

**The Interactional Emphasis of Furo Wariboko in A. Igoni**

**Barret's *Blackass***

**THESIS**

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**2021**

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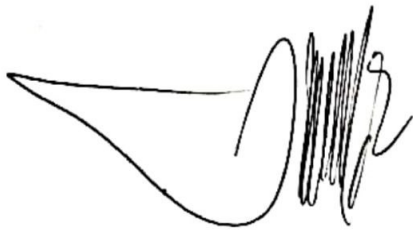
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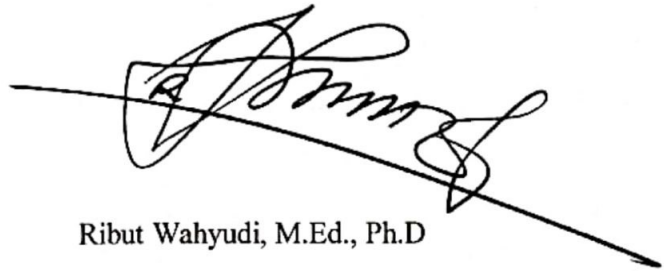
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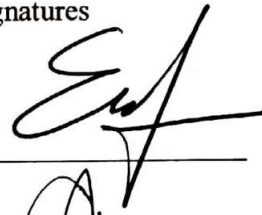
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## MOTTO

*“You should enjoy the little detours to the fullest. Because that’s where you will find the things more important than what you want.”*

*(Ging Freecs by “Hunter X Hunter” Anime)*

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicated my thesis to my family, especially my beloved mother, Ir. Ida Fitri Prihatin encourages and supports me in almost every situation while finishing this thesis. Also, I dedicated my thesis to all my friends who have support in any form so that I am strong and able to finish this thesis.

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Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Alhamdulillah rabil' alamiin, all praises to Allah SWT, who has given strength, passion, guidance, patience, and blessing to complete this undergraduate thesis. Peace and Salutation be upon the greatest prophet, Muhammad SAW, who guides and spreads truthfulness and enlightenment. This undergraduate thesis entitled "Furo's Success on Maintaining His Identity as a Black, Portrait in Barret's *Blackass*" is submitted as the final requirement for accomplishing the undergraduate degree of Sarjana Sastra at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

The researcher would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to all people who give valuable contributions to writing this thesis:

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3. Also, thanks to my brother, Dzikky Wildan Nur Fahmi, and my sister, Anggun Devi Puspitasari S. S. who gave a lot of support to finish this thesis.
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Finally, I admit that the thesis is still far from perfect and still has a lot of flaws. Therefore, criticisms and suggestions are allowed to improve this thesis. Hopefully, this thesis could be beneficial to the readers.

Malang, 20 November 2021



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## ABSTRACT

**Alfarisi, Moh. Salman** (2021). *The Interactional Emphasis of Furo Wariboko in A. Igoni Barret's "Blackass"*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. **Advisor:** Dr. Siti Masitoh, M. Hum.

**Keyword:** Hierarchy, identity, sociology

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The interactional emphasis of identity theory was introduced by George McCall and J. L. Simmons. The interactional emphasis of identity theory has revealed that every human being possibly has more than one identity. It is explained through prominence hierarchy and salience hierarchy. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the prominence hierarchy and the impact of the prominence hierarchy on Furo Wariboko, the main character of A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* Novel. This study is part of literary criticism since the researcher analyzes and interprets a literary work. Based on the object formal, the study uses a sociological approach for analysis that focuses on the sociological aspect that is involved in the novel. Furthermore, the analysis uses the interactional emphasis of identity theory by George McCall and J.L Simmons. The data are taken from A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* novel in form of words, phrases, or utterances. The researcher collects data by identifying and classifying relevant citations based on A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* novel. After that, the researcher analyzes the data by describing and explaining quotations based on the interactional emphasis of identity theory. The analysis results show that: (1) Prominence hierarchy influences Furo to change his identity from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to a new identity as "Frank Whyte". (2) Prominence hierarchy chosen by Furo as "Frank Whyte" has an impact on Furo in terms of, social, economic, and psychological aspects.

## ABSTRAK

**Alfarisi, Moh. Salman** (2021). Penekanan Interaksi Furo Wariboko dalam Blackass karya A. Igoni Barret. Skripsi. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Pembimbing: Dr. Siti Masitoh, M.Hum.

Kata Kunci: Hirarki, identitas, sosiologi

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Teori identitas dengan penekanan interaksional diperkenalkan oleh George McCall dan J.L Simmons. Teori identitas dengan penekanan interaksional telah mengungkapkan bahwa setiap manusia mungkin memiliki lebih dari satu identitas, yang dijelaskan melalui hirarki identitas utama dan hirarki identitas situasional. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji hirarki identitas utama dan dampaknya terhadap Furo Wariboko, tokoh utama dalam novel Blackass karya A. Igoni Barret. Penelitian ini merupakan bagian dari kritik sastra karena peneliti menganalisis dan menafsirkan karya sastra. Berdasarkan bahan objek, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan sosiologis untuk menganalisis aspek sosiologis yang terlibat dalam novel. Selain itu, analisis menggunakan teori identitas dengan penekanan interaksional oleh George McCall dan J.L Simmons. Data diambil dari novel Blackass karya A. Igoni Barret dalam bentuk kata-kata, frasa, atau ujaran. Peneliti mengumpulkan data dengan mengidentifikasi dan mengklasifikasikan kutipan yang relevan berdasarkan novel Blackass karya A. Igoni Barret. Setelah itu, peneliti menganalisis data dengan mendeskripsikan dan menjelaskan kutipan berdasarkan teori identitas dengan penekanan interaksional. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa: (1) Hirarki identitas utama mempengaruhi Furo untuk mengubah identitas aslinya sebagai "Furo Wariboko" menjadi identitas baru sebagai "Frank Whyte." (2) Hirarki identitas utama yang dipilih Furo sebagai "Frank Whyte" memberikan dampak pada Furo baik secara, sosial, ekonomi, maupun psikologis.

## مستخلص البحث

الفاريسي، محمد سلمان (٢٠٢١). التركيز التفاعلي لفورو واريبوكو في رواية "بلاكاس" لأيجوني باريت. رسالة تخرج البكالوريوس. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرفة: الدكتورة سييتي ماسيتوه، الماجستير.

الكلمات الأساسية: التسلسل الهرمي، الهوية، الاجتماعية.

قدم جورج George Michael و J.L. Simmons تركيزًا تفاعليًا لنظرية الهوية. أظهر التركيز التفاعلي لنظرية الهوية أن لدى كل إنسان ممكن أن يكون لديه أكثر من هوية، وذلك من خلال التركيز على التسلسل الهرمي والتركيز على الوضوح. يهدف هذا البحث إلى فحص التسلسل الهرمي والتركيز على الوضوح لفورو واريبوكو، الشخصية الرئيسية في رواية "Blackass" لأيجوني باريت. يتكون هذا الدراسة من النقد الأدبي حيث يقوم الباحث بتحليل وتفسير العمل الأدبي. ويستخدم الدراسة نهجًا اجتماعيًا للتحليل يركز على الجانب الاجتماعي المشارك في الرواية. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، تستخدم الدراسة التركيز التفاعلي لنظرية الهوية من George Michael و J.L. Simmons . يتم جمع البيانات من رواية "Blackass" لأيجوني باريت في شكل كلمات، عبارات، أو عبارات مفصلة. يجمع الباحث البيانات عن طريق تحديد وتصنيف الاقتباسات ذات الصلة بناءً على رواية "بلاكاس" لأيجوني باريت. بعد ذلك، يقوم الباحث بتحليل البيانات عن طريق وصف وشرح الاقتباسات بناءً على التركيز التفاعلي لنظرية الهوية. تشير نتائج التحليل إلى أن: (١) تؤثر هرم البارزية على فورو لتغيير هويته من هويته الأصلية باسم "Furo Wariboko" إلى هوية جديدة باسم "Frank Whyte". (٢) الهرم البارز الذي اختاره Furo باسم "Frank Whyte" له تأثير على فورو من حيث الجوانب الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والنفسية.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Understanding identity has become an important task in human life. Socrates, one of the great Greek philosophers, said that knowing oneself (gnooti seauton) is the beginning of humans interacting with themselves and a solid capital to interact with others (Naisaban, 2004). Knowing yourself means finding your Identity. Identity serves to distinguish and integrate self and personal awareness from various dimensions (Bamberg, 2011). Identity is a very fundamental thing in the individual. The concept refers to what is owned, identified, and positioned in the social environment. The formation of this self-identity is influenced by various factors that come from outside himself or his social environment (Crossley,2000; Thoits, 2013).

According to identity theory, each individual has several identities based on their place and function in society's network of interactions. Identity is formed due to internalizing societally anticipated roles or actions (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Identity theory demonstrates the connection between self-concept and human behavior by integrating internal identity with social structure. This is closely linked to their relationships in society (Murnieks, 2007). According to Stryker and Burke (2000), the connection between identity and roles is found in the meaning of the two. When the meaning of Identity coincides with the meaning of roles. Identity can predict behavior. According to Stryker and Burke (2000), the choice of roles is

a result of the Identity that shapes the self-concept. The identities within the self are arranged in a hierarchical order based on their importance (salience).

The focus of McCall and Simmons' (1978) research is on role identities. Below, we go into greater detail about the importance Stryker (2002) focuses on role identities and the expectations connected to people's roles in the social system. The distinctive quality of role identities is more likely to be emphasized by McCall and Simmons. Idiosyncratic features are people's particular perceptions of their identities and how these identities are negotiated with other people throughout interaction.

Self-identity determines who the person is. The importance of self-identity lies in the direction and intensity of a person's response. If a person considers their Identity meaningful to them, it will positively impact their behavior (Burke, 1991). Individuals will be motivated to give meaning to their behavior consistent with the meaning of their Identity. This condition is called congruence (Burke, 1991). Stets & Serpe (2016) said that when congruence conditions occur, positive emotions will arise. Individuals will feel happy and continue to carry out their activities. Conversely, the absence of verification of self-identity will result in negative emotions.

Individuals have several identities due to their diverse roles in society (McCall and Simmons, 1978). Therefore, the prominence hierarchy and salience hierarchy were introduced to define multiple identities. Prominence hierarchy describes an actor's ideal self, or which roles are central, essential, and long-lasting.



The situational self is represented by the salience hierarchy. It is based on anticipating how people will act in specific circumstances. According to McCall and Simmons, people will typically prefer to act out a more prominent identity when given the chance to do so in a circumstance. However, some circumstances prevent the adoption of significant identities since they don't offer rewards. As a result, individuals become more aware of role identities that they should activate in particular situations. These are the prominent identities. However, one of the literary works that reflect the use of interactional emphasis is a novel titled "*Blackass*" by a Nigerian writer named A. Igoni Barret.

The researcher believes that every human being could be relevant to the interactional emphasis identity theory, which emphasizes the awareness of multiple Identities in every person. Salience hierarchy and Prominence hierarchy were used to categorize the Identity Hierarchy. The alteration in the Furo Wariboko Identity was a reflection of the divided hierarchy of identity. The inspiration for this study that drives the researcher. The study chooses the *Blackass* novel by A. Igoni Barret in accordance with George McCall and J. L. Simmons' Interactional Emphasis of identity theory.

