaces affect the permeability of the psychic and physical borders that female migrants seek to cross. When culturally formed ideologies are challenged and reformed, power is exchanged and negotiated between socio-political groups. *Orchard* portrays how socio-political power structures are challenged, dismantled, and reinforced in times of war and how this affects women's agency. Significantly, women perform gender differently during the war because they adopt gender roles traditionally associated with and performed by men. In the Somali civil war, the majority of men were drafted into the war. In the absence of men, the patriarchal structure in women's homes and communities is broken down and then reformed. In *Orchard*, the social hierarchy is rearranged during the war as women take on the roles of men:

> Women are running their families because the streets have been emptied of men; those not working abroad are in prison or have been grabbed off the street and conscripted into the army. (Mohamed 149)

As a result of the lack of men in Hargeisa, there is a reorganisation of power. Therefore, there is space for some women to find a new and liberated way of being. Meredeth Turshen argues that war "destroys the patriarchal strictures of society that confine and degrade women. In the very breakdown of morals, traditions, customs, and community, war also opens up and creates new beginnings" (20). Accordingly, in times of war, women occupy an extremely liminal position because conflict and rebellion exacerbate the challenges and abuses that women face. The war had a profound impact on women's lives, as they faced displacement, the loss of loved ones, and the breakdown of social structures. These factors left them in vulnerable positions, often resulting in economic hardship and increased exposure to the dangers of violence and exploitation. As outlined by Spencer below, it's crucial to recognise that the Somali civil war also presented instances where women actively engaged in resistance and combat roles, challenging the misconception that women do not participate in warfare. Therefore, the war has the potential to catalyse the reformation of women's gender identities. Spencer describes the complex subjectivities of women and children who are affected by war:

> During wartime, women and children experience enormous pain, suffering and trauma. At the same time, periods of armed conflict and civil war open up spaces for certain forms of freedom which enable women to temporarily step out of traditional roles into new positions that give them a sense of autonomy and agency. ("Visible Wars" 111)

Women and children rapidly fluctuate between a space of vulnerability to agency and back. They navigate shifting power relations as traditional gender roles are dismantled and reformed in times of war.

Deqo occupies an incredibly precarious position: as a refugee without adult caretakers, there are instances in the text when she lives on the street without any form of socio-political protection. She does not have citizenship in Hargeisa and it is unclear if she has been granted refugee status. It is evident that despite her refugee status, Deqo is not protected by the state during the war. Additionally, without a family or a community, Deqo has no form of protection. In search of a safe place to sleep, Deqo seeks shelter in a ditch that she describes as "a no-man's land full of threat and danger" (108). Within the ditch, she sits "wide-eyed" in an abandoned barrel with "her knees pressed up against her chin, her back against the cold metal, trapped like a breech birth in a hard, dead womb" (56). Deqo's precarity is highlighted in this image: her life has only just begun, and she appears to be helpless in her situation as a result of her young age, her lack of social connections, and limited resources. Deqo is trapped within a hostile, lifeless environment that threatens her life. This image also reveals Deqo's significant need for protection and shelter as she can easily fall prey to abuse. In need of warmth, she approaches two men who have started a fire near the barrel. She "sought out the drunks and their fire in a moment of reckless desperation; she wonders what they will do for her, to her." (54). Deqo approaches the men and their fire to keep warm and survive the cold, wet night. When one of the men attempts to grab her thigh, she jumps away from him and scolds him. Shocked by her courage, the men leave Deqo alone to warm herself through the rest of the night. It is evident that in moments of extreme vulnerability, Deqo willingly places herself in precarious situations to better her chance of survival. Further Deqo's bravery is also be attributed to her young age. Deqo cannot fully comprehend the increasingly unstable socio-political environment that she wanders through, alone and without protection. Her naivety is evident in her belief that she can easily outrun the men. "Deqo readies herself to run in case they both come at her […] she can disappear into the night as if winged" (56). While Deqo is vulnerable to abuse, she exhibits agency due to her courage, resilience, and strength because she is willing to take the necessary action to better her circumstances.

Orchard portrays how women establish and maintain relationships that better their chances of survival in times of war, therefore the text portrays female bonding. At the start of the text, the characters occupy opposing socio-political positions: Kawsar is a widow who has lost her husband and daughter to the regime's brutalities. Filsan is a female corporal in the Somali Armed Forces who uses brutal acts of violence to assert control over civilians and to

climb her way up the patriarchal hierarchies of power within the military. Deqo has grown up in a refugee camp on the outskirts of Hargeisa and she is mostly unaware of the politics within the country. Moreover, the three characters have varying degrees of mobility. As a corporal, Filsan moves through the country with a fair amount of ease despite roadblocks, curfews, or the threat of being attacked by rebels. She crosses the physical borders that are used by the state to control civilians. However, Filsan is not able to cross social borders as easily. She is sexualised by her fellow corporals, and she is humiliated when the General attempts to abuse his power to have sex with her. As a result of her internalised shame, Filsan loses her temper with Kawsar and she brutally beats her, leaving the older woman with a broken hip and unable to walk. Interestingly, despite her lack of physical mobility, Kawsar seamlessly crosses social borders. Kawsar's ability to cross social borders is most clearly illustrated in her relationship with Deqo. Both characters are of different classes and ages. Kawsar, an affluent older woman, has lost her husband and daughter to the brutalities of the war, while Deqo is a destitute nine-year-old girl without a family. However, when Deqo enters Kawsar's bungalow in search of safety from the violence on the streets, they form an intimate connection that closely resembles Kawsar's relationship with her deceased daughter. As mentioned, Deqo is highly mobile because she physically traverses vast distances around Hargeisa. She wanders aimlessly the streets of the town in search for food, shelter, and companionship. Furthermore, there are instances in her journey when she crosses social borders and she forms close relationships with those of a different social position than herself. Despite the boundaries of age, class, and political affiliations the characters are bonded together by the war and their need for survival.

Further, each character has an asset that aids the survival of the group. Firstly, Kawsar's bungalow is situated on October road in the region of Guryo Samo. The bungalow shelters them from the soldiers who open fire on civilians on the street. Secondly, Filsan uses her physical strength to push Kawsar in a wheelbarrow to safety. Finally, Deqo's mental resilience helps the three women cross the border to a refugee camp in Ethiopia. It is precisely Deqo's innocence and naivety that gives her the strength to continue her journey in the face of trauma, brutality, and extreme socio-political upheaval. The characters are bound together by their shared experiences of "trauma, isolation and loss" (Tembo 3). Together they "decide to take the path of resistance by standing up for their rights and, eventually, walking away from the violence that has caused them (and their community) so much pain" (3). Despite being uprooted by the war, the characters exhibit a remarkable level of agency by refusing to be controlled and overcome by the conflict. Filsan's decision to walk away from the military can be seen as an act of resistance. Furthermore, their decision to depart reflects a determination to secure their

survival on their own terms, beyond the confines of Hargeisa. However, their journey of migration is incredibly precarious. They are forced to enter the public domain where women and children are abused and killed by the military and rebels. In short, Kawsar, Filsan and Deqo exhibit resilience and strength in the adversity they encounter. They practise agency when they choose to leave their homeland as they refuse to fight in the war or allow their bodies to be collateral damage to the conflict.

Orchard has been analysed through a transnational feminist lens. Kawsar, Filsan and Deqo have a complex subjectivity because they exhibit agency when they decide to leave the dangerous environment of Hargeisa. However, they migrate in a situation of precarity because they are forced from their place of safety when soldiers invade the bungalow. Thus, there are varying degrees of choice and power throughout the characters' experiences of forced migration which impacts their positionality.

Gendered Analysis of the Private and Public Domain During War

Women's subjectivities are particularly affected when the public and private domains merge. The borders between public and private spaces bleed into each other in times of war. To this end, Marion Pape argues that the "lines that separate the home front and the war front are porous just like the shifting front line of the war" (101). The notion of home is of particular concern because the destruction of the private domain directly impacts women. The ways that women navigate, partake in, and modify this space during war will now be examined.

Eliassi argues that "Home as an idea or place provides a useful framework in which to construct a sense of belonging and security" (121). The homing environment is physical and symbolic and includes multiple "dwelling places such as the private home, local neighbourhood, city, region, nation-state, continent" (121). As previously discussed, a migrant's home (whether physical, imagined, singular or multiple in nature) is tied to their sense of identity and belonging. For this reason, women's security, identity, and belonging are ruptured when the boundaries between the public and the private domain are destroyed.

While the notion of home is typically associated with security and belonging, Eliassi argues that:

> home is not necessarily a cosy dwelling place; it can be the site of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and child abuse. Moreover, for stateless diasporas, militarization and authoritarian political regimes can often turn people's homes into dangerous, even lethal, places of violence and destruction. (122)

The private domain, which previously served as a place of belonging and safety for women and children, becomes a site of violence in times of conflict. Home can be instantly transformed from a place of safety to a site of violence and displacement. For instance, Deqo has a brief experience of the private domain when she is taken in by Nasra, a female prostitute who lives in a compound with two other women. Deqo partakes in household chores such as preparing food and cleaning in exchange for food and a place to sleep on the kitchen floor. However the sense of belonging and security that Deqo experiences in the compound are short-lived. With the increasing conflict in Hargeisa, the women have "new customers —soldiers and plenty of them" (Mohamed 122). When a soldier climbs over the compound wall, Deqo's sense of safety is shattered. As a result of this invasion Deqo

> spends another sleepless night in the kitchen, her sense of safety breached, waiting for more giants to jump over the walls and appear right before her in the middle of the night with guns, or knives, or with nothing but their strong bare hands to squeeze the life out of her. (96)

The invasive nature of war is evident in this image: the soldier, who is an active figure in the war and the public domain, has leapt into the private domain. The merging of the public and private domain is what Bhabha outlines as the "unhomely" experience which "is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the home, the home-in-the-world" ("The World and the Home" 141). Importantly, the 'unhomely' is experienced more frequently in times of war. As mentioned, those who typically participate in the public domain frequently force themselves into the private domain. Further, this invasion of the private domain (whether this is a physical space or a woman's body) is a tactic of war. Bhabha delineates how the blurring between the private and public is profoundly destabilising. When the outside world enters the private domain:

> the intimate recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. ("The World and the Home" 141)

Consequently, women and children are disorientated, displaced and traumatised when those in the public domain invade their homes. Without a barrier between themselves and the war,

women and children are left without a place of safety unless they leave their homes and their homeland.

This blurring between the private and public domain is portrayed *Orchard*. As the war progresses, civilians are displaced, traumatised, and killed. October road becomes "full of tanks and soldiers" (Mohamed 204). Confined to her bed, Kawsar watches as "her neighbours try to flee, hidden in a haze of dust, but bright sandals and dresses give them away and the soldiers drop to their knees and shoot at the ghostly figures" (206). Shockingly, the military has turned gunfire on innocent civilians. Those being shot are wearing brightly coloured sandals and dresses therefore it can be presumed that the military is aware that they are shooting civilians. In this part of the text, the border between the private and the public domain is torn down and women and children are exposed to the full brutality of war. Spencer outlines this further as she describes how in times of war:

> the home front becomes part of the war zone when battle lines are blurred as the conflict gradually encroaches on the domestic space of the home. Women and children are forced to hide to protect themselves from marauding soldiers or they are caught up in the crossfire between warring factions and become collateral damage. ("Visible Wars" 112).

From Spencer's description, it is seen that during the war the domestic space can no longer serve as a place of safety for women and children. In patriarchal societies where women are culturally assigned to the private domain, the invasion and devastation of their home is particularly destabilising. As the public space is perceived to be a male environment, women encounter a sense of estrangement when they are thrust into the public domain as a result of the conflict. They can no longer return to the private domain, but they believe that they do not belong in the public domain. Furthermore, when women enter the public domain they face patriarchal systems of power, alienation, marginalisation and, in the worst cases, a loss of rights and abuse.

Deqo's barrel in the ditch is situated near the centre of the town where sudden gunfire ensues between the military and rebel groups. To escape the crossfire, she leaves her barrel and seeks refuge in an abandoned villa. The villa gives Deqo temporary relief from the war and the desolate conditions in the barrel. "No sounds seemed to penetrate the house from the war beyond the walls; it echoes and hums and ticks as if she has been swallowed by a giant and caught in its ribs" (Mohamed 292). This image highlights the irony that Deqo feels safe in the abandoned villa. She seeks refuge within its walls at the height of the war and she is situated in the metaphorical belly of the beast of the socio-political strife that engulfs the region. Deqo

oscillates from a place of profound vulnerability, where she is aware of her precarious situation, to a place where she feels liberated and safe. She helps herself to the fully stocked cupboards of food because she feels "free to do as she pleases without punishment, guidance or scrutiny" (292). While Deqo feels liberated without adult supervision she is entirely alone and without any form of protection. She believes that she has "found where she belongs" (291) and that the world outside "is an alien world being destroyed, one that she doesn't belong to or feel any ownership over" (293). As such, Deqo appears to have separated herself from the war. This is a protective mechanism that allows her to temporarily disassociate from the violence that she has witnessed and the trauma that she has experienced because of war.

