

Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization: A Postcolonial View of European Immigration in “*The Lightless Sky*”

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Abstract

*This research paper examines Parochial Neo-Colonialism and its role in the perpetuation of refugee marginalization through a postcolonial theoretical framework, with a focus on European immigration policies as represented in Gulwali Passarlay's memoir, *The Lightless Sky*. The analysis investigates how myopic, exclusionary attitudes towards immigration encapsulate a neo-colonial paradigm, wherein former colonial powers sustain indirect hegemony over less developed nations through mechanisms of economic exploitation, political influence, and cultural imposition. This study employs a critical lens to assess how such parochial perspectives and neo-colonial practices systematically reinforce the marginalization and dehumanization of refugees, thereby perpetuating structural inequalities rooted in colonial histories. By engaging with Passarlay's autobiographical account, the paper highlights how contemporary European immigration policies and societal attitudes not only reflect but also institutionalize the exclusion of refugees, elucidating the persistence of colonial legacies in modern migration regimes. The objective is to provide a comprehensive analysis of how these neo-colonial dynamics and parochial biases shape the refugee experience, contributing to ongoing scholarly discourse on the intersections of colonialism, migration, and global inequality.*

Keywords: Parochial Neo-Colonialism, Refugee Marginalization, European Immigration, Colonial Legacies.

Introduction

The concept of Parochial Neo-Colonialism serves as a critical framework for understanding the enduring effects of colonial legacies in contemporary global issues, particularly in the realm of immigration. This research paper explores the intersection of parochial neo-colonial practices and the perpetuation of refugee marginalization, focusing on European immigration policies as illustrated in Gulwali Passarlay's memoir, *The Lightless Sky*. The term neo-colonialism refers to the continuation of colonial power dynamics through indirect means such as economic exploitation, political manipulation, and cultural imposition. When coupled with parochial attitudes—those characterized by narrow-mindedness and exclusionary views—this framework helps reveal how modern practices sustain historical inequities.

Refugee marginalization refers to the systemic exclusion and dehumanization that refugees experience as they navigate immigration systems and societal attitudes in host countries. This marginalization is intricately linked with neo-colonial practices, wherein former colonial powers continue to exert influence over how refugees are received and treated. The concept of perpetuation highlights the persistence of these dynamics, indicating that historical inequalities

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are sustained and reinforced through contemporary policies and practices. This ongoing influence underscores the ways in which neo-colonial legacies continue to shape the refugee experience, perpetuating the exclusion and disadvantage faced by displaced individuals in the modern world.

Gulwali Passarlay's *The Lightless Sky* provides a compelling narrative that illuminates these issues. Passarlay's memoir offers a personal account of his journey as a refugee, exposing the challenges and systemic barriers faced by individuals in similar situations. His experiences underscore how European immigration policies, informed by parochial and neo-colonial attitudes, contribute to the continued marginalization of refugees. Passarlay's story serves as a critical case study to explore how parochial neo-colonialism manifests in contemporary immigration regimes and perpetuates structural inequalities.

Postcolonial analysis has become more prevalent in discussions of European immigration policy and how they affect refugees. In Europe, neo-colonial mechanisms that marginalize refugees and limit their movement are still reflected in current immigration laws. These systems, which are influenced by past practices, establish social and racial hierarchies by deciding who is allowed asylum and who is not. A powerful description of these difficulties is given in *The Lightless Sky*, which highlights the difficulties faced by refugees navigating convoluted and frequently antagonistic immigration systems. The book reveals how political and legal restrictions serve as instruments of exclusion and illuminates the bureaucratic and securitized processes that govern migration.

The lingering effects of colonial power dynamics, in which former imperial powers still exercise control over migration and settlement, are closely linked to the marginalization of migrants in Europe. Notwithstanding assertions of humanitarian concern, immigration laws frequently put economic interests and national security ahead of refugee rights, resulting in stringent border restrictions and asylum procedures. A first-person account of the daily experiences of refugees ensnared in these neo-colonial systems is presented in *The Lightless Sky*. The difficulties portrayed in the book highlight the ways that racial prejudice, systemic obstacles, and geopolitical concerns influence the experience of refugees, eventually sustaining cycles of marginalization and exclusion.

Employing a postcolonial theoretical framework, this paper aims to analyze the intersection of neo-colonial practices and parochial attitudes in shaping immigration policies. The postcolonial perspective provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how historical colonial relationships continue to influence modern migration systems and contribute to global inequality. By integrating insights from Passarlay's memoir with theoretical analysis, this research seeks to elucidate the persistence of colonial legacies in the refugee experience and contribute to scholarly discourse on the intersections of colonialism, migration, and inequality. The current study lays the groundwork for a critical exploration of how neo-colonialism and refugee marginalization intersect within European immigration policies. By deploying a postcolonial lens, it highlights the enduring influence of colonial legacies on contemporary global issues, emphasizing that the treatment of refugees is shaped by historical power dynamics. It argues that modern immigration policies, particularly in Europe, are not just responses to current crises but are deeply rooted in the inequalities established during the colonial era. This sets the stage for a nuanced analysis of how these policies perpetuate exclusion and reinforce global hierarchies.