*Blackass* novel begins with the life story of a Nigerian named Furo Wariboko. But one day, a strange thing happened. When he woke up, his skin became white. He was confused. Since his skin turns white, he becomes more confused than anyone. Furo felt so devastated. Then, he decided to leave his family. Eventually, he realized that his change as a white person could give him so many fortunes. Then, he decides to keep going on with his condition. Many people treat

him well than on his previous skin as a black person. He did white people things and took some advantage of being white. He got many more privileges than ever (Barrett, 2015).

Moreover, the novel talks about satire on culture, cliché moments to Furo Wariboko, how he quickly gets a job, his new girlfriend, his past life, and others. Also, *Blackass* is a remarkable literary work since it won some awards as one of the best novels in the world. Therefore, *Blackass* attracts the attention of researchers to study it. Through some studies, researchers showed some gratitude towards A. Igoni Barret successfully brought a different kind of novel about racism (Morris, 2016).

Interactional Emphasis Theory indicates that every person has some factors while establishing their Identity. Also, it indicates that every person possibly has some identity activated based on the situation. The researcher assumes based on the description provided above, the identity alteration of Furo Wariboko, the protagonist of A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass*, would be compatible with The Interactional Emphasis Theory. The researcher applies George McCall and J. L. Simmons' Interactional Emphasis, an identity theory, to the sociological analysis. This study aims to find out the factors behind the decision of Furo Wariboko's identity change that identity change portrayed during the process of his identity change. The researcher decides to analyze using this theory because some studies mainly focus on racism instead of analyzing Furo Wariboko's identity change.

## **B. Problem of the Study**

The researcher develops the research questions in reflection on the previously discussed background:

1. What are the factors that convinced Furo to change his identity from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to a new identity as "Frank Whyte"?
2. What are the impacts that Furo experienced when changing his identity from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to a new identity as "Frank Whyte"?

## **C. Objective of the Study**

According to the research questions, the researcher's goals for this study are:

1. To find the factors that convinced Furo to change his identity from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to a new identity as "Frank Whyte".
2. To find the impacts that Furo experienced when changing his identity from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to a new identity as "Frank Whyte".

## **D. Significance of the Study**

The study's findings and analysis were anticipated to be both theoretically and practically useful. In theoretical terms, this study emphasized the use of George McCall and J. L. Simmons' Interactional Emphasis of Identity Theory. It focuses on the hierarchy of identities that influences how a person perceives their roles. Therefore, the study aims to explain and find out how Furo, the main character of A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* novel got convinced him to change his original identity from "Furo Wariboko" to new identity as "Frank White completely." Also, this study aims to find out the impacts that Furo experienced when changing his identity from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to a new

identity as "Frank Whyte. In practical terms, the researcher anticipates that the study will be helpful to readers, especially English Department students who are interested in learning more about the Interaction Emphasis of Identity Theory. The study was also intended to enable English Department professors to provide their students with a more comprehensive understanding of the Interactional Emphasis of Identity Theory. In consideration, the work might contribute to future research in this area.

#### **E. Scope and Limitation**

There are various aspects that the novel might be explored. While George McCall and J. L. Simmons' Interactional Emphasis of Identity Theory reflected on Furo's process of completely changing his identity into Frank White and his situational Identity, which was activated in a specific situation, the researcher only focuses on the prominence hierarchy and the impact of prominence hierarchy. The study's limitations were acknowledged by the researcher. Since Furo is the main character, this study only focuses on him.

#### **F. Definition of Key Terms**

1. Interactional Emphasis: The McCall and Simmons concept of identity places special emphasis on the idiosyncratic aspect, or how people interpret their roles differently and interact with others (McCall & Simmons, 1978).
2. Prominence Hierarchy: The prominence hierarchy represents an actor's ideal self which is central, significant, and long-lasting. It shows the priorities, which influence their conduct in different contexts and across time. This hierarchy describes how people want to see themselves concerning

their ideas, desires, fundamentals, or significance. The prominence hierarchy is more stable and long-lasting (McCall & Simmons, 1978).

3. Salience Hierarchy: The representation of the situational identity. Identity is viewed as the most favorable obtaining support. However, the salience hierarchy is momentarily activated in various situations (McCall & Simmons, 1978)

#### **G. Previous Studies**

The researcher locates certain earlier studies considered relevant references. Some researchers have researched a related topic. (Adebayo. S, 2020) in his study titled *The black soul is (still) a white man's artefact? Postcoloniality, post-Fanonism, and the tenacity of race(ism) in A. Igoni Barrett's Blackass* concludes in a typical post-racial setting where white privilege might not be common, *Blackass* as a sophisticated novel represents a diverse psycho-sociology of race. Other perceptions and interpretations of white privilege exist. It has to do with racism's institutionalization as a result of colonial racism. By highlighting the globalization and threat of white supremacy, it implies that racism only exists in societies with multiple racial groups. In *Blackass*, we learn how to imagine racial oppression as something other than white and to liberate it from systemic racism's control and desires. This study was compared to earlier studies because it could help researchers gain new perspectives when looking for information about white privilege.

Second, (Olondo, 2020) with a journal article titled *The Fluidity of Identity: Representation of Intersectionality in Igoni Barrett's Blackass*. This journal article

expresses concern regarding the identity assumptions made by people based on their skin color. Therefore, by exploring the intersectionality of various strands of Identity, this study examines how Nigerian author A. Igoni Barrett employs his *Blackass* novel to submerge us in the racism present in post-colonial Nigeria. To show how Barrett conforms to and subverts these ideas to show the nuances of inferiority in the African subject compared to the superiority of the "white" protagonist, the researcher also looks into the numerous fallacies associated with various identities. To explore the complexity of Identity, this research has focused on the intersectionality portrayed in the *Blackass* novel, which aims to expose various fallacies and binaries related to race and gender. This study adds information about the disparity between white people and black people about the issue of skin-color stereotypes.

Third, (Dwivedi, 2020) in his study titled *Skin Colour Hegemony in Blackass: A Critical Study*, has observed the discrimination toward skin color. Lighter skin seems to get easiness to succeed in this world nowadays situation. This skin color hegemony has grown to become a concern of the researcher. Further, the study uses Hegemony theory to unfold the issue brought by A. Igoni Barret through his novel titled "*Blackass*." The researcher found that the lighter skin people's hegemony was more like a constructed narrative. The study shows how the hegemony of lighter skin people portrayed in *Blackass* is the same as with a nowadays severe issue. Lighter skin people tend to dominate colored people's countries such as Nigeria. Then, the researcher describes the main character named Furo as representing how lighter skin people are treated in Nigeria. This research

was used in previous studies because it was able to contribute to researchers finding data related to the privilege of being white.

Fourth, (Alfaisali, H. S. A. 2021), in his master's degree thesis titled *Race Traitors and Individual Psychology In John Howard Griffin's Black Like Me, Andrea Levy's Small Island, And Igoni Barrett's Blackass*, analyzes the three novels "Black Like Me," "Small Island," and "Blackass," which are chosen to represent three different locations (the USA, UK, and Nigeria), and time periods (the 1950s, 1940s, and 2010s), to find out why racial traitors leave their races and how white privilege heightens feelings of inferiority or superiority. The concept of "Race Treason" by Noel Ignatiev was combined with the Individual Psychology Theory, "White Privilege" from "Critical Race Theory," and the Individual Psychology Theory. As an example, "Individual Psychology" is interested in examining feelings of inferiority and superiority, whereas "Race Treason" is concerned with ending the "White Privilege" that accords superiority feelings to members of the white race and inferiority feelings to members of other races. It should be noted that the idea behind the term "Racism" is that one race is either superior or inferior to other races. As a result, the researcher has been able to find information about the reasons why black people typically fear white people.

Fifth, (Iromuanya. J. 2020) in the study titled "*White Man's Magic*" A. Igoni Barrett's *Blackass, Afropolitanism, and (Post)Racial Anxieties.*" Through Afropolitanism and (Post) Racial Anxieties perspective, the researcher found that "*Blackass*" is a portrayal that describes the benefits of becoming white people instead of black people. The "White Man's Magic" that Furo acquired is a local

representation of the global system of white supremacy that was fostered by European colonialism. The researcher is also concerned that those who support afropolitanism will likely end up colonizing other people because they ignore the system of white supremacy. Then, the researcher sees A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* novel as a successful literary work that can bring the future and the past perspective about white supremacy and similar issues. This research has contributed to the researcher providing the data that contains the benefit of becoming white people in contrast with black people.

Last, (Rono, D. C. 2017), in the study titled *Social media as a literary technique in Igoni Barret's Blackass and Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah*. The study's objective was to study how social media was used in the works of Barret and Adichie. Examining the various social media tools used and their functions was part of the research into how social media could be used as a storytelling tool. I also looked into the possibility of using social media as a venue for telling stories. The effectiveness of social media techniques for expressing theme issues was also examined in the study. Social media operates as an integrated but distinct field from creative writing. The two authors incorporate a variety of social media elements into their stories. Adichie uses the blog gadget in *Americanah*, whereas Barret uses Twitter in *Blackass*. In one section of *Blackass*, you can find tweets. Social media usage aligns with the turning point in the story. It exhibits Barret and Adichie's investigation of novel modes of communication. This study tried to identify how people may use social media to tell a tale and manipulate it as a narrative method. This research was used in previous studies because it could



contribute to researchers opening up researchers' insights in finding some data related to social media use.

In conclusion, all the previous studies have the same object to study. Besides, there are none of the previous studies uses the interactional emphasis of identity theory. In this case, the researcher only found six previous studies regarding the analysis of the *Blackass* novel. The case indicates that there are still a few studies about *Blackass's* novel.

## **H. Research Method**

In this chapter, the methodology for this study's data analysis is explained. It is made up of the following: research design, data, data source, data collecting, and data analysis.

## **I. Research Design**

In order to analyze the research data from the *Blackass* novel, this study employs a literary criticism methodology. Literary criticism is used to analyze or evaluate works of literature. Literary criticism is formed essentially by opinion, supported by evidence in the literary works, linking to the theme of the literary works, style of the literary works, and setting context. It usually involves a discussion of literary works and connects your ideas with other study results. Furo, the protagonist in A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* novel, is analyzed in-depth using literary criticism to determine his prominence hierarchy and salience hierarchy.

As a result of the data being gathered in the form of the novel's main character's words or utterances, this study fits into the category of qualitative

research. The identity prominence hierarchy and salience hierarchy indicated by Furo are examined using the interactional emphasis of identity theory by McCall and Simmons. The researcher explains why Furo decided to entirely alter his identity and what kind of situational identity Furo possesses. The main character, Furo, experiences a process of identity change in the *Blackass* novel. As a result of this approach, this study is expected to learn a lot about Furo's prominence and salience hierarchies.

Based on the object formal, the researcher used the sociological approach in analyzing the *Blackass* novel. The sociological approach uncovers the relationship with the novel. Usually, the sociological approach examines the author's reflection on society. The sociological approach can represent what the author sees within society, which is brought in their style.

#### **J. Data and Data Source**

Data refers to any information that can be collected, stored, and analyzed for a specific purpose. In the context of the research described, the data would refer to words, phrases, or utterances that are identified and classified as relevant citations.

The data source used by the researcher is a literary work in the form of a novel, *Blackass*. This novel was written by a Nigerian writer named A. Igoni Barret and published by Graywolf Press on January 3, 2016. This novel was published in the United States and the language used in this novel is English. This novel has 272 pages published in hardcover printed form and can be accessed as an e-book.

