



The Crisis of Identity: The East and the West.

Racial Conflict in EI Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North

Dr. Afaf Ahmed Hasan Al-Saidi*

Associate Professor of English Literature. College of Education, Aden University. Aden, Republic of Yemen

***Corresponding Author:** Dr. Afaf Ahmed Hasan Al-Saidi, Associate Professor of English Literature. College of Education, Aden University. Aden, Republic of Yemen

Abstract: In the modern world with the increase of immigrant numbers, mixture nations, and constitution of countries with different cultural multiplicity, the question of identity came to the surface.

The research will discuss the issue of identity in former colonized countries and immigrants from these countries who suffered from facing the diasporas and the dilemma of the difficulty to construct their identity. The paper will investigate postcolonial novelist, especially in former British colonies, El Tayeb Salih. As an academic disciplined theorists considered the issue of identity as one of the essential legacy of colonialism and imperialism, the novelist also exposed and expressed the conditions of identity crises that emerged in postcolonial period.

Keywords: Colonialism, imperialism, Ethnic conflict, Identity, Hybridity, Mimicry, Orientalism

1. INTRODUCTION

Bill Ashcroft (1989) states in *The Empire Writes Back* that "more than three-quarters of the people living of the world today have had their lives shaped by the experience of colonialism' (p.23). Even after the political change and many nations got independence and no more they are colonies, but culturally and economically there were many dilemmas and crisis, people were still in confusion about their culture and identity. The struggle of the colonized subjects for their cultural identity and the social formation of the new independent nations was an aspect of cultural transformation that led to a conflict with the colonizer's culture.

Ethnic conflict is another feature of postcolonial era left behind because of colonial policies conducted in the colonies especially in Africa and Asia. The ethnic sectors' struggle is for independence or to be recognized as equal to each other. Colonial powers created societies in their colonies that are varied by divide them ethnically. Inter ethnic rivalry exposed, specifically, in former British colonies because "the British did not effectively break down the traditional mobilizing structures that facilitate ethnic collective action" (Blanton, Mason, Athow 2001).

The most themes that both deal with are race, gender, ethnicity, identity and culture. Postcolonial criticism as Habib argues (2008) in *Modern literary criticism and theory: a history*, has taken a number of aims most fundamentally, to re-examine the history of colonialism from the perspective of the colonized; to determine the economic, political, and cultural impact of colonialism on both the colonized peoples and the colonizing powers; to analyze the process of decolonization " and above all; to participate in the goals of political liberation, which includes equal access to material resources, the contestation of forms of domination, and the articulation of political and cultural identities (p.123).

The issue of identity is not a clear and fixed concept as it may be imagined, that led to the crisis and became a phenomena as Mercer (1995) argues "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (p. 43).

In general, the situation was overwhelmed with the tensions of struggling of newly independent states to achieve their cultural, political, psychological identification reflects their privacy, established by their self-determination not that imposed by the colonizer in which mimicked them for a long time.

2. THEMATIC CONCERN

Born in Karmakol, near Al Debba, Salih moved to Khartoum as a young man to attend Gordon Memorial College (later Khartoum University). In 1952 he travelled to London as part of the first generation of Sudanese educated in Britain in preparation for independence, which came in 1956. Salih's encounter with the west was to mark his fiction and his life, though his depiction of village life in northern Sudan formed the centrepiece of most of his fiction. Through a rendering that is both realistic and absurdist, he transformed that humble setting into a universal stage.

Salih was an iconic Sudanese novelist well known not only in Arab speaking countries but in the world literary arena as an important postcolonial writer. He was born in 1929 in North Sudan and died on February 17, 2009 in England. He earned his bachelor degree in Sudan at University of Khartoum, and then moved to UK for receiving a degree in the field of international affairs. El Tayeb Saleh, while staying in England, worked at Arabic Service of BBC the British Broadcasting Corporation. Later he worked in Qatar for Information Ministry then at UNESCO in Paris. Salih received an international reputation after the publication of his famous novel *Season of Migration to the North* (*Mawsim al-hijra ila'l-shamal*) in 1966. The novel is translated to about thirty languages in the world in which caught the attention of readers and scholars throughout Sudan and outside. Besides, the novel was selected as the most important novel in Arabic literature in 2001 by the Damascus-based Arab Literary Academy. Undoubtedly, the novel perhaps pictures the political and cultural shift scene of Sudan since the British colonized the country. Beside *The Season of Migration to the North* Salih published some other works including *Doumat wad Hamid* (1960) *'Urs al-Zayn* (1964) *A Handful of Dates* (short story 1967) *Daw al-Bayt* (Bandarshah I, 1971) *Maryud* (Bandarshah II, 1976).