Statement of the Problem

This research explores how European immigration policies, influenced by neo-colonial legacies, perpetuate refugee marginalization. Utilizing postcolonial prism to *The Lightless Sky*, it examines how historical patterns of domination and exclusion shape exclusionary practices towards refugees.

Research Objectives

- To examine how parochial neo-colonial attitudes in European immigration policies perpetuate refugee marginalization in *The Lightless Sky*.
- To investigate the impact of neo-colonialism on the marginalization of refugees in European immigration systems, as presented in *The Lightless Sky*.

Research Questions

- How do parochial neo-colonial attitudes in European immigration policies contribute to the marginalization of refugees in *The Lightless Sky*?
- In what ways does *The Lightless Sky* illustrate the impact of neo-colonialism on refugee marginalization within European immigration systems?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for its critical investigation into how parochial neo-colonial attitudes shape European immigration policies and sustain the marginalization of refugees, as illustrated in *The Lightless Sky*. Employing a postcolonial framework, this research elucidates the enduring influence of colonial legacies on contemporary immigration practices, revealing the systemic nature of refugee exclusion. By examining these dynamics, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how neo-colonial ideologies continue to inform and perpetuate inequitable immigration systems. The insights gained aim to advance discussions on developing more just and humane immigration policies.

Literature Review

The Lightless Sky by Gulwali Passarlay offers an intimate and harrowing account of the refugee experience, particularly the struggles of Afghan refugees fleeing political instability, war, and violence. As an autobiographical narrative, Passarlay's journey from Afghanistan to Europe places him at the center of a broader conversation about global displacement, refugee rights, and the failures of international immigration policies. The text provides a critical view of European immigration systems, particularly how these policies marginalize and disenfranchise refugees under the guise of security and border control. Passarlay's experience as an unaccompanied child refugee reflects the realities faced by millions of displaced people, revealing how these systems perpetuate what some scholars' term "neo-colonialism," where former colonial powers exert control over non-European migrants through exclusionary immigration practices.

The book serves as a significant case study within the wider literature of refugee studies and postcolonial critique. Refugees from the Global South, such as Passarlay, encounter not only the physical borders of Europe but also the metaphorical barriers of racism, xenophobia, and neo-colonial attitudes that continue to define Europe's interaction with refugees from formerly colonized regions. The examination of *The Lightless Sky* is therefore crucial to understanding how European immigration policies are informed by historical colonial legacies, contemporary security concerns, and a reluctance to embrace multiculturalism. It also offers an important narrative that counters the often faceless portrayal of refugees in political discourse, providing an individual perspective on the complex, dehumanizing systems that dominate refugee management today.

The genre of refugee autobiographies has grown in significance in recent years, with stories like Gulwali Passarlay's *The Lightless Sky* emerging as vital contributions to refugee studies and literature. Scholars such as Shahram Khosravi (2010) have argued that refugee autobiographies serve as critical interventions in the discourse around migration, giving voice to those often silenced by the bureaucratic and political machinery of immigration systems.

Passarlay's detailed recounting of his perilous journey across Europe disrupts the common portrayal of refugees as helpless victims and instead portrays them as resilient individuals with agency, capable of navigating complex social and political landscapes. These narratives challenge dehumanizing stereotypes that cast refugees as "other," presenting their experiences as integral to understanding the humanitarian crises of today.

The significance of memory and trauma in refugee narratives cannot be understated. Liisa Malkki (2015) discusses how personal storytelling plays a crucial role in the construction of identity and the preservation of memory for displaced people. In *The Lightless Sky*, Passarlay recounts his journey with vivid detail, providing insight into the emotional and psychological impacts of forced migration. His story aligns with the broader literature that recognizes refugee narratives as not only personal stories but as collective histories of displacement and survival. These accounts serve as counter-narratives to state-controlled versions of migration, highlighting the violence and injustice embedded in global immigration systems. Refugee autobiographies such as Passarlay's often stand in contrast to mainstream depictions of refugees, which frequently reduce them to statistics or political pawns, thus contributing to the dehumanization of migrant populations.

Moreover, refugee autobiographies serve as tools of political resistance. As P. K. Rajaram (2002) points out, refugee stories have the potential to disrupt hegemonic discourses of migration by showcasing the lived realities of displaced people. In Passarlay's case, his narrative forces readers to confront the harsh conditions faced by refugees, such as detention, exploitation, and the denial of basic human rights. By framing his personal story within the larger context of the global refugee crisis, Passarlay's autobiography critiques both national and international immigration policies, which often prioritize border security over humanitarian concerns. In doing so, *The Lightless Sky* joins a growing body of refugee literature that seeks to reclaim the agency and dignity of displaced people.