The use of a novel as a data source provides a unique and rich source of information for the researcher. Novels are often used in literary analysis and can provide insights into themes, character development, and social issues. By analyzing the text of the novel, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the author's message and how it relates to their research topic.

#### **K. Data Collection**

To collect the data, there are some steps:

1. The researcher used the "scanning" read technique on A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* to identify some essential points of the novel.
2. Underlining, highlighting, and taking notes on the words or sentences related to the research questions.
3. Classifying the data that are compatible with the interactional emphasis of identity theory by McCall and Simmons in the analysis

#### **L. Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves a number of procedures after data collection. The researcher's initial task will be to find the data relevant to the prominence hierarchy and the impacts of the prominence hierarchy. Then, the researcher identifies the evidence quotation to support the data by applying a sociological approach and the interactional emphasis of identity theory. Next, the researcher identifies the data deliberately by combining the researcher's arguments which are relevant to the theory and the data source. Last, the researcher sums up the result of the discussion at the end of the study in the conclusion segment.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEWED OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **A. Sociology of Literature**

Sociology is a science that analyzes society as well as the alterations and advancements that have taken place in social life. It adheres to a set of rules and laws. However, the sociology of literature is a subfield of general sociology that focuses on the "text" and, more specifically, on everything outside the text itself. It was first developed as a specialized field of sociology at the end of the nineteenth century. The sociology of literature is a specialized field of study that focuses on the connection between a literary work and the social structure in which it is created and, more specifically demonstrates how social circumstances affect whether a literary work is produced. (Ahmadi, 2021)

In addition, academics have been working hard to comprehend the close connection between society and literature. The sociology of literature is the term for it. It makes reference to and draws inspiration from the academic fields of sociology and literary studies. Sociology is, in fact, the unbiased and scientific study of people in society, as well as the investigation of social institutions and processes. Literature, on the other hand, focuses on how people interact with society and their attempts to change and adapt to it. As a result, sociology and literature share similar concerns. The novel can be seen as an attempt to recreate the social world, including interactions between people and their families, environments, politics, and the state, among other things. It is

one of the main literary genres. Literature penetrates the surface of social structure and reveals how humans experience society emotionally, in contrast to sociology, which analyzes society objectively.

On the other hand, academics have yet to establish research and analytical methodologies that are commensurate with the intricacy of their subject of study. This is not a stereotypical depiction of every specialized work. Instead, interested in the general principles behind today's literary history and literary criticism study. (Lowenthal, L. 2020)

Literary studies and social science, which challenges literature in its field, are fundamentally different from one another. More than one might anticipate for such a diverse endeavor, the basic contradiction between the two shapes literary sociology's work. Conflict exists on all fronts, from methods and objectives to theory and practice to the problems that each subject raises and the responses that each field provides. Literary critics see the literary work as having a purpose, whereas social scientists see it as illuminating, illustrating, or analyzing social processes. Literary studies are centered on aesthetics, even though few interpreters clarify what they mean by the phrase.

Griswold described literary sociology as "like an amoeba: it lacks a clear structure but has progressed forward in some ways regardless" in the Annual Review of Sociology in 1992. She couldn't help but think back on her long-held conviction that the subject wasn't organized around important topics or

debates as "a proper field ought to be," even though it had produced excellent theoretical results".

Peterson and Berger (1975) demonstrate how the market for record labels affects changes in recorded music. Moving on to the area of book publication, Powell (1985) shows how the intricate web of social ties between editors and members of the academic press has a big impact on the genesis and prospects of an academic paper. But none of these prominent cultural sociologists use books—many of them standalone works of fiction—to elicit social science research inquiries. The work of literature professor Janice Radway, which spans from the early 1990s to the present, contains some of the most sociological analyses of novels (1991).

Moreover, exercising critical judgment in literary studies entails taking part in the development, promotion, and legitimation of literary canons as well as the institutions that support and are supported by those canons. This evaluation process in turn leads to a series of separate confluences. The social repair of the artwork interacts with and supports the mystery of art. The literary judge connects with the work of literature, frequently with great enthusiasm, whether they are critics, educators, researchers, or creative writers. No other social science fosters a similar emotional commitment in literary objects. (Desan, Ferguson, & Griswold, 1989).

In the 1970s and 1980s, sociological research on literature and literary practice peaked, and a book of essays on the topic was published (Desan,

Ferguson, & Griswold, 1989). Nonetheless, it appears that there hasn't been much sociological study of literature or novels before or later. Few sociologists presently look to novels - at least, in a systematic sense - for data on social practice or social change, with the exception of Griswold, who contributed to the Desan collection and continues to publish about the sociology of literature.

Griswold (2000; 1992) and Radway (1991) both contend that it is appropriate and beneficial to approach literary works from a social perspective. According to their writings, American and Nigerian romance books, respectively, provide details about the social lives of their readers and publishers. When reading books to learn about sociology, it is necessary to make a distinction between those who support social injustice and those who oppose it.

The sociology of literature is concerned with facts; it looks at the origin, nature, and dynamic of what appears to be an author's personality; and it aims to prevent evaluation that amounts to nothing more than a list of authors ranked in a subjective league. In addition, Meilana (2021) mentioned that the sociology of literature also uncovers social, political, economic, and cultural institutions, as well as various fields, people, and their lives and behaviors.

Finally, we could research the degree to which some identities are more flexible than others. People might be more interested in altering their identities to suit the situation than more structurally fixed roles or group identities, for instance. We could also look into how the different identities affect us in

different directions. When role and group identities are initially assumed, person identities, for instance, may influence them. Individual identities may, however, have little impact once a role or group identity is formed.

## **B. Identity Theory**

The self is reflexive in both identity theory and social identity theory. It might accept that it is an object and categorize, label, or otherwise identify itself in specific ways in relation to other social classifications or categories. According to social identity theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell 1987), this process is known as self-categorization; in identity theory, it is known as identification (McCall and Simmons 1978). An identity is created as a result of the self-identification process.

The idea of identity, in Foote's opinion, provided the impetus for comprehending the position. He looked into how different roles might influence how people behave and what kinds of jobs have obligations. It is necessary for people to identify with, take on, and become the role in order for the energy, passion, and drive essential for roles to work.. This was the starting point for McCall and Simmons (1978) investigation of role identities. The hypothesis of density. The personality and role that an individual generates for himself as a resident in a specific social position" However, McCall and Simmons argue that these are not static ideas, but rather have an influence on daily life.

Actors are aware of who they are. The capacity for reflexivity is necessary for having a sense of oneself. It consists of self-awareness, self-



evaluation, and scenario planning. Most importantly, it suggests that one believes they are the center of attention. When social actors think of themselves as objects, they view themselves from the perspective of the people they interact with. When people experience themselves as others do, their feelings resemble others' feelings and the meaning of the self becomes shared. According to this approach, the self develops through interpersonal interaction and a society's complex, diverse environment, which is more beneficial. Furthermore, the self needs to be ordered and separate much like society is. The phrase "the self reflects society" is consistent with this. Stryker (2002)

One way to conceptualize the self is as a group of identities interconnected with various elements of the social system. The foundation of this theory is James' (1890) idea that there are as many different selves as there are unique social positions and group responses to the self. Identity, according to Stryker (2002), is the "internalized positional designation" that a person has for each of the various roles or responsibilities they have in society. As a result, the concept of role identities in people has developed.

An actor's role identity is the significance they give to themselves when acting in a role. Because people are socialized into particular roles, the meanings are influenced by culture. Consider the position of a parent or a custodian. Additionally, the meanings come from how people interpret their own roles. As a result, the meanings attached to positions include both a specific or idiosyncratic component and a normative or shared component. Since idiosyncratic meanings are the non-shared element of role identity

meanings, McCall and Simmons (1978) noted that interaction would be necessary for these meanings to exist.

Associations with the self that distinguish one person from another are referred to as person identities. The meanings encompass a person's distinct values and goals along dimensions such as how much power they aspire to have the control identity (Stets and Burke 1994) and how they perceive themselves morally in terms of their moral identity (Stets and Burke 1994). These identities are useful in a variety of situations and roles, unlike social or role identities. In many interactions, they might therefore be essential (Burke 2004).

Along with their role identities, social actors also have social and personal identities. Social identities are the interpretations people give to belonging to specific categories, such as being female, American, or Democrat. People who identify as members of a particular group think of themselves as similar to other in-group members but different from other out-group members. Identification with fellow in-group members produces similar beliefs and actions among group members as well as a sense of acceptance and social acceptability (Stets and Burke 2000).

A role's, a social group's, and a person's identities are interconnected. Instead, they respond to the situation by acting simultaneously. Within groups, there are roles, and those positions are filled by different people in various ways. For instance, the role of a parent exists in the larger family unit, and some people play it to a greater or lesser extent.

## **C. Interactional Emphasis of Identity Theory**

Role identities are the main topic of discussion in McCall and Simmons (1978). McCall and Simmons made an effort to draw attention to the distinctiveness of role identities, the variety of interpretations that people bring to their roles, and the interactions that other people have with these identities. McCall and Simmons are more interested in the relationship between the self and behavior compared to other researchers who treat the self as a distinct topic. Additionally, since behavior is the result of interaction, individuals trade skills like bargaining and negotiating as well as incentives and costs that either encourage or discourage action.

### **1. Prominence Hierarchy**

According to McCall and Simmons, people frequently assume several role identities. They see people's many responsibilities as arranged into a hierarchy inside the self. They called it prominence hierarchy. This hierarchy shows how people define themselves in terms of their thoughts, desires, and fundamental or important values.

The first factor is how much support people in a situation are given for the identity they are developing. People develop self-support and receive support from others more after claiming an identity the higher it rises in the prominence hierarchy.

Another factor is how committed and involved people are in their roles influences the prominence hierarchy. People's identities are important to them if they are invested in them to the extent that doing so results in

positive emotions or a lot of respect. The advantages that people derive from their identities both extrinsic and intrinsic also have an impact on their prominence in the hierarchy.

Extrinsic rewards are resources obtained from others in exchange for claiming an identity, such as money, precious things, favors, and status. Intrinsic rewards are the internal gratifications that people experience when performing a duty. These may include a sense of competence when doing specific behaviors. The stronger the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits place identity in higher ranks in the prominence hierarchy.

Support, dedication, and rewards are the next three variables that have an impact on the prominence hierarchy or the ideal self. It is believed that each person has a different ideal self, depending on which aspect they value more. Others may need your support, while others may value your internal and external pleasure. The prominence hierarchy, in general, represents people's priorities, which guide their actions in various contexts and situations.

## **2. Salience Hierarchy**

In the salience hierarchy, the situational self is represented. It is the identity that is thought to be most advantageous to adopt in a situation when seeking support. The prominence hierarchy is more enduring and stable than the salience hierarchy, which is somewhat erratic as role identities are momentarily activated in various contexts. Prominence, support, rewards,

and the perceived opportunity structure are a few factors that affect the salience of identity in a given situation. The significance of the role identity's level of prominence, according to McCall and Simmons, is the key element. According to each individual, a different amount of other factors affect the salience hierarchy.

In a situation, a role identity is more likely to be used if it is more prominent. The second factor is the need for support for a specific identity. According to McCall and Simmons, if an identity's recent support hasn't lived up to expectations, especially from a critical audience, they would pay attention to another identity that has previously received support. The person won't make an effort to maintain an identity that was once unsupported because they don't want to take the chance that it will lose support once more. They will therefore make new investments in both a threatened and an unthreatened identity.