The orientation and the themes of Salih's novel are the depiction of new atmosphere after decolonization period, the reaction towards the legacy of imperialism and heading towards constructing a national and individual identity. Salih's refusal of colonial ideology is an echo of a "national and cultural identity, the need for the Empire's former colonies to shape their own future" (Krishnan, 1996. P.14) In *Season of Migration to the North*, Salih involved with debunking the English imperialism's controlling discourse, "the characters" as McInnis argues "crack the repressive structures that emphasize the advantaged standpoint of the colonizers and deny representation to the colonized Other. In fact, the novel's central obsession is its examination of the manners of Sudanese Others within English culture." (M. C. Innis, 2007. pp.86-92).

The importance of Salih as a novelist relates to his *Season of Migration to the North* as being the first instance of a non-Western novel addressing the experience of exile and colonial disgrace, with identity loss of a native outsider, both in the European Diaspora and the homeland. Salih, in his novel, tries to recreate and bring back the Sudanese history as Africans not from the colonizers imposed view, but from the natives, previously colonized. Hence, the novel is "an example of writing back 'to the colonial power' that once ruled Sudan" (Makdisi, 1994. P.535). In addition, Salih's writings present another important subject of postcolonial period, which is cultural hybridity. However, he uses the cultural hybridity as a way of resistance to the power of colonial domination as stated by Patricia Greesey "it suggests that hybridity is not always negative nuisance upon the colonized while it can be altered into a instrument of counter-colonialism; reversing the discursive practices of the colonizer" (1997, p. 192).

Season is the tale of a young man who returns to his village in Sudan, and meets a newcomer to the village, Mustafa Sa'eed, who eventually recounts the story of a period of his life in London just after the First World War. Sa'eed became a novelty in London and women were attracted to him as to an exotic animal. Mustafa Sa'eed takes his revenge on this society that he rejects and which eventually rejects him. This is a story of a clash of civilizations and the brutal effects of a superficial "Orientalism" made famous by Edward Said.

Mustafa Sa'eed initially angers and then intrigues the young man (the nameless hero of the book) especially when he hears him reciting poetry in English. It turns out the two men have a similar past, bridging both Sudan and the Western world. Mustafa Sa'eed eventually tells his story and the young man, the hero of the novel, realizes that Mustafa Sa'eed is his doppelganger. "I have redefined the so-called east-west relationship as essentially one of conflict, while it had previously been treated in romantic terms," Salih once explained in an interview (Mahjoub, Friday 20 February 2009). There is

nothing simplistic about the colonial tale of *Season of Migration to the North* – it is not a one-dimensional denunciation of the evils of colonization, but a subtler tale of the slow corruption of the human soul.

The novel's international success established Salih's reputation both in the Arab world and abroad as a major literary figure. However, the subject matter of a romance between a male from the colonies and a European woman as seen in *Season* was a common topic in Arabic and African fiction during the colonial period, with interracial relationships often portrayed as ending in tragedy (Tran, 2010. p.1). Across Arab and African fiction, colonial miscegenation was shown to be dangerous to the hearts of Arab and African men through the portrayal of the cold and selfish nature of European women. Such racially centred depictions can be interpreted as a political and social challenge against the racial hierarchy, which the West had constructed in order to justify the idea of empire.