From a postcolonial perspective, *The Lightless Sky* can be interpreted as a critique of the ongoing legacy of colonialism, particularly in how European states continue to treat refugees from the Global South. Scholars like Homi Bhabha (2004) and Gayatri Spivak (2003) have long argued that colonialism's impact did not end with political independence; rather, it persists through neo-colonial practices such as border control and immigration policies that favor Western countries over non-Western peoples. Gulwali Passarlay's journey is a powerful example of how these dynamics play out in contemporary Europe, where refugees from formerly colonized regions are viewed as threats or burdens, rather than as individuals in need of protection. The book reveals the neo-colonial underpinnings of European immigration policies, which often reproduce the racial hierarchies and power imbalances established during colonial times.

Postcolonial theory helps to unpack the complexities of Passarlay's experiences as an Afghan refugee navigating European borders. His narrative speaks to the ways in which European immigration systems reinforce the Global North's control over mobility, dictating who is allowed to enter and under what conditions. As Nando Sigona (2015) has pointed out, refugees from the Global South are often subjected to rigorous and exclusionary immigration policies that reflect a lingering sense of colonial entitlement. In *The Lightless Sky*, Passarlay encounters numerous barriers—both physical and bureaucratic—that prevents him from finding safety. These barriers are not only a result of contemporary security concerns but are also rooted in the historical processes of imperialism and Orientalism, which continue to shape Europe's perception of non-Western migrants.

The application of Edward Said's (1978) concept of Orientalism to Passarlay's experiences is particularly illuminating. Said's analysis of how the West has historically constructed the East as "other" provides a useful framework for understanding the dehumanization that refugees often face in Europe. Passarlay's encounters with European border authorities, who frequently

treat him with suspicion and hostility, reflect the persistence of Orientalist attitudes in modern immigration systems. These systems position refugees from the Global South as “undesirable others,” reinforcing the cultural and racial hierarchies that were established during the colonial era. Scholars such as Gargi Bhattacharyya (2018) argue that these exclusionary practices are part of a broader neo-colonial project that seeks to maintain European superiority by controlling the movement of people from former colonies.

The treatment of refugees within European immigration systems has been heavily critiqued in recent scholarship, particularly in the context of the 2015 refugee crisis. European states, under the pressure of managing large-scale migration, have often prioritized border control and security over the protection of human rights, leading to the marginalization of refugees like Gulwali Passarlay. Scholars such as Elspeth Guild and Violeta Moreno-Lax (2017) have examined how European policies, such as the Dublin Regulation, place an unfair burden on countries at the EU’s external borders while making it nearly impossible for refugees to seek asylum in more prosperous northern states. In *The Lightless Sky*, Passarlay’s journey through multiple European countries reveals the failures of this system, as he is repeatedly pushed from one country to another without receiving the protection he so desperately needs.

The literature on European immigration policies points to a systemic failure to address the root causes of refugee displacement, focusing instead on containment and deterrence. Didier Fassin’s (2011) concept of “humanitarian reason” is particularly relevant here, as it highlights the contradiction between Europe’s self-image as a protector of human rights and its actual treatment of refugees. While European governments often portray themselves as leaders in global humanitarian efforts, their immigration policies frequently undermine the rights and dignity of asylum seekers. In *The Lightless Sky*, Passarlay’s experiences in detention centers and his interactions with immigration authorities expose the dehumanizing nature of these systems, which treat refugees not as individuals in need of protection but as potential threats to national security.

Additionally, scholars like Ruben Andersson (2014) have critiqued the commodification of border control in Europe, where the management of refugees has become a lucrative industry for private companies and government contractors. This “border industry,” as Andersson terms it, profits from the detention, surveillance, and deportation of refugees, further entrenching the marginalization of displaced people. Passarlay’s narrative highlights how this system operates in practice, as refugees are subjected to exploitation and abuse at the hands of both state actors and private individuals. The European immigration system, as portrayed in *The Lightless Sky*, is not designed to protect vulnerable populations but to maintain the status quo of exclusion and control, reinforcing the neo-colonial dynamics that have shaped Europe’s relationship with the Global South for centuries.

The tension between humanitarianism and neo-colonialism is a central theme in the literature on European immigration policies, particularly in how these policies affect refugees from the Global South. Scholars like Alexander Betts (2013) argue that while European countries often frame their response to the refugee crisis in humanitarian terms, their actual policies reflect a more self-interested, neo-colonial agenda. This is evident in the EU’s reliance on third countries, such as Turkey and Libya, to manage refugee flows, effectively outsourcing border control to non-European states in exchange for financial incentives. In *The Lightless Sky*, Passarlay’s experiences reveal the failures of this approach, as refugees are left stranded in unsafe conditions or forced to undertake dangerous journeys in search of protection.

Williams (2016) has examined the “safety/security nexus” in European border governance, arguing that the conflation of refugees with security threats has justified increasingly restrictive immigration policies. This has led to the criminalization of asylum seekers, who are often portrayed as potential terrorists or criminals rather than individuals fleeing persecution. Passarlay’s narrative challenges this framing, as he emphasizes the dangers he faced in

Afghanistan and his desire for safety and freedom. His story serves as a powerful critique of the securitization of refugee discourse, which not only dehumanizes refugees but also undermines the principles of international human rights law.