For instance, if the people at a party supported the parent's identity but not the professor's identity, the parent identity may be more likely to be used in the future when a social situation arises. Another way to look at it is that people will continue to activate an identity that has received prior support and that support is at or above predicted levels in a situation.

The third factor is a person's demand for the kinds and amounts of intrinsic rewards, like respect or physical gratification, and extrinsic rewards, like material possessions or power, received through identity performance, determines where an identity goes in the salience hierarchy.

Contrarily, when people receive less or more than expected intrinsic or extrinsic rewards for an identity, they are more likely to act in accordance with that identity in the future. This is because individuals are more likely to seek support for an identity when it is received at expected or higher than expected levels. When people do not receive the expected rewards for their identity, they feel relative deprived. They seek the pleasures connected to their identity more avidly the more deprived they are. When people get more benefits than they anticipated, they experience relative improvement. They will develop expectations for the excess of rewards associated with a particular identity as they receive more excess rewards.

The final factor involved in selecting an identity in the salience hierarchy is the perceived opportunity structure under the given conditions. The opportunity is the amount of profit (rewards-costs) that people would experience for assuming a particular identity in a given situation. It is significant to note that calculations of benefits or costs are based on an actor's perception of which role identity is dominant, in need of reinforcement, and advantageous to the actor. Someone might think that it is unprofitable from their perspective for another actor to assume a specific identity while they are present in a situation. However, the person must take on the role of the other actor because it is important to understand that the identity of the actor, not the person, is what matters.

## CHAPTER III

### FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter explains the analysis results of a study for Furo Wariboko, the protagonist of A. Igoni Barret's *Blackass* novel, using the prominence hierarchy and salience hierarchy. Using the interactional emphasis of identity theory developed by George McCall and J.L. Simmons, the researcher examines the prominence hierarchy and salience hierarchy of identity in Furo's identity.

#### **A. The Factors that convinced Furo to change his identity from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to a new identity as "Frank Whyte"**

The researcher found that Furo's prominence hierarchy is his new identity as "Frank Whyte." Frank Whyte's identity has been built along with the story in the novel. Furo seems to want to change his identity completely. Some aspect that has influenced identity placement on the prominent hierarchy there are support, commitment, and rewards. The researcher found the supporting shreds of evidence for each aspect below.

##### **1. Support**

Support is a key factor in shaping individuals' identities within the context of prominence hierarchy. It can help individuals navigate the rewards and penalties associated with different positions in the hierarchy, providing them with the resources and encouragement needed to maintain a positive self-concept and achieve their goals (McCall and Simmons, 1978).

In A. Igoni Barrett's "Blackass," Furo's interactions with various individuals highlight the crucial role that support plays in shaping an individual's position within the hierarchy. In the following data analysis, the researcher will explore how support impacts individuals' identities within the prominence hierarchy, using Furo's experiences as a case study.

The analysis will examine various forms of support, including social, economic, and emotional support, and how they affect an individual's position within the hierarchy. Through this examination, the data will provide insights into the ways in which support shapes an individual's experiences and identities within the prominence hierarchy, emphasizing the critical role that it plays in determining one's place within this complex social structure.

- a. Got money from a stranger to pay for a motorcycle taxi (p. 7)

This is the first-moment Furo gets his fortune after turning white. After he left his home without notice of his family after his change into white people and walking for two hours on the way to the interview, he felt rushed by the time. There is no time for a walk to the interview. He feels that he miscalculated the distance. The solution he does is to check the time, but he forgot to wear his watch. After that, he picked the nearest person in front of him and asked for help. A young lady named Ekemini, in a tank top and tight jeans, slowed his steps as he drew up to her. The lady tells the time. Furo feels a bit more in a rush after hearing that.



Ekemini feels something unique about Furo, who is white-skinned but has a familiar Nigerian accent. The lady asked Furo why it is possible to have a Nigerian accent. Then Furo answered that he is a Nigerian for sure. Then Furo explained that he was rushing to go to the interview and had no money after leaving his home. Ekemini asks where the interview place is taken. She knows that it will not take much time if Furo takes a taxi bike. Then, Ekemini felt suspicious, but Furo tried to convince him with a fake scenario.

*His confidence mounted along with her curiosity. 'It's not like I chose to trek to my interview, you know,' he said, and held her gaze. Settling deeper into character, he softened his tone: 'I was attacked by robbers this morning. They took my car, my wallet ... and my phone. I was lucky to get away with my documents.' He tapped the folder under his arm. (Barret, 2016, p. 7)*

*In the silence that followed, Furo and Ekemini were jostled together by a flash wave of pedestrians. With her chest pressed against him and her breath in his face, Furo almost regretted lying to her. But he had no choice, he told himself, no choice at all. (Barret, 2016, p. 7)*

After a bit of suspicion, Ekemini offered help by offering money for bike fare.

*She waited a beat, and then spoke in a rush, her tone embarrassed. 'Can I give you some money for the bike fare?' Furo's grin was truthful. 'That would be nice of you. It's just a loan, of course.' (Barret, 2016, p. 7)*

The expression on Ekemini's face was pleased as she handed the recipient a thousand naira note that she had taken out of her handbag. As she left, Furo thanked her. Inquiring about his phone number in case he wanted to return the borrowed money later, he opened his folder, took a pen out, and handed it to her.

In summary, Furo got borrowed money from Ekemini as a form of support. Ekemini willingly lends the money for Furo to get a bike. Even Ekemini has a slight bit of suspicion. Without a doubt, she lends the money. Maybe the suspicion is why such white people have a Nigerian accent and claim that he is Nigerian. Furo may get the money by playing a fake scenario, but it turns out to make Ekemini believe it just like that. According to McCall and Simmons, money loan assistance is one of support.

b. Helped by a stranger to pass the job interview queue (p. 10)

After arriving at the job interview location at a book advertising company named "Haba!ltd", Furo felt relieved that he could make it there on time. Then, Furo paid for the bike and hurried to take the queue behind the job applicants. Suddenly, he heard a man's voice that seemed like someone was calling him. At first, Furo was not sure about it. But the man tried to keep talking to Furo.

Furo felt confused, but the man made sure Furo that he talked to him. The man also tells Furo such a small talk like his elder brother lives in Poland. Furo felt a bit annoyed by the man. After that, the man said his intention to the point to Furo. He wants Furo to write his name at the front desk.

*He needed the job more than he feared a lynching. Lucky then that he didn't have to face his convictions, because the tension eased when the mob leader – this idiot who wants to get me in trouble, Furo thought with a flash of hatred – raised his voice: 'It's a nonsense job anyway.' He turned his attention back to Furo. 'You have to go inside and write down your name, then collect a number from Tosin, the woman at the front desk. She will call you in by your number.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 10)

Later, the man also tries to convince Furo that for sure he will get the job. Then, Furo thanked the man because he helped to pass the job applicant's queue. Furo went ahead and ran to the receptionist.

*'Yes, go and write your name,' the man agreed, and nodded vigorously, but did not release his grip on Furo's shoulder. 'You will get the job, for sure. Me and you have plenty things to talk about.' His eyes bored into Furo's, and his face hardened, shed its friendliness, twisted into a scowl. 'Watch out for Obata!'* (Barret, 2016, p. 10)

*The vehemence of his words spattered Furo with spit, and this time he couldn't help it, he raised a hand to wipe his face before muttering, 'OK, thanks.' He shrugged off the man's hold, drew away from him, and ran the gauntlet of hostile faces towards the building entrance.* (Barret, 2016, p. 10)

In that case, Furo got his second fortune on his interview day. A stranger helped him to pass the job applicant queue. The man also convinces Furo that he will get the job. The man looks sincerely and helps Furo. It can be noticed that Furo got the support because of his skin color.

c. Helped by Syreeta to make a passport (p. 60)

*On Thursday, 21 June, Syreeta gave Furo an old phone that she no longer used, and after she loaded it with airtime, she made a call to someone she knew at the passport office in Ikoyi. A new passport would cost nine thousand naira and take three months to process, but through her contact it would take three days and cost seventeen thousand. Furo didn't have the money, and he said so in a voice shocked into loudness after hearing Syreeta say into the phone, 'We'll come tomorrow,' but she shushed him with a finger pressed to her lips, then muffled the phone against her chest and whispered to him, 'At least see the man first, get the application form.' Furo shut up in agreement, and on Friday morning she drove him to the passport office, parked the car by the gate, and handed him an unsealed envelope. 'That's*

*twenty thousand,' she said, and when his outpourings of gratitude had dragged on too long, she interrupted, 'Go on. The man is waiting.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 60)

On June 21, Syreeta gave Furo an old phone she no longer used, and after giving it some airtime, Furo dialed a number she knew was at the Ikoyi passport office. A new passport would cost 9,000 naira and take three months to obtain, but thanks to her connections, it would only take three days and cost 17,000 nairas. Furo lacked the funds, so when Syreeta announced over the phone that they would arrive the following day, she silenced him with a finger to her lips, tucked the phone against her chest, and whispered to him, "At least meet the man first, grab the application form.". On Friday morning, Syreeta gave Furo an opened packet and drove him to the passport office after parking the car outside the gate. Furo gave her his consent. When they arrive at the passport office, Syreeta gives Furo 2,000 nairas and leads him there.

d. Helped by an unknown old lady to get a cab (p. 64-65)

Furo was persuaded to stand by the side of the road across from the passport office for forty minutes after the administrative tasks at the passport office were finished. He moved to a different spot along the road when his legs started to feel tired, but that didn't help. Every taxi that arrived, whether it was a plain yellow, special red, metro black, or an unpainted kabu-kabu, sped off empty because the drivers would not lower their exorbitant prices.

*The lady smiled at him again, a mouth-and-eyes smile whose genuineness was almost telepathic, and then she raised her hand and patted the air before her chest in a soothing motion. 'Take it easy,' she said with assurance. 'I'll*

*help you stop a cab.' Feeling his anger ebb at the flow of her voice, Furo aimed a long look at her, took in her youth, the cheerful spirit reflected in her face, and he returned her smile at last and said, 'That's sweet of you. Thanks.' He was about to ask her name when she spoke. 'Don't mention. You'll have to move away though. We can't let these drivers know we're together. Go now, quickly, a cab is coming.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 65)

An elderly lady stepped in to help him. She was walking down the street when the last taxi driver yelled out his last fare, four thousand naira, and then drove away after Furo made a peace sign with his fingers, which indicated two thousand. The lady approached Furo and said hello as he moved back from the road, cursing. She gave him a pleasant smile in response to his grudging remark, and she offered an assist for Furo to get a cab.

*Furo swung his eyes to the window when he felt the lady's hand on his shoulder. 'You'll give him one thousand naira,' she said. Then to the driver, 'Baba, this is my friend, please treat him well. E se, e le lo.'* She stepped back from the window, returned Furo's wave, and resumed her stroll to sainthood. (Barret, 2016, p. 65)

Furo got angry because he had been standing for nearly hours, but the fare was just beyond Furo's money. The lady tried to calm down Furo, and the lady helped him to get a cab with a two thousand naira fare. The lady does it willingly, calmly, and friendly. Indeed, the lady stops a cab that only asks for one thousand naira.

e. Hid by Syreeta from her sugar daddy (p. 89-p. 91)

On Wednesday morning. Furo was relaxing on the sofa watching the Mr. Bean series on TV. Syreeta was in the kitchen preparing breakfast.