While Deqo initially appears to be detached from the violence outside the villa, her sense of detachment quickly wears thin. For instance, Deqo watches from a window as a fugitive is shot down by the military in front of the villa. At first, she "regards his death with the same detachment she does the television show [she is watching]. She has no comprehension of why these grown men are tormenting each other and is grateful for the glass separating them" (303). Then, Deqo willingly crosses the protective barrier of the villa to bury the man and prevent dogs and vultures from eating the man's body. When she steps outside, she picks up what appears to be a leaf. Only to realize that what she is holding is a decomposing human ear. Through this shocking realization, any distance that Deqo has attempted to place between herself and the outside world instantaneously disappears. Despite the fear that she feels she continues with her quest to bury the man. In this moment of profound vulnerability, Deqo willingly leaves her place of safety to honour the man by burying him. In a war where human life is disregarded and bodies are left on the roadside by the regime and rebels, this act symbolises Deqo's resistance against the war. Therefore, Deqo's journey is filled with acts of resilience and strength, yet she is incredibly vulnerable to the dangers around her.

In summary, when the barrier between the private and public domain is destroyed, women are placed in a particularly precarious position as they navigate an unknown and dangerous environment. Through close engagement with the text, it has been shown that despite Deqo's profound vulnerability, she acts from a place of agency where she resists the dehumanising and oppressive nature of the war.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed *Orchard* through a gendered lens with a particular focus on how conflict-induced migration impacts women's subjectivities. *Orchard* is set during the Somali

Civil War, and patriarchal ideologies about gender exacerbate women's vulnerable positioning. When the private domain is destroyed during the war, women are doubly displaced: they are forced from their homes (their place of safety and belonging) *and* they are displaced from their homeland. War exacerbates the oppression and abuse of women because gender-based violence is used as a method of war. For instance, soldiers and rebels use the conquest of the female body as a means to assert control over a territory. Thus, Women are made to navigate the public domain when they are particularly vulnerable to abuse. Following the journeys of the three female protagonists, the text highlights the challenges that women encounter in times of war because of patriarchal gender ideologies.

The text simultaneously highlights how women utilise war and forced displacement to re-direct their lives and reposition themselves within society into a role where they have more agency. Deqo's journey of migration has been the focus of this chapter. She is the most vulnerable character in *Orchard* because she is a child and a refugee without familial connections or transnational networks. Therefore, Deqo navigates her way through Hargeisa without protection, guidance, or aid. Despite her precarious position, Deqo is not a passive victim of her circumstances. In this time of destruction and reconstruction, Deqo enters the public domain and crosses social and spatial borders to better her circumstances and obtain a sense of belonging and familial connection "however makeshift" (Mohamed 336). Mohamed effectively portrays the devastating effects of the war and how women are particularly vulnerable to abuse during social and political instability. However, amongst the chaos and desolation of the war, the power structures that perpetuate gender ideologies are uprooted. Thus, women are not only victims of war, but they also have a liminal positioning because they oscillate from a position of profound vulnerability to a position of agency.

Chapter Four: Analysing the Border Between Fact and Fiction in the Content and Form of *The Fortune Men*

Introduction

This chapter expands upon the overarching analysis of borders to examine the unstable boundary between fact and fiction in the content and form of *Fortune*. The text is centred on Mahmood Hussein Mattan, a Somali sailor arrested by the Cardiff City Police and later executed by hanging. This occurred due to his alleged involvement in the murder of a woman in Cardiff Bay in September 1952. It is significant to note that, unlike Jama and Deqo, Mahmood is an adult when he crosses the border into Wales.[15] The host community does not perceive Mahmood as a vulnerable individual in need of aid. Conversely, he is seen as a threat by the host because of his age, race, and ethnicity. Mahmood's migration journey as an adult aligns with the main theme of this thesis, which examines how age and societal views of childhood influence the characters' ability to cross borders.

This chapter situates *Fortune* within the genre of creative non-fiction — a genre that contains both fictional and non-fictional narrative elements. Using this genre, Mohamed interrogates issues of factuality in non-fiction writing by incorporating the historical documents from Mahmood's case into the text. Mohamed exposes the injustices that occurred in Mahmood's trial as he is wrongfully convicted of murder, without appeal, despite a lack of witnesses or sufficient evidence. *Fortune* is Mohamed's literary *account* of Mahmood's exilic journey, and her representation celebrates his complexity as a transnational subject. Additionally, by highlighting the injustices during the trial, Mohamed holds those who oppressed Mahmood *accountable* for their actions. For example, the real names of those involved in Mahmood's case such as Chief Detective Inspector Powell and Mahmood's barrister, Rhys Roberts, are used in the text. Powell, Roberts, and the witnesses in court discriminate against Mahmood because he is a black migrant from Somaliland. Thus, Mahmood is portrayed as the socio-cultural 'other' by the police. Furthermore, the fictional narrative elements in *Fortune* shed light on Mahmood's inner consciousness as his identity is ruptured when he is dehumanised in court and his jail cell. Importantly, Mohamed displays the other side of Mahmood's story as she depicts his experiences of migration, alienation, and

[15] Chapter Five will compare Jama, Deqo, and Mahmood's stories of migration to reveal how social factors such as age and gender impact their positionality.

displacement from his perspective. She offers an alternative portrayal of Mahmood to locate and present his humanity which was hidden in the archives of police interviews and court transcripts. Therefore, by using the genre of creative non-fiction, Mohamed humanises Mahmood and highlights his vulnerability as he is confronted with impermeable social borders.

As mentioned, there is no scholarly literature that examines *Fortune*. The theoretical framework in Chapter One of this thesis, together with selected secondary research, will guide the analysis of the text. This introduction has introduced the focus of this chapter by briefly outlining Mohamed's strategic use of creative non-fiction where she interweaves non-fiction writing from Mahmood's case into the text to problematise the discrimination that he encountered in Wales. Through her use of fictional narrative techniques, Mohamed reveals the impact of misrepresentation on Mahmood's identity. Following this, creative non-fiction will be defined and the characteristics of the genre will be outlined. Next, the narrative elements and literary constructs of *Fortune* will be delineated. Finally, the chapter will be concluded with an analysis of the effectiveness of Mohamed's narrative approach. The role of the author as a representative of 'truth' and the function of the reader as a constructor of meaning is explored.

Narrative Crossroads and Cultural Confluences: Unpacking the Generic Liminality of *Fortune* and Mahmood's Hybrid Identity

Creative non-fiction is characterised by shifting parameters and "fluid boundaries" (Rennie iii) between fiction and non-fiction writing.[16] Rigid literary conventions are crossed and made malleable by writers who combine these narrative modes, effectively "blurring limits and rendering existing literary boundaries entirely flexible" (Rennie 20). Thus, the genre has a dynamic narrative form that challenges scholars' attempts at arriving at a single definition. The terms that are used to label the genre include creative non-fiction, literary non-fiction, narrative non-fiction, non-fiction storytelling, new narrative journalism, long-form journalism, and documentary fiction (Rennie 4; Mulgrew 4; Krog 58). Each term highlights the paradoxical nature of a genre characterised by inner complexities and contradictions because it is both factual and fictional at once. The term 'creative non-fiction' will be used throughout this

[16] Non-fiction writing portrays events, persons, and history in a factual manner. This form of writing is closely linked to reportage writing that represents "public knowledge and history" (Rennie 14). Fictional texts are not bound to represent factual elements of a particular moment in history. These texts engage with non-fiction texts and historical events imaginatively and have distinctive literary techniques and devices.

chapter to refer to the genre. This term foregrounds how writers use non-fiction writing to produce a literary text that has a hybrid narrative mode.

The characteristics that are typically associated with creative non-fiction will now be analysed in more detail to explore how Mohamed blends elements of fiction and non-fiction to offer an alternative portrayal of Mahmood. Duncan Brown points to the various narrative forms that make up creative non-fiction, describing it as "writing which makes its meanings at the unstable fault line of the literary and journalistic, the imaginative and the reportorial" (1). Brown's definition points toward the way that the genre is made up of multiple interwoven narrative modes. As outlined in Chapter One, Hall theorises that cultural hybrids' identities are made up of multiple parts from their homeland and their diasporic homes ("Cultural Identity" 226). It is precisely the multi-faceted and somewhat evasive nature of creative non-fiction that makes it a suitable genre to portray migrants' fluid identities (Mulgrew 2014). To this end, the heterogeneous nature of the genre mirrors the inner complexities that make up Mahmood's hybrid cultural identity.

Mohamed engages with and expands upon factual events from Mahmood's case by interweaving fictional literary devices into the text. In discussing creative non-fiction generally, Tom Wolfe emphasises the genre's novelistic characteristics stating that "It consumes devices that happen to have originated with the novel and mixes them with every other device known to prose" (49). Similarly, Gillian Rennie defines the genre as a "type of non-fiction prose narrative reflecting certain literary conventions" (77). Rennie lists literary techniques that are characteristic of creative non-fiction including a structured plot pyramid, the use of fictional literary devices such as symbolism, and the portrayal of a character's inner consciousness. These three literary techniques are evident in *Fortune* and will now be briefly discussed. First, creative non-fiction texts have a plot with "a beginning, a build-up to a climax and a conclusion" (Brown 3). *Fortune* begins a few days before Mahmood's arrest and builds up to his sentencing, the climactic moment in the text, and concludes with his execution. It should be noted that while *Fortune* has a structured narrative plot, the linear temporality of the text is disrupted when Mahmood is placed in jail. The temporality oscillates between the past and present as he recalls the memories of his life to piece together the events that led to his wrongful conviction. This differs from non-fictional writing, particularly journalistic reports, where the most important information is presented at the start of the text. Furthermore, there are three newspaper excerpts are included at the end of the novel. The excerpts informed the public about Mahmood's execution in 1952. These summarised reports highlight the reason for Mahmood's conviction as well as the time and place of his execution. The reports evade information about

Mahmood's personal life or his reaction to his sentence. By only representing the facts about the court proceedings, the reports strip Mahmood of his humanity. In contrast, Mohamed offers a detailed description of Mahmood's personal experience of his wrongful conviction. At the start of the court proceedings, he believes that he will be found innocent by a just judicial system and he believes the local saying: "The truth will set you free" (212). When the case is sent to trial Mahmood is overcome by disbelief and helplessness. He comes to realise that despite the lack of evidence against him he will be convicted and he "can't rely on no witnesses, no lawyers, no judge, no fate" (238) to save his life. Second, story-telling techniques help to deconstruct the distance between the reader and Mahmood's story. Mahmood is the focaliser of the text and the factual information from the case is represented alongside "feelings, emotions, and expectations" (Krog 24). Consequently, there is an underlying "consciousness behind events and actions that give insight" (24) to the reader about the impact of these events on Mahmood's sense of self and belonging. For Mahmood, Cardiff is a site of profound alienation. As an adult and a black male migrant, Mahmood is perceived as a threat by the host and he is forced onto the social and spatial peripheries of the city. The cultural ideologies of the host constrict the permeability of the city's borders and the reader observes the city from the marginal spaces that Mahmood occupies. Third, Mohamed interweaves imagery and symbols into the text to portray Mahmood's liminality. The symbol that will be explored in this chapter is the prison cell where Mahmood awaits execution. The cell is a physical entity, yet it is simultaneously a figurative device that Mohamed utilises to portray Mahmood's liminality. Bhabha's theory of the 'Third Space' will be applied to the text to argue that the cell is an interstitial space where Mahmood navigates the border between life and death.[17] Through the use of literary techniques, Mohamed immerses the reader within Mahmood's inner state of being. Thus, the text illustrates the fragmentation of Mahmood's identity as he realises that the host community will never embrace him. As a consequence, Mahmood experiences both ostracism and oppression from this community, ultimately leading to his tragic demise at the hands of the very community he attempted to become a part of.