The literature also highlights how racialized borders contribute to the structural violence experienced by refugees. Fassin (2021) discusses how refugees are subjected to various forms of state violence, including detention, deportation, and the denial of basic rights, all of which are justified through racialized discourses of security and national identity. In Passarlay's case, the bureaucratic hurdles and dehumanizing treatment he faces are symptomatic of a broader system that views refugees not as individuals in need of protection but as racialized "others" who threaten the social and political fabric of Europe. This system, Guild and Fassin argue, is inherently neo-colonial, as it perpetuates the historical power dynamics that privileged European populations while marginalizing non-European people. Recent scholarship, therefore, positions Passarlay's narrative within a broader critique of the racialized nature of Europe's immigration policies, highlighting the intersection of race, migration, and neo-colonialism in the contemporary refugee crisis.

The literature also highlights the neo-colonial dynamics at play in the global response to climate-induced displacement. Sultana (2021) argues that while the Global North is largely responsible for the environmental damage driving displacement, it is the Global South that bears the brunt of the consequences, with little support from wealthy nations. This dynamic mirrors the historical exploitation of colonized regions, where European powers extracted resources and wealth while leaving behind environmental devastation and political instability. Passarlay's journey through Europe, as recounted in *The Lightless Sky*, reflects the lack of responsibility that European countries take for the root causes of global displacement, whether they be political, economic, or environmental. The literature calls for a more equitable and humane approach to migration that recognizes the interconnectedness of climate change, colonialism, and refugee displacement, urging Europe to adopt policies that address these issues in a comprehensive and just manner.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on global migration, with refugees facing heightened challenges in accessing asylum and protection. Recent studies, such as those by Julia Morris and Ruben Andersson (2021), have examined how the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities within immigration systems, particularly for refugees from the Global South. The pandemic provided European governments with a justification to further tighten border controls and restrict movement, often under the guise of public health concerns. However, scholars like Morris (2021) argue that these restrictions disproportionately affect refugees and asylum seekers, who are already marginalized within the global migration system. In *The Lightless Sky*, Passarlay's experiences navigating the complexities of European immigration systems resonate with the challenges faced by refugees during the pandemic, as both periods are marked by exclusionary policies that prioritize state security over human rights.

The literature also explores how the pandemic has revealed the fragility of global refugee protection mechanisms. Andersson (2021) points out that many of the emergency measures implemented during the pandemic, such as border closures and the suspension of asylum procedures, have had long-term consequences for refugees, contributing to increased uncertainty and vulnerability. The pandemic has also reinforced neo-colonial dynamics, as wealthy nations in the Global North have largely focused on protecting their own populations while neglecting the needs of displaced people in the Global South. This neglect reflects a broader pattern of neo-colonialism in which European countries prioritize their own security and prosperity at the expense of refugees from formerly colonized regions. In light of this, the literature calls for a reevaluation of European immigration policies in the wake of the

pandemic, urging governments to adopt more inclusive and equitable approaches to refugee protection.

The role of digital technologies in refugee management has become a key focus of post-2020 scholarship, with researchers examining how technological innovations are used to monitor, control, and marginalize refugees. Scholars like Petra Molnar (2021) have critiqued the increasing reliance on surveillance technologies in European border control, arguing that these technologies reinforce existing power imbalances and contribute to the dehumanization of refugees. Facial recognition software, biometric data collection, and digital tracking systems are now commonly used in refugee camps and at border crossings, ostensibly to enhance security and streamline immigration processes. However, Molnar (2021) points out that these technologies often have the opposite effect, further entrenching the marginalization of refugees by reducing them to data points and stripping away their privacy and agency.

Postcolonial studies has extensively studied the issue of neo-colonialism in immigration policies, with a focus on the manner in which former colonial powers continue to retain control over non-European migrants through exclusionary language and restrictive border practices. Researchers like Bhambra (2020) contend that current immigration laws in Europe are firmly rooted in past colonial systems, which perpetuate racial inequalities and power disparities. This supports Passarlay's (2015) story in *The Lightless Sky*, in which his difficulties crossing European borders as a refugee reveal the systemic obstacles put in place to discourage non-Western migrants. As an example of how European nations continue colonial-era forms of administration over non-European entities, these policies, which are frequently presented as security measures, disproportionately impact refugees from the Global South (Mayblin & Turner, 2021). Such practices are increasingly criticized in the literature as tools of neo-colonial domination, highlighting the ways in which former imperial powers use aggressive border enforcement, legal exclusions, and administrative roadblocks to manage displaced populations.

European immigration policies are further contextualized as an extension of colonial power by the notion of "border imperialism" (Walia, 2013). According to this paradigm, borders serve as both physical and racial stratification weapons, allowing Europe to control the movement of non-Western populations while profiting from their labor under exploitative circumstances (De Genova, 2017). Passarlay's forced relocation across several nations in *The Lightless Sky* without legal refugee status is a prime example of what academics refer to as the containment and deterrence tactics used by European governments (Feldman, 2019). This literature also emphasizes how Europe is exempt from responsibility when developing refugee policy by ignoring conflicts that produce refugees, which are frequently made such challenges; European refugee policies' humanitarian façade, revealing their function in upholding Eurocentric power over displaced people.