Suddenly, Furo heard a knocking on the door. Then Syreeta comes to Furo immediately. Furo wants to ask Syreeta who is knocking on the door, but Syreeta pushes Furo to hide in the guest room and locks the door from the inside. Syreeta also asks Furo to remain silent inside the guest room.

*He started to speak, but she raised the knife to her lips and, grabbing his arm, she pulled him into the guest room. 'Please stay here, lock the door,' she begged in a whisper, her fingers digging into his forearm. Furo nodded in assent, after which she loosened her grip and began absent-mindedly stroking his reddened skin with a nervous look on her face. The knocking had grown louder, the in-between pauses shorter. Syreeta's eyes refocused on Furo's face as she said to him, 'Don't come out until I tell you,' and striding out of the guest-room door, she eased it closed behind her. Furo reached the door in a bound. He turned the key and removed it from the lock, but still he felt exposed, so he rushed to the windows and drew the curtains, then returned to the door and dropped to a squat beside it. Still the pounding sounded; the blows were furious. (Barret, 2016, p. 89)*

It is Bola, Syreeta's Sugar daddy, who is knocking on the door. It is kind of clear that Syreeta felt frantic. Syreeta knows that it would be Bola. Syreeta must take action to hide Furo. It would be big trouble which will mess up Syreeta. After that, Bola asked about Syreeta's Condition. Syreeta was said that she was sick. Bola shows big worry to her.

Bola said that he is missing Syreeta so much. Bola wants to spend more time with Syreeta. Syreeta shows inconvenience. Syreeta responds with a bit of dislike. Therefore, suddenly, Bola approaches the guest room. Syreeta called out with urgency to warn Bola not to enter the guest room. Bola started curiously. Syreeta kept denying that the guest room was hardly ever used, so she locked the door. Syreeta also pretended that the key to the room was lost. Bola offers to force open the door. Syreeta swiftly refused it.

It would be Syreeta's mistake if Bola found Furo in the guest room. Syreeta tried so hard to hide Furo.

*'I'm here already,' Bola said. She made no reply, and he continued, 'We haven't spent time in this flat since you moved in. I don't even know what your bedroom looks like.' Furo barely had time to interpret the creaking sounds from the settee when, as Syreeta called out with urgency, 'No Bola, that's the guest room!' the door handle turned. Furo stared at the door with evangelical awe, the sweat dripping from his face like the last grains of sand in a fatal hourglass. 'Is it locked?' Bola asked, rattling the handle, each swing tugging the string that was snagged in Furo's guts. And then, 'Why is it locked?' His voice, to Furo's ears, was sibilant with suspicion. (Barret, 2016, p. 90)*

*'No reason,' Syreeta said. 'I hardly ever use the guest room and so I locked it. I misplaced the key somewhere. I've been meaning to get a carpenter, but I keep forgetting.' (Barret, 2016, p. 90)*

*Again the handle turned under Furo's terrified gaze. 'Do you want me to force it open?' (Barret, 2016, p. 90)*

*'Hell no, you'll spoil the door! Leave it alone. I'll take care of it later.' Her words were followed by rapid footfalls, and after her door opened, she said, 'This is my bedroom. Come and sit here and wait for me, I'm going to bathe. I'll finish now-now.' (Barret, 2016, p. 91)*

There was no denying that Bola was Syreeta's sugar daddy, her lover, her benefactor, and her guy. Furo had always questioned Syreeta's financial stability, but he now understood that he owed Bola just as much gratitude for the obscene wealth he had been given. He was aware of who had paid for the roof over his head, the bed in which he slept, the \$20,000 required to obtain his passport, the food he consumed, and the fruit juices he drank. Bola was the father figure, though he was unaware of it, if Syreeta was the breast he sucked at in exchange for favor.

Furo felt a stab of sorrow as this thought flashed across his mind: that he was having sex with the lady of the guy who had sheltered him, a man

whose voice was bubbling from behind the wall that had covered his cuckold. He shook his head. According to what he'd learned, the man was adulterous. Syreeta was free, unmarried, her own woman, and, from the looks of it, about half Bola's age. Bola did not deserve to be pitied.

f. Boss pride towards Frank Whyte (p. 112)

*'Oh yes,' Arinze said with a low chuckle and then nibbled his lower lip. Finally he spoke. 'From now on he will be known only as Frank Whyte.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 111)

After deciding to use a new name as "Frank Whyte," Furo told his boss, Arinze, that he would use that name until later. Arinze praises Furo. Arinze said the decision that Furo made was the right decision. It would be avoiding a cautious question such as why white people have Nigerian names. But, Furo knows that the name he used is not a proper name. Later, he is not worried about it. Arinze also helps Furo to keep the secret about his old name. Arinze guarantees that no one will know about Furo's old name.

*During their meeting in Arinze's office, Arinze had expressed astonishment at Furo's decision to change his name. In response to his cautious questions, Furo explained that Frank was his Christian name and Whyte was his furo ere, his family name, the English version of his family's compound name. Many Kalabari families still retained this legacy of the slave-trading days when the chieftains answered one name in the clan and another to the white customer, the European sailors, who had no interest in learning their names and thus, partly in mockery and partly from necessity, addressed them by English nicknames. Hence it became that Fyneface was Karibo, Yellowe was Iyalla, Black-Duke was Oweredaba, Bobmanuel was Ekine, Georgewill was Otagi, Harry was Idoniboye-Obu, and, according to Furo, Whyte was Wariboko. (Barret, 2016, p. 111)*

*But Whyte was not Wariboko. Furo wasn't worried about this fabrication, his first to his boss. He had no fear he would be caught out. Ayo Abu Arinze*



*was Yoruba or more likely Igbo, or even of mixed ethnicity, with some Hausa thrown in somewhere – his three names together were confusing, but his surname was Igbo – and more to the point, he wasn't Kalabari, so it was unlikely he would know the secret history of Kalabari names. Yet Arinze was Nigerian enough to know that the whitest names in the country came from Furo's parts, the Niger Delta. Besides, he was pleased at the reason Furo gave for making the change. Because, as Furo said, Whyte would be easier for Haba! customers to pronounce and memorise, and, furthermore, it would remove the distraction of a white man bearing a black name. Such dedication to duty boded well, Arinze said, and he agreed with Furo that no one in the office need be informed of his old name. (Barret, 2016, p. 111)*

*Furo pondered on this snag before he said at last, 'I'll make the change official. I'll get a new passport. Is it possible to pay me in cash until I bring the passport?' (Barret, 2016, p. 112)*

*'That we can do,' Arinze said. 'Tell you what, Obata. Don't open a file for him, not yet. For tax purposes let the records show that he's on a three-month internship in marketing, and put down his salary as marketing expenses. Frank, you'll have to bring your passport before the end of three months, by the end of September. Then we'll make your position permanent.' (Barret, 2016, p. 112)*

*'I'll get the passport this month,' Furo said. And he added: 'Thank you, Abu.' (Barret, 2016, p. 112)*

After Arinze announces Furo's new name, helps immediately with administrative needs for the salary account. Arinze suggests Furo make a new passport with the new name. When Furo asks to give cash until he gets the new passport, casually, Arinze approves it. Furo promises that he will get the new passport in a month.

## **2. Commitment**

Commitment is a crucial factor in an individual's experiences and identity within the prominence hierarchy. In the context of A. Igoni Barrett's "Blackass," Furo's commitment to his chosen identity as a "white man" is a complex and multifaceted process that shapes his experiences within the social structure. This commitment encompasses more than just a desire to fit

in or attain a higher status; it involves a deep-seated belief in the superiority of whiteness and a willingness to reject his Black identity entirely. Furo's unwavering commitment to this chosen identity enables him to navigate the complexities of the prominence hierarchy and interact with others in a manner that supports his desired status.

In the following data analysis, the researcher will explore how Furo's commitment to his chosen identity shapes his experiences within the prominence hierarchy. Through this analysis, the researcher will provide insights into the multifaceted nature of commitment and how it influences an individual's position within the social structure, specifically in relation to Furo's commitment to his "whiteman" identity.

- a. Furo's choice to use his white identity after getting his first job (p.25-p. 27 and p. 103)

*The chicken farm never recovered from that blow. Neither did Furo's father, who kept the business open mainly as an excuse to escape the house every day. By the time Furo gained admission to university and departed for Ekpoma, his father's business was nothing more than an inhouse joke and his mother had accepted her everlasting role as the sole financier of everything Wariboko. (Barret, 2016, p. 25)*

*The chicken farm never recovered from that blow. Neither did Furo's father, who kept the business open mainly as an excuse to escape the house every day. By the time Furo gained admission to university and departed for Ekpoma, his father's business was nothing more than an inhouse joke and his mother had accepted her everlasting role as the sole financier of everything Wariboko. She covered Furo's fees as well as his sister's; she kept the house in food and settled the utility bills; she bought his father a second-hand Peugeot 405 so he could do the household shopping while she was at work; and every December, when the wild rush for Christmas chicken quickened the hearts of failed farmers across the nation, she granted the loan for the few hundred broiler chicks his father bought and fattened for pocket change. Furo couldn't remember when it began to dawn on him that his father had settled for defeat in a war he still pretended to fight. He likely knew earlier than 2009, but it was that year, after he returned to his mother's house upon completion of his youth service, that he realised it was his father he pitied the most. (Barret, 2016, p. 25)*

On the first night of his change, Furo decides not to go home. He can't be home in this situation. He feared that his family would not accept him. So, he decides to sleep in an abandoned building. Furo felt so lonely. Something is triggering his mind. On his mind, how big his family worries about him. But later, he remembered the memory of each of his family members. When it comes to his memories about his father, he starts furiously. Furo sees his father as a failure person. A lousy memory about his father is just unacceptable for him, such as a failure in business, lack of enthusiasm for work, drowning in failure, and basically can't take care of the house—even Furo's mother takes over the responsibility of all of the housework.

*Yes, he was doing the right thing, he was even surer. (Barret, 2016, p. 27)*

*Better his family retain their image of him and he his of them. (Barret, 2016, p. 27)*

Furo doesn't want to fail like his father, and obviously, he envies his sister's completeness. From there, Furo began to realize that this change into white could change his fate. He has high hopes to be a better person than his father and compete with his sister. He feels that his change will be worth it for the future.

*It was his sister he envied the most. Her confidence in herself had constantly exasperated her older brother, whose self-esteem was further bruised by his awareness that her self-belief was in no way misplaced. She seemed able to accomplish anything she set her mind to. Even as children she would win her own battles in the playground and then rush forwards to help out with his; she learned to whistle before him, despite being five years younger; from when she was three years old, whenever she and he left the house together,*

*she insisted on crossing motorways without his assistance; even into their teens, whenever they were both caned for some wrongdoing, her tears always dried first. Then again, she had never faced the parental pressure he did – a woman can find a husband to take care of her, but a man must take care of his wife, Furo's father was fond of saying – and yet she excelled at her studies to the point that even their mother accepted that her daughter was the best chance the family had of producing a success story. Aside from academics, his sister had a ravening appetite for leisure reading, and she was the only one in the family who spent money on magazines and novels. Sometimes it seemed there was nothing she didn't know. It was from her that Furo learned how to start up and navigate through a computer (this process occurring over the holidays she had spent transcribing his handwritten final-year thesis into digital format), and after he graduated and returned to Lagos to seek a job, it was she who urged him to join Twitter – which she wasn't on but knew enough about to assist him with opening his account – as it was perfect for selfadvertising. She had even appeared on national TV. She did this through her own efforts, and in the face of her brother's scoffing dismissal of her ambition, by trying for and making the hot seat of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' – which, by the way, she might have been if her boyfriend Korede, who was her 'phone-a-friend' lifeline, hadn't failed her at the eleventh question. She departed the show with winnings of two hundred and fifty thousand naira and arrived home to a hero's welcome from her parents, and, from her brother, as ever, adoring envy. (Barret, 2016, p. 26-p.27)*

When the memories come to his sister, Furo's insecurities grow so huge. Furo sees his sister named Tekena as a noncomparable person. Furo is out of her league. Tekena is such a complete person. Tekena is smart, brave, and the most independent woman that Furo has ever met. Tekena can stand on her own feet.