Additionally, Mohamed uses creative non-fiction to problematise the subjective nature of 'truth'. Antjie Krog discusses how fictional literary techniques are used to engage with non-fiction texts and historical events to locate the 'truth'. She explains: "where we initially used facts to enable our fiction to arrive at the truth, we now use fiction—or more accurately,

[17] The link between Mahmood's prison cell and Bhabha's 'Third Space' will be discussed in detail further on in this chapter.

fictional elements—to enable our facts to arrive at the truth" (35). This chapter argues that writers cannot arrive at the 'truth'. Fiction and non-fiction writing are representations of writers' interpretations of reality that are told from their perspective. Thus, writers' portrayals of history are bound to their subjective views of the world. Alternatively, writers use creative non-fiction to present a variety of 'truths' or perspectives about particular events or characters. As the genre is made up of multiple narrative forms, it disrupts conventional literary genres and challenges a grand narrative of 'truth' that is represented through a single, hegemonic lens. Therefore, events that were deemed indisputable are re-examined and brought into question to tell the "untold" and present the "personal manifestations" of those who suffered the most from "social ills" (Mulgrew 24). In *Fortune*, Mohamed interrogates how Mahmood is portrayed to the jury. In court he is silenced and oppressed by a single narrative where he is positioned as the dangerous 'other'. As such, the text challenges the external gaze of the host because it delineates his personal story of socio-political abuse in the diasporic space. Additionally, Mahmood's story is a story about black history, where the transnational, black subjects encounter the imperial ideologies of 'otherness'. By re-representing Mahmood's story, Mohamed explores the "ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation" (Hall, "Cultural Identity" 225).

Thus far, the features of creative non-fiction have been outlined. The genre has a form that is made up of multiple parts that draw from fictional and non-fiction narrative modes. By selecting parts of both fictional and non-fiction narrative elements, Mohamed re-presents marginalised social groups who are misrepresented in non-fictional writing and historical events. Tragically, while Mahmood is innocent, he is convicted of murder and executed because his life is not valued by the host. Mohamed uses creative non-fiction to interrogate the hegemonic narrative that was used by dominant structures of power to silence, oppress, and kill Mahmood.

Reshaping History: Exploring Creative Non-Fiction in *Fortune*

Mohamed utilises the multifaceted narrative form that is characteristic of the genre of creative non-fiction to portray Mahmood's transnational identity. *Fortune* is an example of how contemporary creative non-fiction addresses the "representational crisis" (Mulgrew 9) of marginalised individuals who are silenced and misrepresented by history. Of particular interest is the way that Mohamed uses the genre of creative non-fiction to represent the inner complexities and contradictions that coalesce to form Mahmood's hybrid cultural identity.

Mohamed also pays tribute to the multicultural environment of Tiger Bay, Cardiff. As a port town, Tiger Bay is a diaspora space where sailors take lodging between jobs at sea or they attempt to establish a more permanent form of settlement in Europe. Transnational subjects transform the socio-cultural landscape of Tiger Bay:

> You might walk along the docks and find sailors carrying parrots or little monkeys in makeshift jackets to sell or keep as souvenirs, you can have chop suey for lunch and Yemeni *saltah* for dinner, even in London you won't find pretty girls – with a grandparent from each continent – that you just stumble into in Tiger Bay. (65)

Tiger Bay is a site of socio-cultural convergence, yet it is also a space of discrimination and abuse. In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha describes the harbour of the modern world as a space "of transnational 'exchange', and exploitation" (12). Bhabha's description of the harbour is evident in *Fortune* where the harbour is portrayed as a diasporic space where goods are exchanged and transnational links are established, maintained, and negotiated. Bhabha describes the harbour of the modern world as a "cultural passage" (12) where migrants negotiate their fluid identities as they encounter alternate ways of performing culture and being in the world. Paradoxically, as Bhabha argues above, the harbour is also a site of exploitation where migrants are confronted with oppressive regimes of power from European socio-cultural forces. Kate Webb delineates Mohamed's portrayal of the multicultural environment of Tiger Bay where "Somali, Welsh, Arabic, Yiddish, Hindi and German all jostle together on her pages. But this proliferation contrasts with the constricted minds of many people in postwar Britain" (19). There are various instances in the text where Mahmood interacts and forms connections with migrants in Wales. Mahmood is a complex and charismatic character who can adapt to different environments. While Mahmood does establish connections with other migrants, such as those he shares lodging with, he generally exercises caution, refraining from becoming too involved with them. This is with the exception of his friendship with Berlin, the owner of Berlin's Milk Bar, a favoured destination among Somali sailors. Berlin is a fellow Somalilander who knew Mahmood when he was a child. Within the confines of this setting, Mahmood discusses his past with Berlin, offering the reader glimpses into his personal history. The existing familiarity between the men seemingly builds a sense of trust, enabling Mahmood to communicate more openly. Berlin also shows his loyalty and support for Mahmood by visiting him in prison, demonstrating the depth of their bond. In spite of Mahmood's friendship with Berlin, his existence is marked by profound solitude. He spends most of his day alone

attempting to navigate the Welsh community discreetly without harm, evading attention, and potential conflicts with the police. The host community is inimical toward migrants and many individuals believe that the "ports are our broken skin" (107). In this metaphor, the Welsh nation is a body that is vulnerable to disease (socio-cultural contamination) due to broken skin (porous spatial borders). The ports allow foreign bodies (migrants) to enter the body and their presence is a threat because they have the potential to change the body's system (British culture and socio-political structures). As a consequence of these xenophobic ideologies, migrants are mistreated and physically abused by the host community. *Fortune* outlines what occurs when these tensions spill over and migrants are attacked because of their difference from the host.

Furthermore, through her representation of Mahmood's exilic journey, Mohamed highlights how the judicial system uses bureaucracy to control and subjugate marginalised social groups. As will be outlined below, Mahmood's conviction and execution is a story of racist violence. He is oppressed by the police, misrepresented in court, and alienated by civilians because he is a black migrant in an area that is rife with racism and xenophobia. As previously mentioned, the text is based on real court case records, police documents, and journalistic reports that informed the public about Mahmood's trial and execution. These non-fictional texts contain, and subsequently expose, the blatant racism that Mahmood encountered in Cardiff, both in and outside of the courtroom. Before his arrest, it was exceptionally difficult for Mahmood to be a part of the intimate spaces of the host. The community monitors Mahmood's movement through the town and he has continuous run-ins with the police who "know him by name" (Mohamed 26). Mahmood's vulnerability is evident as he walks down the street at night:

> You cannot look like prey here. You cannot show weakness or your days are numbered, like those of the Somali drunk the police beat to death last year […]. Even now he flinches when passing gangs of Welshmen when they've been at the boozer on rugby days, everything might seem calm, normal, when suddenly a fist comes into his face as hard as concrete, the shock of it knocking all the words out of his head. (25–6)

The omniscient narrator addresses the reader directly with the repeated use of 'you' and this immerses the reader in the life of migrants in Wales[18]. Through stories in the community, such

[18] While this thesis does not specifically address Jane Gallop's 'Ethics of Reading', her ideas could be useful for analysing the texts. Had there been greater scope, Gallop's theory of 'close reading' can have been incorporated into the theoretical framework of the thesis to explore the ethical aspects of studying migrants. By closely examining the text, focusing on stylistic elements like word choice and repetition, readers can go beyond their preconceived notions and stereotypes about migrants. Paying attention to these smaller stylistic details provides

as the beating of the Somali who was vulnerable because he was drunk, and through his own experiences in Wales, Mahmood has learnt that to be perceived as vulnerable, like "prey", will result in unsolicited abuse and possibly death. Any sign of weakness on his part elicits violence from the host. In fear for his safety, Mahmood retreats further to the social and spatial margins of Tiger Bay. He is unable to integrate into a host community that seeks to abuse him. This forms a violent cycle of abuse. By keeping to himself, Mahmood remains an enigma to the host community who fail to see beyond his difference. Despite living in the diasporic space for five years, he continues to be perceived as the 'other' as a result of his status as a Somali migrant, his race, and his enigmatic and defensive behaviour. Thus, Mahmood is an easy target of dehumanisation which leads to him being criminalised by the police.

Mohamed employs the heterogeneous nature of creative non-fiction in an attempt to represent the contradictions that make up transnational identities and spaces. She explores the social tensions and inner rupturing that occur when "difference and sameness are hitched together" (Mulgrew 10). Moreover, *Fortune* is made up of various narrative modes and Mohamed uses the text to offer an alternative to the single story. In her portrayal of Mahmood's life in Cardiff, Mohamed exposes the danger of racial and cultural prejudice. The ways that dominant power structures determine how cultural hybrids are represented and how this fractures their identities will now be explored in more detail.

Cultural Hybridity, Identity, and Representation in *Fortune*

Using Hall's theory of cultural identity and representation, the way that external representation impacts Mahmood's identity is assessed. Hall argues that

> Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. (225 "Cultural Identity")

Hall outlines how the representation of a historical event is determined by ideologies that are, in turn, affected by the dominant social, cultural, and political structures of power within a particular place and time. Representation, in both fictional and non-fiction writing, is a blend

insight into the character's actual experiences, rather than relying on the reader's assumptions about what the character *should* experience.

of reality and interpretation. Representation or, more to the point, *misrepresentation* severely impacts Mahmood's identity and belonging. Mahmood's race, ethnicity and class dominate the hosts' perception of him. As previously mentioned, Mahmood is regarded with suspicion and treated with hostility because his foreign qualities make him a social and economic threat to the host. Mahmood believes that racist and xenophobic ideologies led to him being targeted by the police:

> he is locked up because these white *shayaadiin* hate that he got one of theirs. That's what it all boils down to, right? He took one of their women, and for that they gotta punish him. 'The blacks take our jobs and take our women'. They talk like that in all the papers, and say it to your face if they're feeling bold. They don't see you having the right to earn money or marry whoever you want. (Mohamed 231–2)

In Wales, it is not acceptable that Mahmood, as a black man and a migrant, has married a white Welsh woman. The racist and xenophobic ideologies are overt and migrants are ostracised in newspapers and on the street. As a result of his difference, Mahmood is denied the opportunity to genuinely integrate into Wales or establish a life with a member of the host community. Mahmood intentionally crosses the social border between migrants and the host community when he and Laura get married and have children. As a consequence of his defiance against the social order in Wales, Mahmood is punished and he is denied his basic human right to justice. To summarise then, Mahmood's life is tragically cut short by a judicial system that is manipulated by those in power who determine who has the right to live. This system privileges those whose identities align with or are favoured by the host community, enabling them to navigate and reside freely in Wales.

Fortune offers the reader a way into the mind of a character whose identity is ruptured when he is portrayed as the 'other' by the host. In conversation about Caribbean cultural identities, Hall discusses the "internal traumas of identity which are the consequence of colonisation and enslavement" ("Negotiating" 31). Mahmood is confronted with the same imperial ideologies of 'otherness' that were used to oppress slaves and colonised subjects in the Caribbean. For example, Mahmood is forced into menial jobs and he and Laura "could only find black-walled, squalid places to rent as a mixed couple in Cardiff" (Mohamed 76). He is marginalised by "the external processes and pressures of exploitation" ("Negotiating" 31) because of his ethnicity and race. Importantly, the Somali migrants, who arrived and settled in Wales after working on the ships, faced significant marginalisation owing to a complex interplay of factors. Their distinct ethnicity and race, coupled with their economic positioning

where they could only get menial jobs, positioned them as outsiders within the Welsh community. This was exacerbated by the language barrier between the two communities which hindered effective communication and reinforced the Somali's isolation. Furthermore, the perceived competition for resources and opportunities, fuelled by post-colonial dynamics, bred resentment among the locals and contributed to the Somali's marginalised status. The hosts' disdain for Somali migrants is further iterated in an example from the text. After bringing him in for questioning, Chief Detective Inspector Powell finds that Mahmood is

> wilder than expected, a real rogue with no respect for authority, a covetous darkie with no fixed abode. He'd read somewhere that for Somalis every man is his own master. They aren't like the jovial Kroo boys or anglicized West Indians, but truculent and vicious, quick to draw a weapon and unrepentant after the fact (105).

Powell's perceptions reveal deeply ingrained racial biases reflecting the prevailing racist ideologies of the time. This example illustrates the hosts' prejudiced view that Mahmood and others like him are subjected to. This discriminatory perspective of Somali migrants Mahmood significantly contributes to Mahmood's sense of exclusion. When Mahmood encounters the external scrutiny of the host community, he is deeply traumatised. Thus, Mohamed portrays "the way that internally one comes to collude with an objectification of oneself which is a profound misrecognition of one's own identity" (31). This is most evident in the trial where the prosecution's case is upheld by the belief that Mahmood is capable of murder because he is a black migrant from Somaliland. Over time, Mahmood is stripped of the illusion that he will transcend the multitude of social boundaries in Cardiff because the fundamental parts of his identity are used as grounds to criminalise him.