The securitization of migration, in which asylum seekers are presented as possible dangers rather than as people in need of protection, is another essential component of neo-colonial refugee governance (Lazaridis & Wadia, 2021). Policies that associate refugees with terrorism, criminal activity, and unstable economies have resulted from this discourse, which has been bolstered by political rhetoric and media narratives (Ibrahim, 2020). The common view of non-European migrants as "unwanted others" is reflected in *The Lightless Sky* through Passarlay's interactions with border officials, who frequently treat him suspiciously (Huysmans, 2006). Violent border enforcement tactics, like as detention facilities and deportation policies that disproportionately target migrants from previously colonial countries, are made legitimate by this securitization process (Achiume, 2019). Under the guise of national security, these

measures are criticized in the literature as a continuation of colonial power institutions that systematically restrict and exclude racialized migrants.

Another important topic in postcolonial criticisms of European immigration laws is the criminalization of asylum-seeking. Researchers like Dauvergne (2016) contend that rather than viewing refugees as people escaping persecution, modern asylum systems regard them as criminals who violate their legal and territorial sovereignty. Passarlay's protracted court battles and run-ins with hostile immigration officials in *The Lightless Sky* serve as an example of how asylum-seeking has been reframed as an unlawful conduct rather than a human right. According to the literature, these punitive measures help European nations avoid their responsibilities under international law by delegitimizing refugee claims (Hathaway, 2020). Another example of how neo-colonial power structures determine whose suffering is deemed worthy of protection is the selective application of humanitarian frameworks, which prioritize certain refugees based on racial, religious, or geopolitical considerations (Ticktin, 2011).

The marginalization of displaced populations is mostly caused by the racialization of refugees, which perpetuates colonial-era divisions between the "civilized" and the "barbaric" (El-Enany, 2020). Postcolonial scholars contend that European immigration policies frame non-European refugees as cultural and economic burdens while systematically favoring white or Westernized migrants (Bhattacharyya, 2018). Since Afghan and other non-Western refugees frequently face more scrutiny and exclusion than migrants from Eastern Europe or Latin America, Passarlay's experiences in *The Lightless Sky* serve as an example of how racial profiling affects the treatment of asylum seekers (Sigona, 2018). This is consistent with current research on "differential inclusion," which holds that migrants are classified and handled according to racist hierarchies, enabling Europe to continue dominating the global economy and politics while restricting access to resources and rights (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013).

Literature examines how tales of refugee resistance subvert the neo-colonial systems that control migration. By providing counter-narratives that humanize and empower displaced people, works such as *The Lightless Sky* are essential in challenging prevailing refugee discourses (Khosravi, 2010). According to research on testimonial literature and refugee storytelling, personal tales can be used as a form of political resistance to highlight the inequities of European immigration laws and give oppressed groups their agency back (Malkki, 2015). Such works challenge state-controlled narratives that portray migration as a catastrophe by emphasizing the lived experiences of migrants and instead draw attention to the structural injustices that drive people to leave their countries of origin (Rajaram, 2002). Therefore, the literature emphasizes the significance of refugee-authored narratives in opposing neo-colonial immigration policies and promoting a change to more humanitarian and equitable approaches to migration and asylum.

The economic exploitation of migrant labor is a crucial aspect of neo-colonial immigration policies. While establishing stringent immigration laws to limit the rights and mobility of migrant workers from the Global South, scholars contend that European economies rely on these workers (Anderson, 2019). As a result, immigrants are economically necessary yet socially and legally excluded. This paradox is demonstrated in Passarlay's (2015) story in *The Lightless Sky*, where he describes how European labor markets take advantage of unauthorized workers while denying them fundamental safeguards. According to studies, this labor exploitation upholds colonial economic inequalities, since Western countries continue to take

resources from former colonies, now in the form of cheap labor, without giving migrants the rights that come with full citizenship (Guevarra, 2020).

The predicament of climate refugees—those uprooted by environmental problems made worse by industrialization driven by the West—is another new area of interest in postcolonial migration studies (Bettini, 2020). Even though many impacted locations have historically been exploited for European economic growth, European immigration regulations primarily reject climate-induced displacement as a legitimate category for asylum (Farbotko & Lazrus, 2019). According to scholars, the Global North contributes to environmental destruction while avoiding accountability for its effects, and this selective recognition of refugees perpetuates neo-colonial hierarchies (Sealey-Huggins, 2018). Passarlay's (2015) journey exemplifies this larger trend, as many people are forced to flee Afghanistan due to environmental degradation, war, and economic instability, only to be turned away at European borders.