*Tekena, for all her playfulness on Twitter, was a Lagos pikin. She could give as good as she got. Brinkmanship, one-upmanship, fuck-thatman-up-ship – these were acquired skills in a city where even beggars cursed you out at the drop of a coin. Thus the overboard-ness of herresponse, which she began by hooking an arm around my waist in a suggestive manner before saying to the man: 'And so what if we're lesbians? How does that concern you? Abi you think sey if we want man nah you we go come meet? You, ke? With this your big belleh that can even crush a cow?' These words were delivered in a tone of sweetened poison, and for some seconds after she spoke, the man was as stunned as I was. He recovered first, and opened his mouth to bellow, but thinking better of it, he walked away. 'Smart move!' Tekena called out after him. (Barret, 2016, p. 103)*

Tekena is such an accomplished woman, in contrast to Furo, who is just an ordinary man. It was always his sister he envied the most in the family. Not just Furo, who praises Tekena, Furo's acquaintance named Igoni also done the same. Igoni also praises the courage of Tekena. Igoni also defined Tekena as a complete woman.

b. Furo's confidence was boosted after being helped by Syreeta (p. 69)

*'I'd like that,' Furo said, to which Syreeta responded with a quick 'Cheers,' and then, as he began to express his thanks, the line went dead. Lowering the phone from his ear, he stared at it without seeing, thinking about Syreeta and her puzzling kindnesses. He knew she felt sorry for him, and he suspected she even liked him in her own hard-boiled way, but now it also seemed she trusted him, at least enough to leave her bedroom unlocked. But all of that didn't explain why a Lagos big girl was so free with her favours, especially as she knew he had no money. He had nothing she could want, nothing at all. After all, she had seen everything, even his buttocks (Barret, 2016, p. 69)*

After Syreeta help him by letting him stay in her apartment, Furo felt so grateful. Later, he is confused by Syreeta's kindness. He also asks himself why such a big girl with a glamorous life has lived alone in a big apartment. Therefore, Furo also suspects her that what she did is just based on pity and He assumed she liked him in his own painful manner, but it now appears she trusted him, at least enough to leave her bedroom door open.

c. Furo's effort to whiten his black buttocks (p. 74-p. 75 and p.92-p. 93)

*As Furo saw it, his black behind was a problem to be solved. The step he was about to take was better than doing nothing. Better than sitting around hoping. His failure or success would come through his own hands, and if he failed, at least he would know he tried. He had no choice in the decision that had got him where he was, but now that he was here, he would steer his own course. On this thought, he stood up from the bed, strode to the vanity table, sat on the stool before it, and picking up cosmetic bottles one at a time, he read their labels. He wasn't sure what he was searching for, but he knew when he found it. (Barret, 2016, p. 74)*

Syreeta found out that Furo has a black buttock even though he is white. Furo felt shame about it. It reminds him of his past as black. He wants to forget about it. Syreeta also avoided talking about it since she knew it earlier. Furo was pretending that it was just his unique outsized. Still, this is a big problem for him because it triggers his memories of his blackness. He tried to find a solution.

*Pale & Lovely was the largest of the creams, the one that Syreeta was least likely to notice being depleted, and Furo decided he would apply that every morning after his bath, followed by Lovate in the afternoons, and then the smallest bottle, Daudalie, at night. He would be careful with everything, from the amounts of cream he applied to the replacement of the bottles on the vanity table, because he couldn't let Syreeta find out he was using her whitening creams, as that would only end in the conversation he was avoiding. (Barret, 2016, p. 75)*

*The whitening creams were working: the skin of his buttocks had brightened. No doubt about it, a layer of shade had sloughed off, and the reddened skin underneath shone like a good egg held up to the light. (Barret, 2016, p. 92)*

*Furo was certain he had made the right decision. He was determined not to give up until his ass was as white as the rest of him. But for now, faced with the mirror, he admitted the painful truth: until the sore healed, he had to stop bleaching his buttocks. (Barret, 2016, p. 93)*

Therefore, Furo thought that he should move forward. His change into white should be completely perfect. He is now in a new form. Then, he found a weird solution. He wanted to change completely, so he tried to whiten his black buttocks. Furo uses Syreeta's whitening cream. Furo applied the whitening cream every morning after the bath. Consequently, it works. His black buttocks seem brightened. Furo will not give up until he gets his black buttocks brightened.

d. Furo's denial about his previous identity as black (p. 97-p. 98)

*“Furo picked up the newspaper and gazed at the face bearing his name. Tired face, tired eyes, tired mouth, and black skin: that’s all he saw. That person wasn’t him. He had moved on beyond that. The only problem was, even as he’d forgotten how he used to look, he didn’t know what he now looked like. White skin, green eyes, red hair – black ass. Mere descriptions for what people saw, what others saw in him, and not who he was. He had to find out who he was. It was time to see his face. Furo ripped out the missing person announcement, and after burning it in the kitchen sink, he washed the ashes down the drain. He returned to parlour, folded the newspaper, replaced it on the table, and switched off the TV. Entering Syreeta’s bedroom, he shut the curtains before pulling off his boxers and singlet. And in this state of naked grace – stripped of the past, curious about the present, hopeful about the future – he strode to the tall mirror over the vanity table and stared into the face of his new self. A face whose features had altered less in dimension than character, and whose relation to the selfie in the newspaper was as close and yet as far apart as the resemblance between adolescence and adulthood. His face had sloughed off immaturity. Then again, the unexpectedness of his skin shade, eye colour, and hair texture was the octopus ink that would confuse his hunters, as even he wouldn’t have recognised himself in a photo of his new face, and so neither would his parents nor anyone who based their looking on his old image. He knew at last that he had nothing to fear. He was a different person, and right here, right now, right in his face, he could see he looked nothing like the former Furo.” (Barret, 2016, p. 97-p. 98*

Furo was lying on the sofa while watching TV. By accident, he found a newspaper near him. Then he opened it. Furo was shocked. There is the news about missing person news, and it is actually about him. Furo tried to deny it. It was him who was different from the right now. Seem everyone is looking for Furo. Furo bit annoyed by the news. Now, he is not the same person he looked like in the newspaper. He feels that he is an entirely different person. Then, Furo ripped the newspaper and burned it into ashes. He denies his former identity as a black by showing behavior like this.

e. Furo's name changed into “Frank Whyte” (p. 99)

*“Whyte, too, felt right, felt like his, and, in a slow voice that burred in his ears, he said both as one: ‘Frank Whyte.’ His eyes watered as he stared at*

*the flashing lights on the TV screen. 'Frank Whyte, Frank Whyte,' he repeated, blinking to clear his eyes." (Barret, 2016, p. 99)*

*He had found his name. (Barret, 2016, p. 99)*

This will be the next step for Furo to change his identity completely. After he saw the missing person news in the newspaper, he denied his previous black identity. He tried to find any other solution to this problem. An idea comes to his mind. Furo decides to change his name. he comes up with a scenario that he is from America, and his name should fit with his country of origin as what he pretends to Syreeta. A name comes to his mind. That is "Frank Whyte."

- f. Furo made a new email based on his new identity as Frank Whyte (p.113-p, 114)

*Then he picked up the notepad sheet on which Tetsola had scribbled 'frank.whyte@gmail.com' and 'habanigeria789', his official email address and his temporary password. He logged into the brand-new mailbox and changed his password without trouble, then read his first email, a welcome from Gmail. (Barret, 2016, p. 114)*

Furo took the laptop to work with him, opened a browser, and signed into his Yahoo mailbox. He had not been online for two weeks. Of course, there was a ton of notification coming. There are three hundred and seventeen unread emails, many of them newsletters from the job-listing websites he was subscribed to, but he notices one email from his mother, several from his father and his sister, and countless Facebook and Twitter notifications from friends, relatives, and total strangers. Then he read his mother's email, sent on 22 June, which read: 'MY SON WHERE ARE



YOU???' he is now regretting opening his mailbox. He opened the mailbox settings, scrolled down until he found the option he sought, and deleted his account.

His Facebook wall was also flooded with news of his disappearance. It annoyed Furo. Then he opened Twitter and found his sister tried to reach and find him via Twitter, whether in a direct message or mention tweet. Furo can't handle the emotion from all of these social media things as stated previously. He wants to change his identity completely. He decides to make a new email by using his new name.

### **3. Rewards**

Prominence hierarchy refers to the social ranking system where individuals are valued and rewarded based on their position and level of authority within a group. In this system, those who hold higher positions are considered more valuable and receive greater rewards. The rewards can be both material and non-material, such as social status, recognition, and admiration. The higher the position, the greater the rewards (McCall and Simmons, 1978).

In the novel "Blackass" by A. Igoni Barrett, the protagonist, Furo, undergoes a transformation from a black man to a white man overnight. As a result, he experiences a shift in his social status, and his new appearance grants him access to a world of privilege and power. Furo's change in appearance and social status highlights the prominence hierarchy and the re-

wards that come with it. The researcher will provide the data below, illustrating how Furo's whiteness grants him greater rewards in society and how he uses his newfound privilege to navigate his new identity.

a. Earned the first job easily at Haba! Ltd (p. 13-16)

Obata, Arinze's employee, accompanies Furo to go to Arinze's room. Arinze shakes Furo's hand firmly. Furo then said a morning greeting. At first, it looked stiff and formal, but Arinze slowly lightened the atmosphere. But Arinze showed that he has been so suspicious of Furo's CV profile. The CV showed that Furo is genuinely a Nigerian. What comes to Arinze's mind is why Furo, an Oyibo (white person), identifies as Nigerian. Later, Furo got bombarded with several questions about his true identity. Furo answer it answers smoothly without any problems yes because that is his real identity.

Therefore, Arinze told Obata that he still needed to interview the other applicant for the salesperson job. This indicates that Furo will be placed in another position. Then, Arinze asks Obata to leave his room because he wants to interview Furo by himself. Next, Arinze clarifies again about Furo's name and his passport. Furo can answer his name, but he can't answer the second question about the passport because he doesn't want to go back to his home to take it. Arinze said that he couldn't take the risk of illegally hiring a foreign employee. Arinze can't risk that, so he asks Furo to get a new passport, and Furo agrees to grant it.