The represented relationship between East and West within *Season* is further evident through the milestones of Mustafa Sa'eed's life, which Salih parallels with the turning points in the history of European imperialism in the Arab world. Mustafa is born in 1898, the same year as the Battle of Omdurman during which British General Sir Herbert Kitchener defeated the army of Abdullah al-Taashi in order to conquer Sudan. In 1922, Mustafa begins his racially centered sexual crusade against Britain, the same year in which the League of Nations officially recognized the British and French mandates to rule the sea (Hassan, 2003 .p.92). The mirroring of Mustafa's life with the era of British colonization suggests that Salih is writing to explore how cultural history and international politics affects the formation and understanding of colonial identity. By choosing to dramatize these turbulent connections through the depiction of colonial interracial relationships, Salih forces the reader to question the extent to which the colonial categorizations of race can ever be totally challenged. (Tran, 2010. p.3)

Critics of Salih's novel predominantly comment on Mustafa's interracial relationships, with discussion often being formed around two dominant critical approaches. The first one discusses how Salih's subtle incorporation of Sigmund Freud's ideas on sex are expressed through Mustafa's interracial relationships (Tarawneh & John 1998, p.328-49). But by focusing solely on a psychoanalytical reading of Mustafa's various sexual encounters, analysis is limited to discussing his love affairs around the theory of the Oedipus complex, which some critics such as Tarawneh & John and Musa Al-Halool argue to be at the core of Mustafa's desires (Tarawneh & John 1998, p.328-49; Al-Halool 2008, p.1-5). The second approach engages with the novel's historical context by examining the role of Mustafa's interracial relationships within the cultural conflict between East and West (Amyuni 1985, p.25-36; Davidson 1989, p.385-400). However, the latter approach often fails to reference the novel in any textual detail, resulting in a broad discussion of how Mustafa's interracial relationships can be understood as an adverse dialogue between the Sudanese and British imperial culture.

Mustafa's European partners seemingly overcome racial tensions through their involvement with an African male, their employment of colonial discourse reveals their inability to detach themselves from colonial consciousness. "Mustafa invokes the use of colonial discourse in order to maintain colonial categorizations within his relationship. By doing so, he is able to catalogue his lovers as part of the oppressive West, which he believes he must fight against" (Tran, 2010. p.4). Mustafa's use of colonial discourse to ground his partners' identities in essentialist difference can, thus, be seen as a political strategy (Griffiths 1994, p.74). Mustafa's eventual rejection of his European lovers can therefore be interpreted as a metaphorical rejection of the West on behalf of Africa. "For Mustafa and his European partners, colonial discourse is thus similarly employed as a method to differentiate oneself from a person of an opposing race, highlighting the inescapability of racial categorizations during the colonial period (Tran, 2010. p.4).

Colonial discourse theory has been primarily built upon the pioneering work of Edward Said. In *Orientalism*, Said examines a range of literary, anthropological and historical texts in order to illuminate how the West attempted to represent the Orient as Other through Orientalist discourse. By portraying the East as culturally and intellectually inferior, the West was simultaneously able to construct an image of western superiority. In order to sustain these beliefs, objective statements were produced in a manner similar to realism so that they seemed to contain truth-value. These opposing

representations of East and West were further reinforced by imperial power relations, which enabled the West to justify their process of colonization as a 'civilizing mission' (Said 2003, p.5-25).

Season reflects a period, which compound both European and African modernity with colonialism. In 1982, theorist Marshall Berman summarised the era of modernity as one which 'cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology; in this sense modernity can be said to unite all mankind' (Berman 1983, p.15). During the rise of modernism, society began to strongly associate 'the Negro' with the genital (Fanon 1986, p.150). Along with the notion of exoticism and other stereotyped sexual characteristics connected with the African male, their image became fuelled with sexual potency, acting to increase the sexual desire of the white female for the black man as an attractive Other (Gilman 1985, p.109-110). One could therefore argue that the black man was not only the subject of political colonization but also became the sexual prey of white women as the link between racism and sexuality came to the forefront of society. Mustafa is thus able to exploit this issue as a form of racial vengeance for colonization. In this way, Mustafa, if symbolic of the colonized, is able to refuse the colonizer.

Throughout *Season of Migration to the North* there are times when the distance between Salih and his protagonist seemingly becomes blurred. This is further complicated by Salih's favouring of the first person pronoun. The repetitive use of 'I' makes it difficult to distinguish Mustafa's voice from that of the author. The blending of the two voices creates a feeling that Salih is a friend to Mustafa, which in turn suggests that he may hold the same values and beliefs (Tran, 2010. p.7).