European immigration rhetoric frequently uses "European values" as a neo-colonial tactic to defend discriminatory practices. Scholars contend that ideas like secularism, democracy, and human rights are used as weapons to portray non-European migrants as culturally incompatible with Western nations (Mondon & Winter, 2020). Refugees from Muslim-majority nations are framed as dangers to social cohesiveness and national identity in this language, which is frequently associated with Islamophobia (Bracke, 2019). Through Passarlay's encounters with European officials who doubt his capacity for integration, *The Lightless Sky* exemplifies this argument. Literature criticizes these narratives for maintaining civilizational differences from the colonial era, presenting non-Western migrants as always "other" and establishing Europe as the only keeper of modernity (El-Tayeb, 2018).

The detention facilities for asylum seekers, which house non-European migrants in conditions reminiscent of forced labor camps during the imperial era, have been widely denounced as modern-day examples of colonial domination (Mountz, 2020). According to scholars, these facilities reinforce refugees' status as undesirable groups by disciplining and dehumanizing them (Bosworth, 2017). Passarlay highlights the racialized brutality ingrained in European border regimes in *The Lightless Sky*, which details the cruel treatment of asylum seekers in detention centers. As intentional deterrent measures, these policies are criticized in the literature for mirroring colonial governance practices that used exclusion, incarceration, and surveillance to control vulnerable people (De Giorgi, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by a postcolonial theoretical framework, which provides a lens for understanding the persistent influence of colonial ideologies on contemporary immigration policies. Postcolonial theory, with its focus on the legacies of colonialism and the resulting power dynamics, offers critical insights into how neo-colonial attitudes continue to shape European immigration practices. This approach not only highlights the continuity of colonial thought in current policy frameworks but also illuminates the broader implications for refugee experiences and the pursuit of more equitable immigration practices.

Analysis and Discussion

The Lightless Sky, offers a poignant and critical examination of the systemic injustices faced by refugees seeking asylum in Europe. Through his harrowing journey, Passarlay exposes the ways in which European nations continue to reproduce colonial power dynamics, perpetuating a legacy of marginalization and discrimination. The current study examines the novel through a postcolonial lens, focusing on the themes of neo-colonialism and the perpetuation of refugee marginalization. By analyzing key passages and examining the broader context of European immigration policies, we can understand how these factors contributed to Passarlay's experiences and the ongoing challenges faced by refugees seeking asylum in Europe. Through

a critical examination of Passarlay's narrative the present study highlights the ways in which European nations continue to perpetuate colonial legacies, this analysis aims to raise awareness of the systemic injustices faced by refugees and to advocate for more just and equitable policies. Passarlay's journey highlights the ways in which European nations have employed neo-colonialist strategies to control and manage refugee populations. This is evident in the bureaucratic hurdles, discriminatory practices, and xenophobic attitudes that refugees encounter throughout their journey. The following passage throws light on the parochial neo-colonialism depicted in the narrative of *The Lightless Sky*:

The journey was a nightmare. We were hungry, cold, and scared. We were chased by dogs, and we had to hide from the police. It felt like we were being hunted. Every day was a struggle for survival. We didn't know if we would make it to the next day. But we kept going, driven by the hope of a better life.

The following lines from passage from *The Lightless Sky* provide a vivid illustration of the dehumanizing conditions and treatment experienced by refugees in European detention centers. The metaphor of being "packed in like sardines" emphasizes the overcrowding and lack of basic human rights afforded to refugees. The description of the terrible food, cruel guards, and the feeling of being imprisoned in one's own country highlights the ways in which refugees are subjected to systemic marginalization and exploitation. It's aligned with the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of European nations towards refugees, as evidenced by the creation of detention centers that are designed to isolate and control them. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of these policies, as refugees are treated as inferior and subject to arbitrary control. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies perpetuate refugee marginalization by denying them basic human rights and opportunities for integration.

When we finally reached Italy, we were put in a detention center. It was a terrible place. We were packed in like sardines, with no privacy or dignity. The food was terrible, and the guards were cruel. It felt like we were prisoners in our own country. We were treated like animals, and we were subjected to all kinds of abuse. We were treated like second-class citizens. People looked at us with suspicion and fear. We couldn't find jobs or places to live. It was a constant struggle to survive. We felt like we were invisible, like we didn't matter.

The above passage from *The Lightless Sky* highlights the pervasive discrimination and social exclusion faced by refugees in Europe. The metaphor of being treated like "second-class citizens" underscores the unequal status and limited opportunities afforded to refugees. The description of being looked at with suspicion and fear reveals the xenophobic attitudes of some Europeans towards immigrants. The inability to find jobs or places to live further demonstrates the systemic barriers that refugees face in integrating into European society. These challenges contribute to a constant struggle for survival and a sense of invisibility, as refugees feel like they are not valued or recognized as members of the community. This extract can be connected to the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of some Europeans towards refugees, as evidenced by the suspicion and fear they express. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of European immigration policies, which often discriminate against refugees from formerly colonized regions. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies perpetuate refugee marginalization by denying them access to essential services and opportunities.

The language barrier was a huge problem. We couldn't communicate with anyone, and we felt isolated and alone. We were lost in a foreign country, and we didn't know where to turn. We felt like we were trapped in a nightmare.