Mahmood is dehumanised by those in power because of the manner in which the host regards and represents his difference. Hall argues that

> questions of identity are always questions about representation. They are always questions about the invention, not simply the discovery of tradition. They are always exercises in selective memory and they almost always involve the silencing of something in order to allow something else to speak. ("Negotiating" 26)

Hall delineates the link between identity and representation and how those in power intentionally misrepresent, oppress, and dehumanise marginalised groups. As such, the police "have done a good job of fixing him" (Mohamed 212) because they invent a version of

Mahmood to convince the jury that he is capable of murder. To the police, it does not matter whether Mahmood committed the crime or not. As a result of his difference, Mahmood is an insignificant and unimportant part of a greater social problem. He is one of many migrants who the host nation attempts to extradite from their country by any means necessary. Thus, Somali migrants in Wales are perceived either as dangerous or as an "undifferentiated mass of suffering and victimhood" (Taylor para. 7). This explains why it was easy for the police, members of the court, witnesses, and the jury to frame Mahmood for a crime that he did not commit. Furthermore, in the privacy of his cell, Mahmood is threatened by Detective Powell who tells him: "'You'll hang whether you did it or not'" (Mohamed 195). For the first time, Mahmood comprehends that his life is dispensable because, as a black migrant, he is not seen as a human. Following this incident, Mahmood is further dehumanised by his barrister, Rhys Roberts, who describes him as a "Half child of nature […] Half semi-civilized savage" (294). The Defence objectifies Mahmood in a twisted attempt to portray him as a subhuman being who is not fit for trial. It is evident that Mohamed has incorporated this part of the trial into the text to show how Mahmood is stripped of his humanity and his basic human right to a fair trial.

The police bring forward a line of witnesses who are willing to speak against Mahmood for a reward that is offered by the victim's family. The witnesses who testify against him include those who are native to the area and those who belong to the migrant community. While testimonies from the police and disgruntled Welshmen are to be expected, Mahmood is overcome with a sense of betrayal as "a West Indian, a Welshman, an Arab, a Maltese, an Indian a Jew, almost the League of Nations" (210) testify against him. At this moment, the transnational links that Mahmood had previously established are severed. He is thrown into a binary of 'us' versus 'them', yet it is no longer the dichotomous thinking that he has grown used to in Cardiff. Mahmood has grown accustomed to binary systems such as 'black' versus 'white' and 'migrant' versus 'the host' that limit the interactions between those in the community. Mahmood is extremely alienated because he does not have support from migrants who are similarly mistreated by the host community. During the witnesses' testimonies, Mahmood's identity is broken apart and put back together in a variety of distorted versions of himself. He "can only stand in the dock, his lips sealed shut as they drag his name through mud and broken glass" (210). His silence together with the image of his name being dragged across the ground highlight his helplessness. The mud represents his reputation which is tarnished by the trial. However, the broken glass signifies irreparable damage and destruction, the rupturing of his character. Therefore, the police's ploy to gather migrants to speak against Mahmood is more insidious than ruining his name in the community. They intend to inflict serious

psychological and physical harm upon him. The image is a foreshadowing of Mahmood's death. At first, the trial damages Mahmood's reputation, thereafter the continuous instances of alienation erode his sense of belonging, particularly when his transnational connections are severed. Like broken glass, Mahmood's identity is cracked and fractured beyond repair.

The thesis establishes a connection between cultural hybridity, identity, and representation through a close analysis of the text. Through the process of the trial, Mahmood sees himself from the perspective of the host. He observes himself as a socio-cultural 'other' where he is denied humanity because he is a black migrant. The host's external representation of Mahmood severely impacts his identity and his sense of belonging in the diasporic space. During the trial, Mahmood's sense of self is irreparably damaged when he is ostracised by migrants in the community.

Literary Techniques that Portray Mahmood's Liminality

Thus far, this chapter has outlined the impact of external representation on Mahmood's identity and his sense of belonging in the diasporic space. The figurative devices in *Fortune* will now be examined to analyse the impact of social and spatial exclusion on Mahmood's liminality as he shifts from vulnerability to agency. The cell that Mahmood returns to after he is found guilty is called "the condemned suite" (301) by the prison wardens, and it represents the transitional space between life and death. To use Bhabha's terminology, Mahmood's cell is a 'Third Space' where the border between the living and the dead is blurred, navigated, and crossed before physical life is lost. The cell is an allegory for the peripheral, in-between spaces where the individuals who are *in* but not *part* of society. In his cell, Mahmood is almost entirely cut off from his old life. For those, like Mahmood, who exist on the margins of the diasporic space, there is a distance between them and the world which gives way to a liminal space that straddles the border between life and death.

The cell is a space of physical confinement, immobility, entrapment, and extreme alienation. Mahmood is held in a maximum-security cell and he is watched by wardens to prevent him from taking his own life. Despite the constant presence of the wardens, Mahmood feels alienated and agitated. He perceives their surveillance as a punishment: "If they intended to torture him, this is the perfect way; better than any physical pain they could inflict, the loss of privacy makes Mahmood want to unpeel his skin and step out of it" (304). The wardens' presence is a form of torture because their proximity to Mahmood places him in a permanent state of unease. In his interactions with the host, he has learnt that he cannot show vulnerability

without being attacked. The image of Mahmood unpeeling his skin signifies his extreme discomfort. Yet his skin also represents his difference from the host. Mahmood is aware that he is awaiting execution because his blackness has made him the dangerous 'other' in the eyes of the host. If he were to "unpeel his skin and step out of it" he would be free to leave the cell and live a life that is not controlled by racist ideologies.

Some may argue that sentencing Mahmood to death and erasing his life is the ultimate expression of these ideologies. Mahmood *is* permanently silenced when he is killed, however, his prison cell is also a site of transcendence, resistance, and empowerment. Ironically, from the confines of his cell, Mahmood negotiates and reconstructs his identity. His positionality shifts from a state of vulnerability to a place of agency as he rejects the narratives that oppressed him. Mahmood requests that the police take his statement. He tells the wardens to call

> 'that lying Detective Powell, and let him take my statement, so that the police are not the only ones to write my story. I will have the final say […]. Bring him here and I will tell him what *I* want him to hear'. (346, emphasis in original)

Mahmood challenges Detective Powell who purposefully misrepresented him to subjugate and convict him. Mahmood tells Detective Powell "'you will hear my word and write it down. You don't write my history for my sons or nobody else, you see?'" (347). At this moment Mahmood reclaims his personal history and for the first time, he shares his side of the story. Mahmood asserts his identity which is no longer bound to the external representation of him.

The section of this chapter has delineated the impact of misrepresentation on Mahmood's identity. Mohamed weaves figurative literary devices into the non-fictional narrative accounts about Mahmood. Using the symbol of the prison cell Mohamed exposes Mahmood's precarity and isolation as he awaits execution. However, the cell is also a site of resistance where Mahmood confronts cultural ideologies of difference. Furthermore, he challenges and resists the host's representation of his life by rewriting his own story. In doing so, Mahmood's words and his legacy live on past his death.

Mohamed's Authorial Border Crossing

Mohamed attempts to give a voice to a man whose story was purposefully silenced by dominant regimes of power. In an interview with reporter Zara Pereira, Mohamed explains that she "wanted to write the story to show the real Mahmood Mattan, that his family and friends knew – not the version the police made up" (para. 13). Thus, Mohamed is tasked with the ethical

responsibility of attempting to represent Mahmood in a way that closely resembles who he really was. She claims that she "stayed close to the story and the novel has all the facts of the case" (para. 25). Mohamed has attempted to meet the "obligation to factual representation" (Mulgrew 24) of the genre of creative non-fiction. However, by incorporating fictional literary elements within the factual elements of Mahmood's story, Mohamed risks misrepresenting him. She explains that "the more I fictionalised the story, the more I realised how easy it was to create a different version of events. I could almost relate with the police's approach – it's easy to only look at what you're prepared to see" (para. 28). Tension arises here as the very issue of factuality and misrepresentation that Mohamed attempts to circumvent by using the genre of creative non-fiction circles back upon her. As Krog argues, when language is used to portray an individual's life or a historical event:

> one is already falsifying, fictionalising by deciding which angle, which words to use and what detail to leave out. [...] even the simplest journalism is inadequate in giving a single fact in its complete fullness – the moment there is language, reality is already affected. (in Brown 3)

Language cannot be separated from the writers' subjective points of view. Correspondingly, language is used by writers to frame the world to represent an alternative reality from their perspective. Therefore, Mohamed's portrayal of Mahmood's life must be viewed as "a system of meaning, an interpretation of reality" (Rennie 37). To this end, the text is Mohamed's response to the atrocities that Mahmood experienced in Cardiff. Additionally, the hybridisation of fiction and non-fiction characteristics is used by Mohamed to interrogate current issues and historical events. She addresses this issue of representation in non-fiction writing by delineating how these texts are represented in a manner that silences and oppresses Mahmood[19]. Using the genre of creative non-fiction, she testifies against the oppressive regimes of power, exposing the extent of their destruction of Mahmood's psyche from his perspective.

The cogency of Mohamed's narrative approach is found in the impact of the text on the reader. Mulgrew's argument that writers use creative non-fiction to understand "the other through immersive, fundamentally journalistic techniques" (23) resonates in Mohamed's

[19] Had there been greater scope, the notion of 'critical fabulation' could have been discussed in detail in the thesis. The term was coined by Saidiya Hartman, a scholar of African American literature and history. It is used to describe her method of writing against the archive of trans-Atlantic slavery that often silences or erases the voices of enslaved women. By using historical research, imagination, and storytelling, Hartman attempts to reconstruct the lives and experiences of these women, not only as they were, but also as they could have been. Hartman's critical fabulation is a form of creative non-fiction that challenges the assumptions and hierarchies of history and creates a space for alternative narratives and possibilities (Hartman, 2008).

literary works. Employing fictional techniques, Mohamed intentionally evokes an emotional response from the reader by skilfully interweaving fact and fiction. Mohamed facilitates a profound connection between the reader and the story, enabling them to acquire a "felt sense of the quality of life at a particular time and place" (Rennie 17). She immerses the reader into Mahmood's life in Cardiff as she pays tribute to the various, and at times, contradictory parts that make up his transnational identity. Importantly, Mohamed does not offer solutions to the social ills that ended Mahmood's life. Yet she does expose the racist and xenophobic ideologies that oppressed him and diminished his heterogeneous identity to portray him as simplistic, uncivilised, and dangerous 'other'. She portrays "Mahmood Hussein Mattan and all his real manifestations: the tireless stoker, the poker shark, the elegant wanderer, the love-starved husband, the soft-hearted father (Mohamed 212). In her portrayal, Mohamed humanises Mahmood, revealing that he is more than "just another case of police brutality" (Pereira para. 20). As a result, the reader is exposed to Mahmood's emotions as an innocent man who is caught in a rigged system that is set up to persecute him.

The Role of the Reader as a Constructor of Meaning

Throughout the text, the reader is confronted with the discrimination that led to this miscarriage of justice. The reader witnesses the defence and the prosecution's cases in a dialogue form. Thus the reader undertakes a role that is similar to the jury in court as they are required to negotiate a variety of contesting portrayals of Mahmood. The reader must attempt to locate the "real Mahmood Mattan" (Pereira para. 11) by navigating through the varying degrees of reliability in these representations. Through this process, the reader is made to question those who speak against Mahmood and attempt to uncover the ideologies that led to him being criminalised.

Mohamed prompts the reader to investigate how hegemonic powers manipulate the justice system leading to the conviction and execution of an innocent man. The reader must question the role of justice and ask who and what the justice system serves to protect. The judicial system in Cardiff in 1952 fails Mahmood because it is utilised by those in power to serve hegemonic objectives and regulate borders to determine who can and cannot belong in Wales. Subsequently, the reader is left to contemplate the role of justice for both the migrant and the host. *Fortune* brings about awareness of the way historical events are portrayed to achieve socio-political objectives. The text encourages readers to interrogate the justice system

in the past and present to question if the law protects migrants, particularly vulnerable communities who cross borders without rights.

Mohamed and the reader navigate the various portrayals of Mahmood in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of his complexity as a migrant. Mahmood navigates both seen and unseen borders that are used by those in power to control his belonging in the diasporic space. Mohamed exposes how the judicial system oppresses Mahmood because he is not seen as human and is therefore not deserving of a fair trial. Accordingly, Mohamed deploys the genre of creative non-fiction to represent Mahmood's complex, hybrid identity that is made up of multiple selves. *Fortune* encourages readers to interrogate whether the justice system protects migrants, particularly those who are vulnerable to abuse and who cross national borders without rights or support from the state.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the unstable border between fact and fiction in the genre of creative non-fiction. Mohamed utilises the genre to highlight issues of representation in non-fictional texts that portray Mahmood's life in Cardiff, his trial, and execution. Mahmood is a marginalised subject because as an adult and a black male migrant he seen as a threat by the host and he is prevented from crossing the social borders in the diasporic home. He is kept on the margins of the society in Cardiff by racist and xenophobic ideologies. His conviction reveals the danger of these ideologies and how prejudice results in the oppression and criminalisation of marginalised groups. Furthermore, the text reveals the rupturing effects of misrepresentation on Mahmood's identity as he perceives himself from the perspective of the host: as the dehumanised 'other'. However, while he awaits execution he shifts from a space of vulnerability to resistance and agency. Mahmood rewrites his story from his perspective. In this act, Mahmood reconstructs his identity and his positionality is not determined by external power structures that ostracised him because of his difference from the host. Of great significance is that his identity and positionality at the end, in the prison cell, are determined by his inner sense of self. As mentioned, the central aim of this thesis is to examine how conflict-induced migration impacts child characters through a detailed analysis of the primary texts. Notably, Mahmood stands apart from Jama and Deqo because he is an adult when he crosses the border into Wales. Mahmood's experience of migration as an adult is a pertinent focal point of this chapter and it aligns with the thesis's overarching exploration into the

interplay of age and perceptions of childhood, and how these factors impact the permeability of borders.