In *An Interview with El Tayeb Salih*, the writer addresses this issue by commenting:

I use [the pronoun 'I' in *Season of Migration to the North*] firstly because I want to give what I write the concentration of the poem and the technique of a poem through concentrating on the feelings of the person. I also want to define the point of view for the world. This technique is necessary if the writer wants to go into the mind of every major character, the mind of each of his characters. (al-Muqabila. 1976)

According to *Tayeb Salih Speaks: Four Interviews with the Sudanese Novelist*, the writer, in reference to Mustafa's 'violent female conquests,' comments that 'Mustafa wants to inflict on Europe the degradation which it had imposed upon his people. He wants to rape Europe in a metaphorical fashion' (Berkley & Ahmed 1982, p.15-16).

The identification of a European's woman's body as being a site of western sovereignty resonates once again, emphasising the feelings of power and ownership experienced by the colonized with each sexual conquest. Salih's understanding of interracial relationships during the colonial period is thus seen as an act which cannot be separated from past memories of colonialism, at least on the part of the African male, as race becomes connected to a larger battle for self respect (Hodge & Mishra 1993, p.285). As a result, sex and domination become intertwined for Mustafa and used as a tool of oppression. However, Saree Makdisi in 'Empire Re-narrated' argues that in order to achieve his sexual vengeance Mustafa brings violence upon himself, by willingly becoming for his victims the incarnation of the great Orientalist myth-fantasy (Makdisi 1993, p.540).

Recent critical appraisal of Talib Salih's richly woven, highly nuanced classic, *Season of Migration to the North*, focuses on two main areas; the second in many ways reflects the first. G.A.R. Hamilton and Patricia Geesey (1997), rely on Homi Babha's notion of the "hybrid" to describe Mustafa Sa'eed, and emphasize the colonized subject's inherent predisposition to contaminate imperial discourse as he reflects it back at colonizers. Native peoples are expected to turn into "reassuring mimics of the European form," generated as representations of the "civilizing mission" (p.55) which is said to justify the imperial project, yet it never seems to work out this way. The colonized subject, having been drawn away from deep connection with his original culture by contact with Europeans, ends up suspended between cultures in an indeterminate space; he can never become fully assimilated into the ranks of the colonizers. At the same time, his adaptation of civilized norms unavoidably involves a variation of response that subverts and challenges the authority of the civilizing discourse itself.

According to this view, Mustafa Sa'eed's treatment of women is part of his conscious effort to threaten colonial rule and undermine the master discourse. Other critics, such as Benita Parry, Nouha Homad, and Joseph Lowry, extrapolate this idea of subversion to the point where they view it as the

acting out of a deep-seated rage, driven by desire for revenge in the face of the perceived injustices of colonial oppression. As Nouha Homad puts it rather concisely, “the European woman has to pay for the humiliation her countrymen have caused to the people they colonize” (*Season of Migration*, p.60). Although there can be no doubt that racial stereotypes and colonial presuppositions, on both sides of the interpersonal dynamics involved, play a significant role in shaping the encounters Sa’eed has with English women, it is not entirely clear from the text, in my opinion, that Sa’eed’s attraction is based purely on racial difference, or that he is motivated by conscious intentions to subvert or take revenge on the oppressor. I am not denying that these motivations indeed operate on some level, but I am suggesting that they may not account for all that we observe.

The use of colonial discourse expressed within Mustafa’s interracial relationships. “Mustafa’s use of colonial discourse to ground his partners’ identities in essentialist difference can thus be seen as a political strategy” (Parry, Benita. 2005, p.74). Mustafa’s eventual rejection of his European lovers can therefore be interpreted as a metaphorical rejection of the West on behalf of Africa.

The antagonistic structure acts out the tensions of a conflictual culture which defines itself through racial ideologies. Young’s argument is dramatized through the excitement Ann experiences in knowing she is involved in a relationship which is socially disapproved of. By failing to view Mustafa as an individual, Ann highlights her inability to divorce herself from colonial consciousness. By reducing Mustafa down to a ‘smell’, he is no longer viewed as a person but rather as an object, which satisfies Ann’s senses. For Ann, intimacy with an African male enables her to gain access to the native world, which for her has connotations of exoticism and mystery. Ann thus dramatises Friedman’s argument of cultural exploitation as she uses her relationship with Mustafa to transcend the prison house of modernity and civilization.