The above quoted lines from *The Lightless Sky* highlight the significant challenges faced by refugees due to the language barrier. Unable to communicate effectively with the local population, refugees often feel isolated and alone, struggling to navigate the complexities of a foreign culture. The metaphor of being "lost in a foreign country" emphasizes the disorientation and confusion experienced by refugees, who may not understand the customs, laws, or social norms of their new home. The feeling of being "trapped in a nightmare" underscores the psychological distress and despair that refugees may experience as a result of language barriers. This sense of entrapment can be exacerbated by the lack of support and resources available to refugees, who may find it difficult to access essential services and opportunities. This passage can be connected to the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of some Europeans towards refugees, as evidenced by the lack of effort made to accommodate their linguistic needs. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of European immigration policies, which often assume that refugees should adapt to the dominant language and culture. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies perpetuate refugee marginalization by denying them access to essential services and opportunities due to language barriers.

We were exploited by unscrupulous employers. We were paid very little, and we worked long hours in dangerous conditions. We were treated like slaves, and we had no rights. We were afraid to complain, because we knew that we could be deported if we did.

The Lightless Sky highlights the economic exploitation faced by refugees in Europe. The description of being "exploited by unscrupulous employers" reveals the vulnerability of refugees to labor exploitation, as they may be more likely to accept low-paying and dangerous jobs due to their limited options. The metaphor of being treated like "slaves" underscores the dehumanizing conditions and lack of basic rights experienced by refugees in the workplace. The fear of deportation further complicates the situation, as refugees may be reluctant to complain about their working conditions for fear of losing their precarious legal status. This creates a power imbalance between employers and refugees, allowing employers to exploit refugees with impunity. This passage can be linked to the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of some Europeans towards refugees, as evidenced by the willingness of employers to exploit them. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of European immigration policies, which often deny refugees the same labor rights and protections afforded to citizens. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies perpetuate refugee marginalization by subjecting them to economic exploitation and vulnerability. "The authorities refused to give us refugee status. We were told that we didn't have a legitimate claim to asylum. It was a devastating blow. We felt like we were being punished for fleeing war and persecution."

This passage from *The Lightless Sky* highlights the bureaucratic barriers and discriminatory practices faced by refugees in obtaining asylum. The denial of refugee status can have devastating consequences for refugees, as it leaves them vulnerable to deportation and limits their access to essential services and opportunities. The statement that refugees are "punished for fleeing war and persecution" underscores the injustice of denying asylum to those who are fleeing dangerous situations. This passage can be connected to the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of some European nations towards refugees, as evidenced by the reluctance to grant them refugee status. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of European immigration policies, which often prioritize national interests over humanitarian concerns. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies

perpetuate refugee marginalization by denying them the protection and security afforded to refugees.

We were forced to live in the shadows. We were afraid of being deported, and we couldn't trust anyone. We felt like we were living a lie. We were constantly looking over our shoulder, wondering when the authorities would come for us.

This passage from *The Lightless Sky* highlights the psychological distress and uncertainty experienced by undocumented immigrants. The metaphor of "living in the shadows" emphasizes the precarious and hidden existence that refugees may be forced to adopt to avoid detection by authorities. The fear of deportation can create a constant sense of anxiety and insecurity, as refugees may be constantly looking over their shoulder, wondering when they will be apprehended. The inability to trust anyone further complicates the situation, as refugees may be reluctant to seek help or assistance from others for fear of being betrayed. This isolation and mistrust can contribute to a feeling of being trapped and powerless. These lines can be connected to the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of some Europeans towards refugees, as evidenced by the fear and suspicion they may experience. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of European immigration policies, which often deny refugees legal status and basic rights. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies perpetuate refugee marginalization by subjecting them to constant fear and uncertainty. "We felt like we were trapped. We couldn't go back to Afghanistan, and we couldn't build a new life in Europe. It was a hopeless situation. We were lost and alone in a world that didn't want us."

This passage from *The Lightless Sky* highlights the psychological despair and hopelessness experienced by refugees who are unable to find a safe and stable home. The metaphor of being "trapped" emphasizes the limited options available to refugees, who may be unable to return to their home countries due to ongoing conflict or persecution. The inability to build a new life in Europe further contributes to a sense of hopelessness and despair, as refugees may feel like they are constantly struggling to survive. The statement that refugees are "lost and alone in a world that didn't want us" underscores the profound sense of isolation and rejection that they may experience. This feeling of being unwanted can have a devastating impact on refugees' mental health and well-being. This passage can be connected to the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of some Europeans towards refugees, as evidenced by the reluctance to welcome them into their societies. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of European immigration policies, which often prioritize national interests over humanitarian concerns. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies perpetuate refugee marginalization by denying them the opportunity to build a stable and fulfilling life. "We were just trying to survive. We were just trying to find a safe place to call home. But it seemed like the whole world was against us. We were tired, hungry, and scared. We just wanted to be happy."