Chapter Five: Comparative Analysis of *Black Mamba Boy*, *The Orchard of Lost Souls* and *The Fortune Men*

Introduction

This chapter compares Mohamed's portrayal of migration and the effect of displacement on the characters in *Mamba Boy*, *Orchard* and *Fortune*. As mentioned, at the point of writing this thesis, there is no scholarly literature that examines *Fortune*. Further, there is no existing scholarly work that compares the primary texts. Therefore, the comparison may offer new insights into the primary texts. This comparative analysis examines the children's diasporic journeys and the manner in which their positioning differs from that of adult migrants. To start, the generic conventions in each text are explored. Then, with reference to Bhaktin's notion of the chronotope, the thesis states that all three texts consist of multiple, interwoven narrative strands. Importantly, the narrative structure of the primary texts mirrors the characters' experience of time and space. Furthermore, the chronotopic conventions in the texts differ between the adult and child migrant characters because they have disparate spatial and temporal realities. Following the analysis of the narrative form of Mohamed's oeuvre, the similarities and differences in the thematic content of the texts are investigated. Jama and Deqo's journeys as independent child migrants and Mahmood's childhood memories are compared. Child migrants' perceived vulnerability allows them to transverse boundaries that adults are not able to cross. Of significance is the relationship between the cultural perception of children and childhood and how this affects the permeability of borders. To investigate how age affects the characters' trajectories across space, Jama and Deqo's experiences and Mahmood's childhood memories of migration will be compared to Mahmood's adult life.

Comparing the Narrative Form of the Texts

Mamba Boy, *Orchard* and *Fortune* are semi-biographical texts based on the lives of Somali migrants who are forcefully displaced from their homeland by conflict and civil unrest. *Mamba Boy* depicts the life and exilic journey of Mohamed's father, Jama. Similarly, *Orchard* delineates Mohamed's paternal grandmother's experience of the Somali Civil War in the 1980s. Like Kawsar, her grandmother was disabled and doubly vulnerable as an immobile

woman trapped within the hostile environment of the war.[20] Both *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard* began as projects of oral history where Mohamed engages with her family's stories of migration to investigate the intergenerational displacement within her personal history. In the process of writing *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard*, Mohamed moved away from family biography and life history to write fictionalised accounts of her family's oral narratives. In an interview with Christine Matzke, Mohamed outlines the generic transformation of *Mamba Boy*:

> At first I definitely wanted to write a biography. I wanted it to stay as closely as possible to my father's real life, because it was so interesting, and because I think it didn't need any embellishment at all. The only thing that was problematic was that my father remembered practical details but not anything, really, about his emotional life, his relationships with people. With his mother he was clearer on, but it was his friends, his hopes, and wishes that were lacking. (209)

Mohamed interviewed her father to write his biography. In the telling of his life story, as Mohamed explains above, her father described his diasporic journey in spatial terms. He prioritised the physical process of border-crossing omitting the role of relationships and how these social connections contributed to or hindered his ability to cross borders. In the fictionalised account of her father's story, Mohamed provides "her protagonist with more psychological depth" (Matzke 207) by highlighting the impact of displacement and loss on his identity. Furthermore, a central concern in *Mamba Boy* is the vital role of social relationships that enable Jama to cross social and spatial borders and survive the brutalities of the war.

Mamba Boy and *Orchard* portray Jama and Deqo's personal triumphs as they cross borders and adapt to new and unstable socio-political environments. As it will be explained shortly, the texts also portray the devastating effect of the war on vulnerable communities in the Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia) where thousands of civilians, including children, were displaced and suffered abuse and death. While *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard* are set fifty-two years apart, the texts delineate the suffering caused by the hegemonic forces who had political, economic, and military power at the time. Drawing on her father and grandmother's personal experiences of conflict-induced displacement, Mohamed uses the

[20] Before the war broke out, Mohamed's grandmother was hit by a car and left bed-bound. In an interview at the Lahore Literary Festival, Mohamed states that she explores the experiences of those, like her grandmother, who were left behind during the civil war. This included mentally and physically disabled individuals, the poor, and street children who had no protection or means to escape the war (Mohamed interviewed by Thomas Roueche at Lahore Literary Festival 10:58).

genre of creative non-fiction to represent the effects of colonisation and civil unrest on marginalised social groups in the Africa on a larger scale.

Fortune differs from *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard* because Mahmood's story is severed from his living memory. As outlined in Chapter Four, Mohamed utilised secondary sources from the historical record to construct her fictionalised account of his experience of migration and prejudice in Wales. She also made use of first-hand accounts in the form of interviews with those who knew Mahmood. Interestingly, Jama and Mahmood are from the same generation, they knew one another and there are various similarities in their journeys of migration.[21] They share an ethnic origin with the Eidegalle clan, both men worked as stokers on European ships, they sailed to Wales in 1947 and they met when they both lived in the port city of Hull. *Mamba Boy* delineates Jama's childhood where he matures into an adult while crossing various borders. The text comes to an end with a twenty-two-year-old Jama who decides to return to Eritrea to his wife Bethlehem and their newly born son. Jama's successful spatial journey and personal growth from childhood to adulthood are evident in his decision to reunite with his family and assume the responsibility of caring for his wife and son. In doing so, Jama takes on the role that his father, Guure, had abandoned, a decision that had forced Jama and his mother to migrate to Aden due to their limited resources and lack of support. By breaking the cycle of abandonment, Jama puts an end to the circumstances that led to forced migration and tragic loss. In contrast, *Fortune* depicts Mahmood's adult life as he attempts to settle in the diasporic space. The text's title '*The Fortune Men*' is ironic, as it alludes to the Somali men, like Jama, who embarked on global voyages and brought wealth back to their families upon their return. However, Mahmood's circumstances stand in stark contrast. Entrapped in menial jobs in Wales, he remains unable to accumulate wealth. Additionally, the irony extends further as his life is tragically cut short, denying him the opportunity to revisit his homeland. The text begins, *in medias res* with twenty-four-year-old Mahmood who is days away from being wrongfully accused of murder and his life comes to an abrupt and brutal end. It's important to note that Mahmood is believed to be twenty-eight by the members of the court however he is twenty-four. This is seen in the text when Mahmood thinks: "Maybe he should tell the doctor his real age too. It probably won't make a difference, he knows, but perhaps they'll go easier on a twenty-four- rather than twenty-eight-year-old" (Mohamed 163). Thus, the distinction of the characters' ages set *Fortune* apart from the other texts as the majority of the text portrays

[21] Mohamed initially set up the interview with Jama to learn about his journey of migration. Mohamed also intended to ask her father about Mahmood's life in an attempt to learn about his personality and locate the man who was misrepresented and lost within the historical archives (Matzke 209).

Mahmood's adult life in Wales. By examining Jama, Deqo and Mahmood's journeys alongside one another, the factor of age is brought to the forefront of the comparative analysis. This chapter compares the characters' stories to elucidate how the hosts' perception of children affects migrants' experiences of the diasporic space.

Mamba Boy, Orchard and *Fortune* contain elements of fiction and non-fiction and all three texts are classified within the genre of creative non-fiction. Mohamed fictionalises these accounts of displacement and strategically introduces characters, events, and experiences within the texts to circumvent limitations in their oral narratives and the historical record. As stated previously, Mohamed has familial ties with the characters in *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard*. As a postcolonial writer, she writes to explore the impact of colonisation, war, and displacement on her family. While Mohamed and Mahmood are not related, his personal experience of prejudice and abuse represents a wider history of oppression in Europe and Northeast Africa during the British and Italian colonial occupation of the region. To follow, an analysis of the narrative structure of the texts reveals how Mohamed portrays the rupturing impact of forced displacement in both the content and the form of the primary texts.

Comparing Narrative Shifts in *Mamba Boy, Orchard* and *Fortune*

The texts are made up of two narrative strands that represent private and public experiences of the war. Mohamed interweaves these narrative strands to portray the characters' personal journeys of migration that are embedded within a larger historical context of conflict and displacement in Somalia and the diasporic space. The texts delineate the characters' independent experiences of survival within significant historical moments in Somalia's history. This includes the colonisation of the region, the conscription of Eritrean *askaris* into Mussolini's army, the racist violence that African migrants experienced in Britain, and finally the collapse of Siad Barre's military dictatorship in Somalia and the subsequent civil war. Thus, Mohamed's oeuvre portrays the sustained oppression and violence that occurred throughout Somalia's history with a particular emphasis on the ways that state violence impacts innocent and vulnerable communities.

In discussing child migrants in contemporary African literature, Chris Ouma states that the "ordinary life-world of childhood provides a spatio-temporal plane below and besides adult experiences and therefore narratives of the time" (6). Children occupy an alternate spatial and temporal reality and "childhood rewrites the normative (adult) experiencing of time and history" (21). Ouma's argument is unpacked further through an analysis of the characters'

sense of space, time and history. To start, the children's sense of place during the war is explored. As Gardner argues:

> children perceive the world rather differently than grown ups. Indeed, whilst the subjects of most migration related research – adults – narrate their changing relationships with place and space in terms of what has already happened, children have their lives ahead of them. Their relationships to movement and place are thus either framed in the here and now or in a terrain rather harder for researchers to grasp: the future. (890)

As Gardner's statement suggests, child migrants have an alternate perception of space, place and time when compared to adults. Mahmood frames his journey of migration retrospectively from his jail cell where he has the ability and time to reflect on his memories of childhood. By engaging with his memory, Mahmood escapes from the present moment, the confines of his cell, and his inevitable death. In contrast, Jama and Deqo have an "immediate relationship with their physical bodies and environment" (Gardner 902). Most child migrants experience migration in the present because "children have their lives ahead of them" (890). This notion of immediacy is most significant for child migrants who are solely responsible for their survival. When they migrate through war-torn areas they must carefully navigate spatial environments to seek out limited places of safety. There are a few sporadic instances when Jama and Deqo reflect upon their past where they return to specific memories of family members and friends who have died. This usually occurs after a traumatic event, when they have temporarily retracted from their environment, as they attempt to make sense of their present. However, when they cross physical borders they focus on the task at hand which is to cross social and spatial boundaries and escape the surrounding conflict.

As uneducated and street children, Jama and Deqo were not taught the history of Somalia. Consequently, they are unaware of the socio-political strife which is the cause of the conflict in their homeland. Their perception of historical time is "below and besides" the adults in Somalia because the events that have caused the war are above and beyond their comprehension. Ironically, despite being removed from the socio-political situation at hand, Jama and Deqo must survive the consequences of the war without protection. The texts foreground their everyday experiences of the war and extraordinary acts of violence fall into the background of their daily act of survival. Therefore, the chronotope of the adventure hero dominates *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard* as the narrative foregrounds their personal journeys as they cross vast distances. This is with the exception of short interjections of the historical narrative that appears when Jama and Deqo's journeys of migration are ruptured by violence.

As previously outlined, this occurs when Jama learns that his father and Shidane have died. Similarly, Deqo migrates through Hargeisa with the hope of obtaining safety and belonging. Hence her sense of community is ruptured when she is betrayed by Nasara who sells Deqo to Mustafa, a pimp who attempts to rape her. For the second time, Deqo narrowly evades sexual abuse when she forces the heel of a stiletto into Mustafa's eye. Deqo escapes the compound and heads to the market square, a space that previously represented community and familiarity to her. She runs into a group of shoppers who stand transfixed upon the site of three hanging nomads who have been killed by the NFM. At this moment, Deqo's sense of safety in the public and the private world is destroyed. Once again, she is left without protection in an incredibly dangerous environment. Following this incident, the text shifts to the historical narrative as Deqo returns to her barrel where she remains for weeks on end in fear of being found by Mustafa. In the historical narrative, Jama and Deqo remain in one place. In these moments of temporary stasis, the narrative prioritises the effects of violence on their psyche. In summary, the characters are members of vulnerable communities who are displaced and made extremely vulnerable by colonisation, war, and civil unrest. Yet Jama and Deqo's stories are also marked by their adaptability and strength. Mirroring their liminal positionalities, the narrative shifts back to the chronotope of the adventure hero after these traumatic events.