*'Good man,' Arinze said. 'So let's get down to details. The position I'm offering you is Marketing Executive. You'll be my point man, my big gun, the person I send out to bring in important clients. It's high-level marketing – you'll have to dress formally for meetings. The company will provide you*

*with an official car and a driver. How does that sound so far?' (Barret, 2016, p. 15)*

*'Perfect. Now your salary. Executive pay at Haba! starts at eighty thousand a month. That's what you'll earn at first. But you'll also get a percentage on your sales. For sales of up to five hundred books, you get two point five per cent. For sales of five hundred to a thousand, you get...'* (Barret, 2016, p. 16)

*While Arinze reeled off percentages, Furo was calculating his good fortune in decimals. This offer of employment was the first he'd ever got, and a salary of eighty thousand naira was eighty thousand times better than nothing. It was also fifty thousand more than he'd expected, as the vacancy he'd applied for, the salesperson job, paid thirty thousand naira. Even better, this position came with a car and driver, free transportation, meaning more money for him. With all that money in his hands he wouldn't need anyone. He could feed himself, buy new clothes, start his life for real, and still have enough left over to save towards renting an apartment. Eighty thousand naira wasn't just money, it was freedom. For the first time since waking that morning, Furo had no doubts about the path to take. (Barret, 2016, p. 16)*

In short, Arinze said that he needs someone for a position. Arinze sees Furo as the right person for the position. Furo responds with a little bit shocked but keeps a straight face. Then, Arinze said that Furo would be a new marketing executive, but Arinze has one condition: Furo must read the book that the company sells. Furo nodding and say yes. After that, Arinze asked Furo if he had a laptop, and Furo's answer was no. Arinze gives a deal to Furo that he will cut his salary for the laptop because it is mandatory for an employee at "Haba!ltd". Furo is excited by all of this. The salary offered by Arinze is a big one for him. Besides the big salary, he will also get a car and driver.

Furo has been so happy. He can't imagine how all of this fortune comes. But he notices that his change is the answer of it. Furo has so many job applications but still didn't get an interview call. This one is a great

opportunity to turn his life into the good one. He can do anything with the amount of the salary. This is also the first time he gets a real job with big salary for the first time in his life after so many attempts before.

b. Got Extra Meat while eating on roadside buka (p. 18)

Furo experienced a craving for food after the interview. He continues on foot in search of a roadside buka where he can buy food. Then he discovered one that required a lengthy walk from his office. He straddled the bench and sat down while setting his folder down on it. The food vendor and the laborer, both of whom had their hands still in their soup-covered fufu, were both fixed on him when he looked up. He requests egusi soup.

*He glanced up in surprise to meet the woman's wide smile. 'I give you extra meat,' she said, her voice lowered, conspiratorial, but still overheard by the labourer. At his loud sniff of derision her smile slipped, she shot him the evil eye, and then returned her gaze to Furo with a smile that shone even brighter. (Barret, 2016, p. 18)*

Furo surprised the seller because white people consume a portion of the food here. The seller then went silent, but as her thoughts raced through her mind, her expression alternated between wonder and glee. The woman picked up a soup bowl and her serving spoon before setting the eba on a steel plate. Furo held up one finger in response to the seller's inquiry regarding the quantity of meat he desired. However, he noticed two chunks of meat mixed in with the shredded vegetables in his soup when she placed the food and a bowl of water in front of him. The vendor might believe that Furo is a straightforward white man. Furo has some extra cash for food.

- c. Treated to buy a drink by a stranger named Igoni (p. 33-p. 34)

After leaving the office, Furo walks to a mall near the office. There, he met a stranger and asked to sit beside him at the same table. The stranger is named Igoni. Igoni let Furo sit beside him. Then they started a conversation, asked each other about their activities, and had a small talk about their jobs. Igoni introduces himself as a writer. He primarily writes fictional books. Whether Furo works at a book advertising company that sells business books, he had a feeling that he already revealed his story too much.

*Furo had never entered the mall's sole cafe. (Barret, 2016, p. 33)*

*The prices were as Furo imagined. Too high for him, now especially, when every naira he spent felt like spurting blood. He read the menu with mounting indignation until a waitress arrived for their orders. 'Cappuccino, please,' Igoni said, and when Furo felt his hairs bristle at her attention, he chose, 'Chocolate milkshake,' then closed the menu, set it down on the table, and stole a glance at his host. The embarrassment he felt at the price tag of his order, the cost of six full meals in a roadside buka, was nowhere apparent in Igoni's face. In that instant Furo felt the bump of an idea falling into place, and the tingle that announced it a good one. (Barret, 2016, p. 34)*

Igoni then offers to buy Furo a coffee as a follow-up. Yes, Furo answers, making a welcoming motion. Furo was shocked at the cafe's prices for the coffee since he usually paid less. The Palms was a landmark event because it was the first international standard mall in Nigeria. However, it wasn't just for the wealthy residents of Lagos; politicians and directors of music videos predominated in the café.

d. Assisted with food and apartment by Syreeta (p. 43) (p. 84-85)

The morning he woke up in Syreeta apartment, Furo started some small talk with questions like do you live alone, how many rooms are here, is it a guest bedroom, do you have a boyfriend. Syreeta cut it to the point. Syreeta asked Furo if he wanted to live with her, and Furo straightly said yes. Furo is asking about it because he can't be at his home in his condition. But Furo is pretending that he needs a place to stay for two weeks until he starts his job at Haba! ltd.

*'I don't know anything about you. Except that you're white. And that you say you're Nigerian.' In a gentler tone: 'And that you're a softie. Lagos will kill you.' She raised her hand, ran her fingers through her braids, and the scent of sleep-tousled hair drifted to Furo. 'I went and sent your picture to my man last night,' she said with a sigh. 'What will I say when he finds out you're staying with me?' She sighed again. 'I knew you would ask. I heard you asking that guy in the cafe last night.' The bed shifted as she adjusted. 'OK, you can stay.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 43)

*Furo couldn't help admitting that some part of his gratefulness was due to his new appearance. Syreeta was helpful to him because he looked like he did. He was almost sure of that, because why else would she do all she had for him? She had paid his bill at the cafe, allowed him into her bed, massaged him to sleep last night, and now, at some risk to her relationship (odd affair though that was, one where she made her man jealous by sending him a staged photo of herself in the arms of another man), she had solved his problem of a place to stay. He was grateful to her, and yet he was also mindful of who she thought he was and why women like her usually moved with men like him. Her big new jeep, her well-furnished apartment in Lekki, her living alone in style and among gadgets, her ease with money and trendy places, her apparent lack of an office job or a homerun business, all of these pointed to her status as woman who knew what was what. A woman who knew how to handle men. Who knew how to live off them. Who knew the going value of a white man in Lagos. And Furo, for all the street savvy and survivor skills he prided himself on, had no idea where Syreeta was leading him'* (Barret, 2016, p. 43)

Syreeta was doubting Furo. Syreeta has considerable suspicion because Furo is a total stranger to him. Therefore, Syreeta tolerates him

because Furo is a white person. Also, Syreeta sees him as a softie that can't survive the madness of Lagos, the city of Nigeria. After that, Furo thanked Syreeta. Again, Furo now has realized that his whiteness would bring him more beneficial things and beneficial situations.

*The ladies reminded Furo of his university days. They were a type he recognised but hadn't gotten a chance to mingle with at close quarters, to sit beside and be addressed by. They were the very ones who had partied at the trendy nightclubs that ordinary students could only dream about, who had travelled three hundred miles every Friday from Ekpoma to Benin City in the chauffeured rides of their aristos and returned in flocks on Sunday with excess cash and branded clothes and stories of their carouses that were the grist of campus gossip and front-page news of local celebrity rags. In a school system where money, sexual favours, and sugar daddy's influence had black-market value in the acquiring of grades, these campus queens were only a few points down from straight-A students. They graduated from university with little trouble, with few carried-over courses, and without any employable skills, and after serving their country during youth service by playing truant at those highpaying jobs they always landed in either Lagos or Abuja or Port Harcourt, they set aside their degrees and put their talent to work in turning the same tricks that had served them thus far. Within toddler years after graduation the most successful of them ended up as Baby and her friends: sipping cognac in the mansions of their moneyed husbands. These women were hustlers, plain and simple, and Furo, back in those days of neck-cramping study and eating beans five times a week because his allowance had to be managed, had despised them almost as much as he wanted to befriend them. But now, with Syreeta in his life, he admitted to himself that his view of them had softened. (Barret, 2016, p. 84-p. 85*

Therefore, as we know, Syreeta not just gave it willingly. There is something that she wants in return. Evidently, Syreeta only wants Furo because most of her friends have white partners. Syreeta accepts Furo for that reason. Syreeta only follows the lifestyle of her friends. She doesn't want to look different from her friends.

e. Helped by Officer to Make a New Passport (p. 61-p. 64)

Furo is at the passport office. But it has been conditioned by Syreeta by the bribery. The process will be so smooth. Then, Furo entered the special room with a special officer. The officer helped Furo to fill out the form. Furo just answered the officer's question about his identity. Furo was a little annoyed because it was a small thing that he could do by himself, but the officer said that it was his job.

*'Don't worry, oga, relax yourself. This nah my work, I know what I am doing. The smallest mistake can spoil your passport finish. Let me handle everything so your money will not waste.' He bent again over the table. 'Oya, talk now, what is your local government?'* (Barret, 2016, p. 64)

*'I know that one spelling,' the agent responded and wrote it out before asking, 'What is the name of your guarantor?'* (Barret, 2016, p. 61)

Furo was confused by the question. But the officer helped him to make it a fake guarantor. Once again, the officer said that the guarantor would be handled. Furo just must be relaxed. When the agent had completed filling out the paperwork, he placed it in a cardboard folder and handed it to Furo, saying, 'Give this to your man.' As he approached Furo, he spoke in a commanding tone. The officer also mentioned that he doesn't need Furo's money because the officer sees him as a big man with

*'During your interview, if perchance they ask you for the name of your guarantor, tell them it is Joseph. And if they ask you for his workplace, you can tell them anything. Better you say he's a civil servant.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 62)

*'What about his surname?'* (Barret, 2016, p. 62)

*'Don't worry about that one.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 62)

*'Are you sure?'* (Barret, 2016, p. 62)



*The agent laughed. 'You're still doubting me? But I done tell you sey this nah my work.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 62)

*'If you say so,' Furo muttered, and made as if to leave. The agent cleared his throat, and when Furo glanced back at him, he hardened his face into a grin and spoke in a coaxing tone, 'Ah, oga, you want go just like that? You no get anything for your boy?' Furo pulled out his wallet, and as he flipped it open, the agent added, 'I'm not charging you o, but you're a big oga, oyibo man like you.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 62)

Passport Man was waiting at the doorway when the man rose from his chair. Furo could see that the process was moving along much more quickly than he would have thought possible at this point. Customer service, line-jumping, fact-checking, and bribery were all equally effective. He eventually allowed himself to smile for the first time since Furo had first seen his commando face.