This passage from *The Lightless Sky* highlights the fundamental human desires of refugees to survive and find a safe home. Despite the numerous challenges they face, refugees are simply seeking a place where they can live in peace and security. The statement that "it seemed like the whole world was against us" underscores the overwhelming obstacles that refugees encounter in their journey. The description of being "tired, hungry, and scared" reveals the physical and emotional toll that the refugee experience can take on individuals. Despite these hardships, refugees continue to hold onto the hope of a better life, as evidenced by their desire to simply be happy. This passage can be connected to the research topic of "Parochial Neo-Colonialism and the Perpetuation of Refugee Marginalization" in several ways. First, it reveals the parochial attitudes of some Europeans towards refugees, as evidenced by the reluctance to

welcome them into their societies. Second, the passage highlights the neo-colonialist nature of European immigration policies, which often prioritize national interests over humanitarian concerns. Finally, the passage demonstrates the ways in which these policies perpetuate refugee marginalization by subjecting them to constant hardship and uncertainty.

The way that European immigration policies operate as extensions of neo-colonial control is revealed when analyzed through a postcolonial lens. The stories told in *The Lightless Sky* are consistent with academic criticisms that draw attention to how racially discriminatory asylum procedures are. Passarlay's voyage highlights the inconsistencies in European refugee frameworks, where laws intended to discourage and penalize non-Western migrants conflict with humanitarian rhetoric. His experiences serve as an example of how European nations continue to rule over their colonial subjects, upholding systems of power that marginalize refugees from the Global South and favor Western identity. This result is consistent with other research that examines how securitization and legal restrictions maintain divisions from the colonial era.

Their colonial origins are further highlighted by a careful analysis of border controls and immigration enforcement procedures. Detention facilities, restrictions on visas, and delays in the asylum procedure are all forms of exclusion that disproportionately impact migrants from areas that were once colonized. Passarlay's difficulty navigating European legal procedures in *The Lightless Sky* is a reflection of the larger structural obstacles placed on non-European asylum seekers. These regulations act as strategic deterrents to control the mobility of marginalized communities and maintain Europe's economic advantages in the global economy, in addition to their administrative functions. The research repeatedly highlights that these processes are a reflection of long-standing colonial concerns about racial and cultural "purity" within European boundaries, rather than being neutral or solely motivated by security.

As outlined in postcolonial criticisms, the criminalization of asylum-seeking is a prime example of the securitization of migration. Restrictive border policies are commonly justified by the rhetoric of economic stability and national security, which presents refugees as possible threats rather than people in need of protection. Passarlay's interactions with European officials serve as an example of how securitization makes refugees suspicious and further marginalizes them. This supports the more general claim that European immigration laws uphold economic reliance that benefits the West while restricting the mobility of non-Western bodies, thus sustaining neo-colonial rule. Furthermore, the neo-colonial logic ingrained in these policies is shown by the selective asylum-granting based on ethnic preferences and geopolitical objectives.

Refugee narratives play an important role in opposing neo-colonial structures. A counter-discourse that contests prevailing portrayals of migrants as helpless victims or security threats is offered by testimonial writing, such as *The Lightless Sky*. By revealing the daily reality of relocation, Passarlay's personal story sheds light on the structural inequalities that asylum seekers must contend with. This supports postcolonial claims that refugee voices should be amplified in order to undermine Eurocentric migration narratives. Such literature challenges state-controlled narratives that depoliticize migration and hide the colonial legacies influencing current immigration policies by emphasizing the experiences of refugees. As a result, the analysis emphasizes how crucial texts written by refugees are to challenging the neo-colonial systems that control international mobility.

The Lightless Sky offers a powerful and poignant critique of the systemic injustices faced by refugees in Europe. Through his harrowing journey, Passarlay exposes the ways in which European nations continue to reproduce colonial power dynamics, perpetuating a legacy of marginalization and discrimination. The novel highlights the various challenges faced by refugees, including xenophobia, bureaucratic hurdles, economic exploitation, and the denial of basic human rights. These experiences are rooted in neo-colonial ideologies that prioritize

national interests over humanitarian concerns. By perpetuating these colonial legacies, European nations contribute to the ongoing marginalization of refugees, denying them the opportunity to build a stable and fulfilling life.

Conclusion

The concept of parochial neo-colonialism and its role in perpetuating refugee marginalization, as seen through a postcolonial lens in *The Lightless Sky*, underscores the ongoing power dynamics between Europe and refugees from the Global South. European immigration policies, driven by a legacy of colonialism, continue to marginalize refugees by prioritizing security over humanitarian responsibilities, framing non-European migrants as threats, and reinforcing racialized borders. Gulwali Passarlay's personal journey serves as a poignant critique of these exclusionary practices, revealing how Europe's neo-colonial control extends to border governance and refugee treatment. This perpetuates systemic marginalization, as refugees like Passarlay are subjected to dangerous journeys, bureaucratic obstacles, and dehumanization, which reflect deeper colonial attitudes of superiority and control. By analyzing these elements through a postcolonial framework, it becomes evident that Europe's immigration policies are not only reactive but are embedded in a historical context of colonial exploitation, which continues to shape refugee experiences in the present. Thus, a rethinking of these policies is crucial to dismantling the neo-colonial structures that sustain refugee marginalization.

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