The notion of alternate interwoven narrative strands is also seen in Steiner's argument about the chronotopic generic conventions in *Mamba Boy*. Steiner outlines how the narrative structure of the text oscillates between the chronotope of the adventure hero and the historical narrative (178). The chronotopic genre conventions in *Mamba Boy* were discussed in Chapter One of this thesis to argue that the changes in narrative structure signal changes in Jama's liminal positioning as he crosses borders and navigates unknown terrains. As it will be demonstrated shortly, Steiner's argument can be applied to *Mamba Boy*, *Orchard* and *Fortune*. Here the focus of the analysis shifts slightly from that of Chapter One to examine how the narrative structure mirrors the child migrants' experience of space and time and how this differs from the experience of their adult counterparts.

Steiner goes on to argue that the chronotope of the adventure hero is linked to the road narrative. The symbol of the road is particularly pertinent for Jama and Deqo as they cross great distances on foot. The symbol of the road functions as a linking device that 'runs through' and connects the characters' stories. Further, the road represents Jama and Deqo's mobility, freedom, and the porous nature of the borders they cross. The road is symbolic of the "path of life" (Mikkonen 286) because it is their way out of the conflict that has consumed their homelands. In *Fortune*, the symbol of the road is replaced with a prison cell. Mahmood was

highly mobile as a child and he crossed a variety of borders through Africa without parental guidance. The road that appeared endless and full of opportunity is replaced by "twelve square feet of floor space" (233). In the prison cell, Mahmood is overcome by immobility which signifies his loss of freedom:

> He is a man who needs to walk, always was, and never sit still from the moment he learnt to get up on two feet. He walked the length of Africa, for fuck's sake. This immobility is what will do him in. Just a few months ago, at the end of January, he got the train to London and walked from Paddington to West India Quay and back again, just for the hell of it, for a sudden change of scene, just to remember that this body is his and he can do with it what he wants; that he can push it hard and it will do his bidding like an expensive machine. (247)

Mahmood expresses his freedom by wandering across space without being stopped. The simile of an expensive machine represents his body which is valuable only if it can serve his will where he can rely upon his physical strength to cross great distances without interference.

Mahmood has literally come to the end of the road as he awaits execution. Similarly, the chronotope of the adventure hero, which is evident in Mahmood's memories of his childhood, is collapsed and taken over by the historical narrative. The historical narrative prioritises the time spent in the cell and the impact of devastating historical forces on Mahmood's identity. The main differentiating factor between Mahmood, Jama and Deqo's journeys is that *Fortune* remains in the historical narrative when Mahmood is an adult. Steiner states that in *Mamba Boy* "the narrative returns to aspects of the adventure chronotope at the end of the novel" (287) revealing that Jama "is never crushed by historical forces but instead, like an adventure hero, overcomes and escapes the ordeals of historical space and time" (287). Similarly, Deqo escapes the brutalities of the war as she crosses the border into Ethiopia and seeks help in a refugee camp. The narrative shifts back to the chronotope of the adventure hero as she leads an aid worker to Kawsar and Filsan. Deqo "is back in her familiar world; the war and all that time in Hargeisa just a complicated trial to achieve what she has always wanted: a family, however makeshift" (336). Jama and Deqo's journeys have come full circle as they return to their familiar worlds: Deqo returns to the Sa'aab refugee camp whereas Jama is reunited with his wife and son. Their journeys contain a notion of simultaneity because they have returned to their homeland. In contrast, Mahmood's journey of migration is irreparably ruptured and stopped short preventing him from integrating within the diasporic space or returning to his homeland. Thus, Jama and Deqo miraculously survive the historical forces that kill Mahmood.

Furthermore, Mohamed portrays the legacy of colonial violence in the collapse of the temporal dimension in the texts. Reading *Mamba Boy, Orchard* and *Fortune* alongside one another exposes the continuity of extreme acts of violence that stretch across space and time. The texts delineate brutal acts of human rights abuse that occurred in real life. As previously mentioned, *Mamba Boy* bears witness to the life and murder of Shidane who was tortured to death by Italian soldiers. Steiner argues that in using the character Shidane

> the narrative collapses the past and the present in order to note the continuities of how the sense of legitimacy to use extreme violence in the colonial setting is carried to the colonial present, where Canadian soldiers fail to recognise the humanity of Shidane Arone. (185)

Mohamed inserts the character of Shidane into the text to blur the temporal plane in the text and problematise the continuity of violence from the past to the present. Steiner's observation about the continuous acts of oppression is applicable to all three texts. Aminatta Forna states that the instances of extreme violence against civilians in *Orchard* "take place in a matter of weeks, but given the length of the Somali conflict, the women's stories could be drawn over decades. When the book ends, the war is far from over" (para. 11). To expand on Forna's argument, the variation between Deqo, Filsan and Kawsar's age elucidates the encompassing nature of the war that takes hold of the lives of characters from all walks of life. Furthermore, as the war is "drawn over decades" it could occur over an individual's lifetime. Mohamed collapses the temporal dimension of the text where the characters could represent the life of one woman as she navigates the war at various stages in her life. Mahmood's personal story of abuse at the hands of the police is alarmingly relevant seventy years on. Black individuals are mistreated by the police and denied their rights revealing that while time has passed these ideologies of otherness live on.

The generic conventions of *Mamba Boy, Orchard* and *Fortune* have been discussed. The texts are constructed out of two interwoven narrative strands, where the protagonists' personal experiences of migration are portrayed within a wider historical context of oppression in the Horn of Africa. Children experience their spatial environment, their placement in this environment, and time differently than adults and this is mirrored in the content and form of the texts. All three texts share a historical context of continued oppression and violence. Mohamed collapses the temporality in the texts to problematise the sustained presence of violence and oppression in Somalia that affects the characters' trajectories.

Comparing Childhood, 'Place' and 'Emplacement'

This section of this chapter explores how childhood is culturally constructed and the manner in which beliefs about children impact the permeability of borders. Gardner's theorisation about 'place' and 'emplacement' and how this affects child migrants' mobility guide the comparison of the primary texts. Gardner defines 'place' as

> a social position and a physical location [. . .]. Children are therefore 'placed' both in terms of their location in space, and in terms of their positions in families, communities and wider society". (895)

To this end, 'place' is a spatial *and* social entity. Child migrants' mobility, which is seen in their ability to freely cross borders, is socially determined. Gardner's concept of 'place' is interlinked with the notion of positionality. Positionality is a key term that has been used throughout this thesis to argue that migrants are positioned within an existing social hierarchy in the host state. Children have a particularly unstable or liminal positioning because their 'place' is imposed upon them "by adult moral values" (Fog-Olwig and Gullov 3). Children's placement in a particular society is therefore controlled by governing forces in the public domain *and* by adult civilians (from the host nation and the migrant community) who determine the social order in the private domain. Those in power 'place' children in spatial environments and social hierarchies that are deemed suitable and culturally appropriate (Gardner 895). If children are perceived to be vulnerable and in need of shelter and protection, they may surpass intimate social borders because they are 'placed' within familial and communal networks of care. Paradoxically, once 'placed' within these spaces child migrants' movement can be restricted as they are forced to remain within a particular space, usually the private domain. In this way, the cultural perception of children catalyses the tightening or loosening of borders and affects children's ability to freely move through space. Furthermore, "processes of 'emplacement' depend not only on how childhood is culturally constructed in each context but also upon gender, ethnic identity and social class" (Gardner 895). Therefore, child migrants' positionalities and degrees of mobility are influenced by the culturally constructed perception of children as well as other factors such as their gender, age, and class.

Gardner explores the agency of child migrants whose positionality shifts when they cross borders:

> As they move between different domains, children may have greater or lesser control over how they're placed and may in turn participate in different forms of compliance, resistance or subversion. (895)

When child migrants are 'placed' in different domains they oscillate between a state of vulnerability and agency. They may comply with their placement within social structures to ensure their survival. In a different context where they have more agency, they may resist and subvert these structures. Independent child migrants are responsible for their own survival and they are aware of their precarity. Therefore, they may only come to resist culturally determined ways of performing childhood once they have the physical and mental strength to survive the consequences of stepping against the social order in the diasporic space. As mentioned, child migrants' trajectories are affected by how they are perceived by those in power. However, they may actively engage with and negotiate their 'placement' within a particular environment, thus contributing to their liminal and complex positioning. On the one hand, children are dependent on adults for hospitality. On the other hand, there are moments when children voluntarily leave the places where they receive care to continue their independent journeys of migration and enhance their opportunities. By leaving these places of care, children resist culturally determined constructs of childhood and age-appropriate activities.

Child migrants' trajectories across space are affected by culturally determined beliefs about children and childhood. Just as they encounter borders, they must navigate social and spatial hierarchies where adults attempt to regulate their movement. Gardner's theory about childhood, 'place' and 'emplacement' will now be explored further in an analysis of Jama and Deqo's experience of migration and Mahmood's childhood memories of border-crossing.

Comparing Jama, Deqo and Mahmood's Culturally Constructed Childhoods

For highly mobile, transnational subjects like the child migrant characters in the texts, the way that children are 'placed' and 'emplaced' in different cultures is thrown into relief. *Mamba Boy*, *Orchard*, and *Fortune* portray the journeys of independent child migrants who travel great distances, mostly on foot. Their stories of migration expose what it is "like to grow up in a world in which geographic mobility over long distances is taken for granted, a part of everyday life" (Gardner 890). When they encounter new environments, they are 'placed' and 'emplaced' by the adults around them who attempt to determine how children should interact with space. The degree to which children's mobility is affected by culturally determined ideologies is further explained by Ouma who states that "Childhood is a set of dimensions that engages with

material realities as raced, classed, gendered and sexed social identifications" (2). These factors such as race, class, gender, and sex are perceived and performed differently in different societies. Through a close analysis of the texts, the ways that Jama, Deqo and Mahmood are "emplaced in different political ecologies and social hierarchies" (Gardner 896) are explored and compared.

Jama is highly mobile in Aden and he is left to explore the city without the interference of adults. His agency cannot be attributed to socio-cultural or economic privilege. Rather, he freely crosses borders because he is invisible to the adults in his diasporic home. As a young Somali male, he is 'emplaced' near the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy alongside the Somali market children whom he has befriended:

> Many of the Somali boys were the children of single mothers working in coffee factories, too tired after twelve hours of work to chase after boisterous, hungry boys. Their fathers came and went regularly, making money and losing it, with the monsoon trade. With no parental beatings to fear, the Somali boys saw the other children as well-fed and soft enough to harass safely. (31)

The host community 'emplaces' Jama within a group of boys according to their gender, ethnicity, and class. The Indian, Jewish, and Yemeni child migrants are placed in the private domain and 'emplaced' within the family unit. It is only the Somali children who are marginalised, ignored, and left to roam the streets without parental guidance and care. They exist on the social and spatial margins of the city without the aid of adults. Consequently, the Somali children in Aden are seen as the 'other' and undeserving of care because it is believed that without the guidance of their parents their lives will not amount to anything of value.

Jama's life is marked by mobility and irregularity as he explores the streets of Aden in search of food and entertainment. "Days and weeks and months came and went but Jama rarely knew where he would be eating or sleeping on any given night, there was no order to his life" (24). Before her death, Jama's mother attempts to regulate his movement. Despite her best efforts, she is unable to fix Jama in 'place'. "Ambaro left for the coffee factory at dawn and didn't return until dark, leaving Jama to either float around the Islaweyne home feeling unwelcome, or to stay out in the streets with the market boys" (8). In response to being ostracised in the Islaweyne household, Jama retreats to marginal spaces and takes to sleeping on roofs:

> His favourite place to sleep was an earth-smelling crook on the roof of a teetering apartment block. The crook was made up of a mud wall that curled

> over to make a three-walled tomb, inside it Jama felt as safe as the dead, in this world but not of it, floating high in the sky. (23)

The image of the crook is likened to Deqo's barrel in the ditch. This exemplifies how Mohamed inserts imagery in her texts to represent the characters' positioning at various points in their journeys. Both Jama and Deqo are marginalised and their social positioning and the spatial environment mirror one another as they attempt to find safety in spaces that they believe will protect them from danger. These makeshift spaces of refuge are structurally unsound: Deqo's barrel frequently floods, it is contaminated with kerosene, and it is placed near the homeless men who sexually harass her. Similarly, Jama's "tomb" is located on a rooftop of a "teetering" apartment block—suggesting that the block itself is unstable and that it, together with Jama's sense of safety, may come crashing down. Being made of clay and exposed to the elements, Jama's crook could break around him at any point. The simile that Jama is "as safe as the dead" suggests that in his "tomb" he is removed from the world and, like the dead, he is protected from harm and further suffering. Thus, Jama and Deqo's precarity is highlighted in their action of turning dangerous and exposed spaces in the public domain into private places of shelter. Their basic needs of food, shelter and safety are not met which highlights their desperate need for care. Moreover, from their perspective, these makeshift spaces of refuge separate them from danger in the outside world. These spaces reflect the characters' marginalised positioning as they are 'in' but not 'of' the world. The imagery also reflects their liminality because they exist in the liminal space between life and death where at any moment, they could lose their lives or miraculously survive the danger that surrounds them.