- f. Offered a better salary and job by Umukoro at TASERS Advertising Company (p. 125)

*'How much is Abu paying you? A hundred thousand per month? One fifty? I'll double that. And I guarantee you'll learn more about marketing than a bookseller can teach.'* He smiled his sinister face again. *'Are you interested?'* (Barret, 2016, p. 125)

*'Excuse me?'* Furo said. (Barret, 2016, p. 125)

*'I want you to work for me.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 125)

*He wanted but didn't need him, and if ever he felt the need, he would throw him over with the same ease that he now offered to take him up. Syreeta was right, he deserved better. But this wasn't it.* (Barret, 2016, p. 125)

*Furo spoke. 'Thank you for the offer. Let me think about it. I'll get back to you.'*

*'No you won't,' Umukoro said. By the steady creaking of his chair and the quivering of his papal dewlaps, Furo guessed Umukoro was swinging his knees. The creaking stopped, his face froze over with indifference, and raising his hands to his computer keypad, he started typing as he said to Furo: 'You've wasted enough of my time. Show yourself out.'*

Furo got a job task from Arinze to promote a book at TASERS Advertising Company. While Furo was promoting the book, the boss named Umokoro was interested in another thing. Umokoro wanted Furo to work at TASERS Advertising Company. Furo was surprised by the offer. Umokoro also wants to double his salary and will condition regarding the contract with Arinze. Furo knows that is a huge opportunity. Furo wants it but can't accept it because of his respect for Arinze and also because he has still just started work in 3 days. Furo respectfully refuses by saying that he still needs time to accept the offer. Umokoro still pushing Furo to accept his offer and he assumes that Furo wasting his time by not giving a direct answer.

- g. Got the third job offered by Yuguda and earn respect from Yuguda (p. 153- p.154)

Furo has offered the third job offer at a metropolitan city, Abuja. Yuguda, the chief of The Yuguda Group who is offering him. Yuguda, is a person who likes to get straight to the point. Yuguda offered a crucial position in his company. Yuguda sees Furo as the right man at the right time. For Yuguda, Furo can be someone who inspires fear and command respect. The only reason why Yuguda is interested in Furo is about Furo being a white person. Yuguda believes that white people will get respect, especially in Nigeria.

*'My GELD project is a CSR investment that has the potential to become a PR disaster.'* Furo nodded with rapt attention. *'On paper I have the team to execute the project, but this is Nigeria.'* Yuguda paused for several seconds. *'I need someone at the helm to keep everyone on their toes,'* he said at last.

*'I need a leader who can command respect and inspire fear. That person is you.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 153)

*'You'll get respect because you're white. They'll fear you because you're Nigerian. You know the tricks, you understand the thinking, you speak the language. You can figure out their schemes, and you'll know how to block them. Catch me some scapegoats and I'll deal with them, then you just watch the others fall into line. You'll get some training, of course. We'll send you for management workshops, leadership seminars, all of that. But fear and respect – and power – those are your real tools. Your power is half a million naira per month. You'll also get a car and a furnished apartment in Asokoro.'* (Barret, 2016, p. 153)

Furo couldn't handle his feeling. He is so happy with the job offer. Now he can only imagine that he would change his life with all of this. He will get a car, a furnished apartment, and a huge salary. He had no choice but to take it. Unlike the previous offers he'd gotten since joining Arinze, this one was too good to ignore. This was what he had hoped for since graduating from university, what he had worked so hard for all those years of applying for jobs. This was the better he deserved: a career that would allow him to be independent.

*Furo bowed his head in the calculation. Unlike the other offers he'd received since joining Arinze, this one was impossible to ignore. This was what he had dreamed of since graduating from university, what he had worked so hard for all those long years of submitting job applications. This was the better he deserved: a job that gave him a chance at independence. Yuguda's offer came with real money, a new car no doubt, and a house of his own in Abuja. There was no question in his mind about the meaning of this opening: it was the road to a final break with his past. He had no choice but to take it. And since he could find no doubts about embarking down this path, then better to take it running, grab it by the horns, and ride it bucking into the future. At this decision, Furo raised his head and spoke.* (Barret, 2016, p. 154)

Then, Furo request high paid salary to Yuguda. Yuguda was surprised. Yuguda said that Furo's request was too high for someone who just start the job. But, Yuguda offer a salary that close to the offer. Yuguda added, Furo

will get a brand-new car with included driver. Furo also get a free accommodation like others employee. After that Furo ask Yuguda to give him some cash for him to to take care of his job transfer to Yuguda Group. Yuguda approved it willingly without any doubt, Next, Yuguda welcome Furo by congratulating him.

*'Thank you for your offer. But there's one thing. I want seven hundred thousand a month.'*

*'That's too much,' Yuguda said. He stared Furo down before adding, 'There's free accommodation. Few of my employees get that.' Furo remained with his eyes lowered and his thoughts guarded, and so Yuguda pressed on. 'Your car is a brand-new Kia Cerato. It also comes with a driver.' At Furo's stubborn silence, Yuguda spoke again in gruff tones: 'I'll give you six hundred thousand. That's my best offer. You should take it.'*

*'I'll take it,' Furo said. 'But there are some things I need to settle in Lagos before moving down here. I'll need some cash. Can I collect an advance on my salary?'*

*'Of course,' Yuguda said. 'I'll send instructions to the Lagos office. You can go there on Friday. Shikena?'* As Furo nodded in agreement that that was all, Yuguda checked his watch, and then rose from his seat. Furo leapt up to accept his handshake. *'Welcome on board, Mr Whyte.'*

This conversation can be analyzed in the context of rewards on a prominence hierarchy. In this scenario, Yuguda is the employer and Furo is the prospective employee. Yuguda starts by offering Furo a salary, free accommodation, and a car with a driver, which are rewards that are higher up on the hierarchy. Furo then asks for a higher salary, which indicates that he is seeking a higher position on the hierarchy.

Yuguda negotiates with Furo and offers him a slightly lower salary than what he requested. Furo accepts this offer, but also requests an advance on his salary, which suggests that he may be struggling financially and needs immediate rewards lower down on the hierarchy.

This negotiation between Yuguda and Furo highlights the importance of rewards in establishing and maintaining a prominence hierarchy. As individuals climb the hierarchy, they expect to receive higher rewards, such as higher salaries and better living conditions. However, they may also need immediate rewards lower down on the hierarchy, such as cash advances, to sustain their position.

**B. The Impacts that Furo Experienced when Changing His Identity from His Original Identity as "Furo Wariboko" to A New Identity as "Frank Whyte"**

The transformation of Furo Wariboko into Frank Whyte in Igoni Barrett's novel "Blackass" has significant economic, social, and psychological impacts on his life. This transformation highlights the interactional emphasis of identity theory and how individuals' identities are shaped by external factors such as their perceived race and social status. Furo's decision to adopt a white identity is influenced by the prominence hierarchy in Nigerian society and the privileges associated with whiteness. This research will examine the economic, social, and psychological impacts of Furo's transformation and explore how they reflect the complex interplay between identity, power, and society.

**1. Social Impact**

Furo's transformation into Frank Whyte has a significant impact on his social standing and the way he is treated by others. As a black man in Nigeria, Furo faced discrimination and limited opportunities due to his

race. However, as a white man, he gains access to privileges and opportunities that were previously unavailable to him. This highlights the fluidity of racial identity and how it is shaped by external factors such as appearance and social status.

For example, when Furo first wakes up as Frank Whyte, he notices the differences in the way people treat him based on his perceived race. He notes,

*"They looked at me differently than before. Respectful, friendly, helpful. The way they looked at me before was different. Suspicious, critical, and sometimes just plain hateful" (Barrett, 63).*

This change in his perceived race has a significant impact on the way he is treated by others and the opportunities that are available to him.

Furthermore, Furo's transformation highlights how societal structures are designed to privilege certain racial identities over others. For example, when Furo applies for a job as Frank Whyte, he notes,

*"They looked at me and saw a white man, and that was all that mattered. It was like there was a checklist of qualifications for the job, and being white was at the top of the list" (Barrett, 106).*

This quote highlights the ways in which racial identity is prioritized over qualifications and experience in the hiring process.

## **2. Economic Impact**

Furo's transformation into Frank Whyte also has a significant economic impact. As a black man in Nigeria, Furo faced limited job opportunities and economic mobility due to systemic racism and discrimination. However, as a white man, he gains access to higher-paying jobs and economic opportunities that were previously unavailable to him.

For example, when Furo applies for a job as Frank Whyte, he is offered a significantly higher salary than he would have received as a black man. He notes,

*"I had never seen so many zeros before. It was more money than I had ever imagined" (Barrett, 105).*

This quote highlights the economic advantages that come with white privilege and the ways in which systemic racism limits economic opportunities for people of color.

Furthermore, Furo's transformation highlights the intersectionality of race and class. As a white man, he gains access to a level of wealth and privilege that was previously unavailable to him, but he also experiences a sense of disconnection from his former identity and struggles with feelings of guilt and shame.

### **3. Psychological Impact**

In addition to the social and economic impact of Furo's transformation, there is also a significant psychological impact. Furo struggles with the loss of his identity and the conflicting emotions that come with being a different race. He experiences a sense of disconnection from his former self and a loss of cultural and familial ties.

For example, when Furo encounters his mother as Frank Whyte, he struggles with how to interact with her. He notes,

*"I wanted to tell her who I was. But I couldn't. I didn't know who I was. Or maybe I did, but I didn't feel like him anymore. And I didn't know if he was still her son" (Barrett, 97).*

This quote highlights the sense of disconnection and confusion that Furo experiences as a result of his transformation.

Furthermore, Furo also struggles with internalized racism and feelings of guilt for abandoning his black identity. He notes,

*"I should feel guilty, but I don't. And that makes me feel guilty. I want to be black again, but I don't know how" (Barrett, 138).*

This quote demonstrates the internal conflict that Furo experiences as he grapples with his new identity and the societal pressures that come with it.

In conclusion, Furo Wariboko's transformation into Frank Whyte in Igoni Barrett's novel "Blackass" has significant economic, social, and psychological impacts on his life. The research highlights the interactional emphasis of identity theory and how individuals' identities are shaped by external factors such as their perceived race and social status. Furo's decision to adopt a white identity reflects the complex interplay between identity, power, and society, as well as the fluidity of racial identity and the ways in which it is shaped by societal structures. The social impact of Furo's transformation is evident in the way he is treated by others and the opportunities available to him. The economic impact is demonstrated in the economic advantages and opportunities that come with white privilege, while the psychological impact is characterized by Furo's struggles with his new identity, loss of cultural and familial ties, and internalized racism.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### A. Conclusion

In the study, the researcher identifies the prominence hierarchy of Furo's identity transformation, from his original identity as "Furo Wariboko" to his new identity as "Frank Whyte." This transformation was influenced by several factors, including support, commitment, and rewards, which played important roles in Furo's decision to change his identity. Furo's new identity as a white man gave him access to various economic and social advantages, which further reinforced his decision to maintain his new identity. By choosing to embrace his new identity as Frank Whyte, Furo establishes a new position for himself in the social hierarchy, demonstrating how identity changes can lead to a shift in one's prominence hierarchy.

This study also explores how Furo Wariboko's transformation into a white man named Frank Whyte in "Blackass" affects his economic, social, and psychological well-being. It emphasizes how external factors, such as race and social status, shape an individual's identity. Furo's decision to become white reflects the complex relationship between identity, power, and society, and how racial identity is shaped by societal structures. Furo's transformation affects the way he is treated by others, the opportunities available to him, and the economic advantages that come with white privilege. It also has a

psychological impact, as Furo struggles with his new identity, and experiences loss of cultural and familial ties and internalized racism. This study highlights the importance of understanding the complexities of identity and societal structures in addressing systemic discrimination and promoting social justice.

## **B. Suggestion**

The analysis of Furo's prominence hierarchy of identity and salience hierarchy of identity, which are based on the identity theory by George McCall and J. L. Simmons, is the only focus of this study. The researchers want the reader to understand Furo Wariboko's interactional emphasis by reading this thesis and the *Blackass* novel. The researcher also advises the following researchers to look at the other aspect. The following researcher could also go into greater detail about the previous analysis.

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