After Ambaro's death, Jama is in a particularly vulnerable state when he is found by Jinnow. Chapter Two of this thesis explored Jama's unsuccessful return to his homeland. His experiences in Hargeisa will now be examined to explore the ways that child migrants actively engage with and subvert the cultural perception of childhood. It is evident that at this point in his journey, Jama's survival depends on Jinnow's hospitality because he is starving: his "bloated gaseous stomach bulged out before him and he wondered why it stretched further out the hungrier he got" (47). Initially, Jama complies with the social order in the compound to survive. However, when his strength is restored, Jama begins to resist the ways that the women expect children his age to behave. Jama grows restless within the confines of the compound where the children are expected to go to school or remain within the private domain. He has grown used to his mobility in Aden and he feels that his life is "no different to the goats', tied up in the compound, staring blankly as they chewed on peelings. He was just a lump of dull

clay that no one wanted to mould or breathe life into" (54). Jama's sense of restriction is evident in the image of the tied-up animals. His life has become smaller, and his mobility is restricted by the cultural perception of children that, like an invisible rope, tie him to the compound. Constrained in this way, Jama is unable to lead a life of his own making. The image of unsculpted clay reveals that Jama is aware of his potential and of the journey he must take to reach his life's purpose, which at this point of the text, is to find his father and obtain a sense of belonging. As a result of his time away from his homeland, Jama's identity is malleable and flexible because he has not been 'emplaced' and moulded within the rigid social hierarchies that determine how he should behave as a child. While Jama's differences from those in his homeland result in his alienation, it also allows him to break through the culturally imposed constraints in Hargeisa that 'emplace' children and regulate their movement. He continues with his journey to find his father and he is "spirited away from family, home, and homeland" (71) with ease. Jama's experience in Hargeisa reveals that child migrants initially accept the culturally imposed ideologies around them. However, if children have the agency to do so, they may subvert these structures to seek other opportunities and advance their journeys.

To continue the comparison between the primary texts, Mahmood's journey of migration when he was a child will now be analysed in more detail to explore how his socio-economic disposition differentiates his journey from that of the other characters. He was born in the year of famine in a world "wet and red from the slaughter of emancipated animals" (163). This image of the slaughtered animals at the start of Mahmood's life is a foreshadowing of his death because he serves as a scapegoat and a human sacrifice for the wrongdoings of others. Mahmood is a "frail boy, stunted by the famine" (165) and he is tormented by his mother who uses "every kind of medicine" (165) to ensure his survival. As the youngest and the weakest of five sons, Mahmood is stifled by his mother's care. Her desperate attempts to protect Mahmood from forces beyond her control are a forewarning of his death where his family has no power to prevent the injustice that ends his life. In her last attempt to protect him from disease, Mahmood's mother cuts the skin on his abdomen and rubs coarse salt into the wound. "That last medicine put him on his feet and made a wonderer of him, a *dalmar*, happy to put as much distance between him and his mother as possible" (165). Mahmood becomes a *dalmar*, a traveller who crosses great distances, to escape his family's perception of him. As the youngest in his family, he is treated like a weak, incapable child. In the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood Mahmood begins to resist his placement within the rigid familial structure in his home: "Not quite a man yet certainly not a child, he bristled at the low regard his elder brothers held for him. Never would he be one to make decisions" (176). Thus, Mahmood leaves his

homeland to ensure that his movement is no longer restricted by his 'placement' within the family. Ironically, Mahmood's mother's attempts to protect him drive him away and into danger.

Like Jama and Deqo, Mahmood is an independent child migrant and he travels through the African continent in a time of political instability and conflict without parental care or companionship. As mentioned, the characters have varying degrees of vulnerability and agency. Their social and economic background greatly affects their ability to cross borders and how they are 'placed' by those in power. Jama and Deqo cross borders from a place of profound precarity. Being from a lower class they must navigate complex systems of power from the bottom of the social hierarchy in the diasporic space. In contrast, Mahmood is *not* an orphan or a street child. While he grew up in a famine that coincided with the colonial occupation of Somaliland, he is protected from oppression and abuse because he comes from a sheltered home life and a family that is socially, economically, and politically established in the community. Mahmood's father, Hussein, is a successful merchant who is later "selected by the Governor as an *Akil* to adjudicate religious cases" (167). Hussein is an elder and a powerful member of the community who determines the outcomes of domestic and religious disputes. From this position, Hussein plays a vital role in managing the social structure in the community. Therefore, Mahmood begins his exilic journey from an agentic positioning because he has established social ties, financial security, and a family to return to. Significantly, his choice to leave his homeland is an expression of his autonomy.

Mahmood feels stifled in Hargeisa as "the absolute stillness of the town, and therefore the whole world, was terrifying, he seemed to be the only thing moving or growing in it" (176). Mahmood believes that the stillness of his homeland restricts his growth. Therefore, he associates the stillness in Hargeisa with stagnation. This goes to explain why the immobility that he experiences in prison is detrimental to his well-being. Hence, at a young age, Mahmood severs his ties with his family and homeland to "try his own luck as a man" (182). There are evident parallels in Jama and Mahmood's journeys as both characters leave their homeland of Hargeisa to follow a path of self-discovery and empowerment. Moreover, their decision to leave catalyses their maturation from a child to an adult. Additionally, both *Mamba Boy* and *Fortune* contain generic conventions found in the *Bildungsroman*. As outlined in Chapter Two, a central differentiating factor between the traditional *Bildungsroman* and the postcolonial *Bildungsroman* is the notion of choice. Interestingly, at the start of his diasporic journey, Mahmood possesses the qualities typically associated with the protagonist in the traditional *Bildungsroman*. He is a "sovereign subject, a protagonist who has not been marginalized and

retains an inherent sense of self" (32). Mohamed utilises the generic conventions of the traditional *Bildungsroman* and then manipulates these elements as a tool to throw light on the slow degradation of Mahmood's autonomy and sense of self. Mahmood starts his journey from a space of agency because by choosing to leave his homeland he is not constrained by the familial hierarchy in his household. However, at the tender age of thirteen, Mahmood cannot comprehend the consequences of this decision. Mahmood's journey of migration has a successful start. However, after he transitions from a child to an adult he loses his rights because he is seen as the cultural and racial 'other' by those in power.

As a child who belongs to a privileged and well-known family in Hargeisa, Mahmood effortlessly crosses the border from Somaliland to Garissa "in the Somali-inhabited north of Kenya" (182) to join a fellow clansman. Mahmood surpasses social borders with the aid of the existing Somali networks that stretch down the east of Africa. Mahmood's mobility relies upon the loyalty to fellow Somalis and their compassion toward child migrants. After a month, Mahmood decides to leave Kenya and "With luck pouring over him like gold" (183) he finds work with a Somali merchant in Zanzibar. Mahmood temporarily severs ties with his family and "he passed a whole year without telling his family where he was. It comforted him to know that he was beyond their orbit" (182). His family's orbit is a simile of Mahmood's family's protection over his life which functions as an unseen force that shields him from danger and keeps him on the right path. Mahmood cuts ties with his family because he finds the hierarchal structure in his home and his mother's need to care for him to be suffocating. Mahmood's alienation is a choice; it is self-imposed and not forced upon him by the external environment. Mahmood separates himself from his family and their prestige, yet he continues to move into the intimate spaces of Somali migrants by relying on transnational networks of care. He has severed his ties with his family to experience the world for himself.

Mahmood continues his journey and finds yet another Somali, a widow named Bibi Zahra, in Dar es Salaam. Bibi assumes that Mahmood is an orphan, and she hires him because of his apparent vulnerability and need for adult care. Bibi is childless and "she filled the house with a clutter of servants, trying to replicate the small noisy home of her childhood" (184). Mahmood undertakes simple errands for Bibi, including occasional drives around town to help her with chores. Amidst this newfound comfort, Mahmood finds himself caught "between the ease of the widow's home and the sense that he was slipping back into resentful boyhood" (184). These circumstances evoke memories of his past life at home, where he felt stripped of agency and treated as a helpless child –a circumstance he deeply resented. To quell the rising tension within him, Mahmood must choose between a life of comfort and his search for

independence, mobility, and adulthood. Hence, when Mahmood is found by a fellow countryman who informs him that his family believes he is dead and he must return to his homeland immediately, a sense of despair overtakes him. He has been found out and Bibi insists on getting him home. However young Mahmood is repelled by the idea of going back to his homeland as he has only recently found his way in the world without his family. He believes that Hargeisa is "a place for the old, not those just starting out in life" (190). Therefore returning to his homeland will be detrimental to his growth, pushing him back into a state of diminished autonomy. Despite Bibi's attempt to facilitate his return through a train ticket, Mahmood finds himself at a crossroads while awaiting the train bound for Hargeisa. In a pivotal moment, he spontaneously decides to board a train to an unknown destination. Ironically, at this point in his journey, Mahmood is most afraid of returning to his homeland because he believes that the safety and structure in Hargeisa will limit his mobility and autonomy. Tragically, it is at this point that Mahmood's life journey takes a turn for the worse. The train, heading South, brings Mahmood to dangerous territory devoid of his family's care and protection. Instead of encountering more Somali migrants along his journey, he lands in the hands of imperial forces where he is treated like the 'other' because of his race and status as an illegal migrant. From this point in his journey, Mahmood begins to lose control of the direction of his life.

As the train pulls away from Dar es Salaam station, Mahmood feels as though "he was heading off to war" (193). This reference to war symbolizes a significant shift in Mahmood's positioning. He has strayed too far from his homeland, and he crosses borders into the hostile territory in Southern Africa where he is vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. He successfully crosses the Kenyan and Tanzanian borders, but he is prevented from crossing the border into Zimbabwe. Mahmood explains to a fellow inmate:

> I crossed the border into Northern Rhodesia and then those uniformed dogs got me the minute I hit that red soil. Arrested for illegal entry and threw me in jail, first time in my life, I was still a young boy, all bones and no sense. No water, nowhere to lie down, just fifty black men in a cell sleeping standing up, shitting into an empty milk powder can. (125)

Mahmood is not part of the conflict in Northeast Africa, but he is repeatedly confronted by insidious forms of violence that are remnants of the war and the colonial project. As a black migrant, he is seen as the 'other' by the police. In Chapter Two, the narrative structure of war literature and transnational literature were explored and compared. Tobey Herzog describes the

three-part structure of war narratives, where because of the trauma experienced during the war, the protagonist shifts from a state of innocence to experience and finally rests in a state of consideration. When Mahmood boards the train, he enters the "unmanning experience of battle" (Fussell 130) where he is dehumanised and loses his sense of self as he comes to see himself as the racial 'other' in Southern Africa and then Europe. Throughout his time in Wales, Mahmood is trapped within the second phase as he experiences recurring instances of ostracisation and abuse. When he is incarcerated, he enters a state of "consideration, meditation, and reconstruction" (Fussell 130). Yet his withdrawal from society is forced upon him, highlighting the loss of his rights. It is ironic that Mahmood left his homeland in search of freedom and mobility only to lose his agency, and later, his life. Mahmood reflects upon his childhood and considers the circumstances that led to his incarceration. However, he cannot reconstruct his identity or adapt to an environment where his difference from the host will soon lead to his execution.

Jama, Deqo, and Mahmood have varying degrees of vulnerability and agency throughout their journeys. Their childhoods have been compared to reveal how their socio-economic and political backgrounds impact how they are 'placed' and 'emplaced' in society. Jama and Deqo are street children, and they cross borders as a result of their invisibility or because of the compassion of others. In contrast, at the start of his exilic journey, Mahmood is highly mobile as he benefits from his family's social status and political connections. Mahmood has an easy childhood despite the colonial occupation of his homeland. In contrast to Jama and Deqo who are displaced and forced to migrate, Mahmood volunteers to leave Hargeisa. Ironically, his agentic positioning changes when he leaves Hargeisa and crosses the spatial border into Southern Africa. For the first time, he experiences imperial ideologies that will lead to his dehumanisation and death.

Precarious Lives: Comparing Adult and Child Migrants' Vulnerability

In her book *Precarious Life*, Butler describes precarity as the "fundamental dependency on the anonymous other" (xiii). Mahmood, Jama and Deqo cross borders in a state of precarity because they rely on the members of the host nation for aid at varying degrees along their exilic journeys. Of interest is the outcome of the characters' dependency on the host, and how their vulnerability affects their ability to cross borders. Mahmood's adult life will now be compared

to the child migrant characters in the texts to explore how age impacts the permeability of borders.[22]

This chapter has thus far explored Gardner's argument that childhood and children are culturally constructed concepts performed differently in different locations. Similarly, Butler argues that "Lives are supported and maintained differently, and there are radically different ways in which human physical vulnerability is distributed across the globe" (*Precarious* 32). Factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and class affect the host's ability to recognise vulnerability. Both adult and child migrants need hospitality and compassion from the host, particularly in cases where they are fleeing bombardment and conflict in their homeland. Foreign aid is more readily available to children because they have a "primary helplessness and need, one to which any society must attend" (Butler, *Precarious* 32). While childhood is perceived differently across the globe, vulnerability is a trait more commonly associated with children, particularly in the earlier years of a child's life. Said in another way, children's physical vulnerability is universal, it is recognisable and therefore easier for the host to identify. In *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard*, Jama and Deqo's vulnerability is easy to identify by the host because they are severely undernourished. When the notion of vulnerability is examined from this angle, the ways that child migrants' perceived vulnerability enables them to cross social and spatial borders are elucidated. As a consequence of their apparent helplessness child migrants do not pose a physical, social, or economic threat to the adults in the host nation. If the children obtain income, they are given low-paying, menial jobs. For example, Jama finds a job in Hargeisa carrying carcasses for a butcher and Deqo collects fallen decomposing fruit that she attempts to sell at the market. Child migrants interact with their environment on a different socio-cultural and economic plane than adults. Child migrants do not pose a threat to the host nation which may reduce instances of hostility and allow them to pass social borders in the diasporic space.

When Mahmood is an adult, he poses a direct threat to the host. As a black adult migrant, he is the 'other' and his difference from the host is perceived as a threat to their safety. "Men pull their possessions closer when he is around" (Mohamed 2) and women cross the street to avoid walking past him. As stated previously, when Mahmood and Laura get married, he is ostracised by the host because he has "breached a white home" (42). He has crossed an unseen social border that is enforced by racist and xenophobic ideologies. Mahmood's story reveals that vulnerability "becomes highly exacerbated under certain social and political

[22] To avoid repetition the term 'child migrants' refers to Jama, Deqo and Mahmood when he was a child.

conditions, especially those in which violence is a way of life and the means of secure self-defence are limited" (Butler, *Precarious* 29). Mahmood is stuck in this state of extreme vulnerability. He is denied protection from the state because he is alienated by the police. Furthermore, he is a target of abuse where verbal and physical violence is a part of his everyday life. He is not able to defend himself because he knows that doing so will result in his immediate arrest. The police "might search for a stolen watch and find a razor or knife—and then what? Two years for an offensive weapon. Instead, he has perfected not being seen" (Mohamed 26). As mentioned in Chapter Four, Mahmood is aware of the dangers in Wales where interacting with the host can lead to his incarceration or death, despite his innocence. Consequently, he lingers on the margins of the city as a means of self-protection and preservation. However, this only furthers his alienation because "Violence against those who are already not quite living, that is, living in a state of suspension between life and death, leaves a mark that is no mark" (Butler, *Precarious* 36). Mahmood is "the Ghost" (Mohamed 26) because he exists in a liminal state between life and death. He is never able to settle or live in the diasporic space. Like Jama and Deqo, when they seek refuge in precarious places, Mahmood's life is continuously under threat. In the trial, Mahmood is profoundly misrecognised. The members of the court refuse to acknowledge Mahmood's humanity and the public does not mourn his death.

In summary, the child migrant characters are dehumanised by the host. However, they oscillate between states of vulnerability and agency frequently, giving them more opportunities to experience compassion from adults that may save their lives. The child migrant characters exist in a state of becoming and, with their full potential not yet met, their possible commonalities to the members of the host nation cannot be ruled out. Paradoxically, their perceived powerlessness allows them to surpass borders and seek opportunities to better their lives. Conversely, Mahmood's positionality does not shift between these two poles as frequently when compared to the child migrant characters. When he is incarnated he remains in a state of profound vulnerability. His journey has shifted into darkness, and with his luck run out, he has reached the end of the road as he has known it. The shift in Mahmood's positioning, from an agentic child to a vulnerable adult is mirrored in the narrative form of the text. The text changes from the narrative strand of the adventure hero to that of the historical narrative, revealing that historical forces have taken hold of his life. Mahmood is not able to integrate into Wales because he poses a threat to the cultural identity of those in the host nation. Further, he is unable to return to his quest for adventure and self-discovery and the text does not circle back to the adventure tale. While Jama and Deqo's trajectories are impacted by the oppression around them, they return to their journey just as the narrative shifts back to the hero

narrative. Despite their vulnerability, they have survived precarious and highly dangerous circumstances. In contrast, Mahmood leaves his family and his homeland. He is alienated by the community in Wales and when he is placed in jail he is torn away from his family in the diasporic space. Mahmood's life is ruptured and he cannot recover from the oppression that he underwent in Wales.

Conclusion

By engaging with examples from the texts, the thesis argues that child migrant characters are perceived as vulnerable and therefore more likely to elicit compassion from the host. Their vulnerability allows them to surpass borders and they are given emotional and financial support and aid from adults. This is not to ignore the abuse that marginalised children experience. To illustrate the vulnerability of the characters, this thesis has delineated the instances of oppression and dehumanisation that occur in the texts. However, the child migrants' journeys of migration are filled with both "lightness and darkness" (*Mamba Boy* 115). They are liminal subjects because they rapidly oscillate between vulnerability to agency as they cross borders and encounter unknown socio-spatial terrains where they are 'emplaced' in the community according to the ways that childhood, gender, class, race, and ethnicity are perceived by the dominant culture in the diasporic space. Mohamed uses the content and the form of the texts to portray how children experience border-crossing differently from adults. All the characters' lives are ruptured by displacement and abuse, however, Jama and Deqo can piece their lives back together again. As children, they are highly adaptable, and they do not pose a threat to the adults in the diasporic space. Mahmood is 'emplaced' at the bottom of the hierarchy in Wales where he is forced onto the social and spatial margins and prevented from settling in the diasporic space. The content and form of the primary texts were compared to argue that the child migrant characters have more agency and mobility when compared to their adult counterparts. When migrants cross borders they are 'placed' differently when they encounter new terrains. This chapter has examined how the child migrants' vulnerability enables them to surpass borders. Mahmood's journey has revealed that there are certain socio-political conditions where migrants' vulnerabilities are "highly exacerbated" (Butler, *Precarious* 29) which results in the tightening of borders and instances of abuse and death.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined Jama, Deqo and Mahmood's journeys of migration separately to analyse how the conglomeration of alternate factors differentiates their journeys. The child migrant characters cross borders in highly volatile moments in history. As migrants and street children, Jama and Deqo are ostracised and abused by those in power. Yet, their marginality also allows them to cross both seen and unseen borders. Sometimes, they are inconspicuous, and they slip past checkpoints without being noticed by soldiers. Importantly, the children's vulnerability is not lost on the surrounding community. Jama, Deqo and Mahmood are frequently brought into the homes of strangers where they are fed, clothed, and given jobs where they can work to establish themselves in the community and build their futures. This is particularly pertinent for Jama who is treated like a "communal little brother" (Mohamed 125) by those who occupy a different social and cultural position from himself. Further, as a male, he is not in danger of abuse, at least not in the same way as female child migrants. A comparison between *Mamba Boy* and *Orchard* reveals that young male migrants can trust strangers more readily than female migrants in the same position. As mentioned, Deqo passes the checkpoints set out by soldiers, this time the NFM, with ease. As a result of her gender, age, and emancipated condition, Deqo does not pose a threat to the soldiers. However, Deqo navigates a landscape that is different to Jama's because she must continually avoid being a target of sexual abuse, even when she is invited into the homes of adults who claim will protect her. In contrast, Mahmood's childhood is not affected by the conflict in Hargeisa even though he is of the same generation as Jama. The start of Mahmood's journey reveals how a migrant's socio-economic disposition can greatly affect the permeability of borders. However, Mahmood is a tragic hero, and his journey of self-discovery and dependence ironically results in the loss of his rights and his death. In Wales Mahmood is, at once, highly visible and invisible. Those in the community regarded him with suspicion and his movement is monitored by his neighbours and the police. Yet at the same time, he is a ghost because he is forced to linger on the periphery of the diasporic space. Furthermore, Mahmood's humanity is not recognised by the host. He is dehumanised because the members of the host community refuse to look past his difference and acknowledge their common humanity with a black male adult migrant.

This thesis has aimed to reject the narrative that child migrants are mere victims of war. Thus, the primary texts portray the resilience that resides within migrants. Despite the challenges they face, Jama, Deqo and Mahmood share a will to live that helps them to continue

in hopeless, devastating conditions. Through a close engagement with the primary text, the characters' liminal position is explored to argue that they do not occupy a vulnerable position indefinitely. Furthermore, a single part of their journey cannot effectively represent the characters' entire experience of migration. Rather, migrants have a complex, fluid positioning as a multitude of conditions influence how they will be treated in the diasporic space. Thus, migration produces children who have a social positioning that changes in response to their internal and external environment. The children oscillate from a vulnerable position where they are abused to an agentic position when they actively remove themselves from the site of conflict and abuse. Additionally, the differences in Jama, Deqo and Mahmood's exilic journeys show that every migrant's exilic journey is to be examined separately while considering the various private and political conditions that affect their ability to cross borders.

This thesis has explored how factors such as gender, social class, race, and age impact child migrant characters' ability to cross borders. While these factors were mentioned, the role of the factors in the characters' journey was kept brief. In future study, I hope to continue examination of the relationship between gender and war and the ways that conflict impacts female child migrants specifically. This proposed future project would compare Deqo's journey with other female child migrants from across the African continent. Overall, I am particularly interested in revisionist texts where the genre of creative non-fiction is used to re-address history and challenge continued forms of violence. In further study on this topic, I could perhaps look at Jane Gallop's example and analyse the ethics of studying child migrants. Furthermore, I would examine creative non-fiction as a hybrid genre. In summary, the proposed project would entail a comprehensive comparative analysis of female child migrants, with a specific focus on examining the intricate relationship between gender and war. Additionally, the research endeavour would aim to explore the potential of creative non-fiction as a powerful tool to challenge prevailing historical narratives.

Writing this thesis has widened my grasp of diaspora and transnational studies. I have personally experienced the transformative value of literary studies as this area of study is used as a tool to spread awareness about migration and its impact on vulnerable communities. For example, in *Fortune* readers may observe disturbing similarities between Mahmood Hussein Mattan's case in 1958 and the recent death of Mohamud Mohammed Hassan. Mohamud was a twenty-four-year-old Somali migrant who died on 9 January 2021 after being held overnight in jail in Cardiff (Jones para. 8). It is suspected that Mohamud was killed by the police. Allegedly, he came into contact with fifty-two police officers and died by excessive force (Jones para 8). Further, the links between Mohamud and Mohamed's stories of oppression

where they suffered abuse at the hands of the police in Wales reveal the continuity of racist and xenophobic violence that has remained unchanged before and long after the 1950s. These extreme acts of violence against civilians are shockingly similar and could well have occurred at the same time. Undoubtedly, Mahmoud's death reveals a tragic reality in the world today. On the one hand, mobility has increased across the globe as a result of globalisation and deterritorialisation. As such, it is easier for individuals to gain access to new spaces through travel and technological advancements. On the other hand, certain social groups continue to be discriminated against. For instance, the prejudice against migrants, particularly those fleeing war, is not decreasing. Refugees are dehumanised and mistreated by the host state. Therefore, using transnational literature, Mohamed sheds light on the many boundaries that migrants must cross as they attempt to feel a sense of belonging and safety in a place far from home. To conclude, *Mamba Boy, Orchard* and *Fortune* represent child migrants as resilient and adaptable individuals. When they come up against the border between life and death, they draw on strength from within themselves. Therefore, the characters' will to live enables them to wade through the devastation that consumes their world not knowing if they will survive in the end. Thus, they are not mere victims of war and abuse. Rather, they have a liminal positioning as they rapidly oscillate from a position of vulnerability to a position of agency. To conclude, Mohamed uses literature to reflect on the past while also bringing about awareness of child migrants' experience of border-crossing and catalysing change in the present. Thus, the primary texts function as a form of activism which elucidates the importance of transnational and diasporic literature as well as literature studies overall.

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