If Mustafa’s seduction and abandonment of white women is motivated solely by a desire for revenge, why does he remain so obsessed with Jean, despite easy access to other, more willing victims? Mustafa mentions frequently that he feels helpless to resist the attraction/repulsion compulsion he experiences in his relationship with Jean; at their second meeting, she insults and taunts him: “I’ve never seen a face uglier than yours.” He resolves to retaliate: “I swore I would one day make her pay for that” (*Season of Migration*, p. 27). His previous pattern has been predictable: “I would do everything possible to entice a woman to my bed. Then I would go after some new prey” (Ibid., p.26), yet he becomes preoccupied with Jean. She comes to his apartment uninvited while Mustafa is engaged in a lovemaking session with Ann Hammond; Ann is driven out from the scene, completely humiliated. Does this episode possibly correlate with Ann’s suicide? For her part, Jean strips off her clothing, entices him, destroys his priceless treasures in return for a promise of sex, then kicks him in the groin and leaves him helpless. After they are married, she openly flirts with other men in public, makes no attempt to hide evidence of her adulterous trysts while he is out of the house, and physically assaults him on a regular basis, so that the marriage becomes transformed to nightmare: “My bedroom became a theatre of war; my bed a patch of hell” (Ibid., p. 29). Yet no matter how much abuse she heaps on him, Mustafa remains determined to possess her.

Jean misses no opportunity to humiliate and degrade her husband. She refuses to have sex with him for weeks after their marriage, and then finally surrenders in the compromising and potentially scandalous setting of a public park. Whatever physical relationship they sustain after that seems irregular and chaotic, more a form of combat between deadly enemies than an expression of affection or form of mutual pleasure. Jean is reckless and clearly self-destructive, and she seems to need to destroy Mustafa at the same time: “Come with me. Come with me. Don’t let me go alone” (*Season of Migration*, p.136), she implores with her dying breath. For his part, Mustafa neither understands why he feels trapped and helpless, nor is able to stop himself from pursuing a relationship which he knows can only bring suffering and destruction:

there was nothing I could do. Having been a hunter, I had become the quarry... I no longer saw or was conscious of anything but this catastrophe, in the shape of a woman that fate had decreed for me. She was my destiny and in her lay my destruction . . . How often I have asked myself what it was that bound me to her! Why didn’t I leave her and escape? But I knew there was nothing I could do about it and that the tragedy had to happen. (Ibid. pp.132, 134)

It is quite accurate to point out the political context of the deadly struggle between Jean and Mustafa, as many critics have done. Nouha Homad maintains that Jean acts the way she does because, “Like her countrymen, she wants to dominate the ‘other’ whom she believes inferior” (Ibid., p.61), and certainly this is a reasonable assumption. The question remains, however: why does Mustafa submit so utterly, so abjectly? If he is intent on revenge for the injustices of imperialism, how is it that he allows himself to become so easily sidetracked and subdued? Stefan Meyer (2001) asserts that the political context accounts for what transpires between Sa’eed and all of these English women: “Mustafa’s lovers, despite their professed idolatry of him, are the more powerful in the sense that they represent the politically, economically, and culturally dominant West. . . . Mustafa plays a ‘masculine’ role through his sexual conquests, but in terms of political and cultural power, he is the one who is ‘feminized’ ” (p.143). There is undoubtedly something strikingly different about Mustafa’s attitude toward Jean when compared with the rest of his lovers.

As Jean continues to refuse his access to her body after their marriage, Mustafa finally threatens to kill her, “wielding a knife over her naked, prostrate form” (*Season of Migration*, p. 4). Jean’s response, rather than fear or apprehension, is further mockery: “My sweet, you’re not the kind of man who kills.” Mustafa is quite specific in describing his immediate emotional response to this cutting remark; significantly, this episode causes him to remember his mother, and, presumably, to weep for the first time at her absence from his life:

I experienced a feeling of ignominy, loneliness, loss. Suddenly I remembered my mother. I saw her face clearly in my mind’s eye and heard her saying to me “It’s your life and you’re free to do with it as you will.” I remembered that the news of my mother’s death had reached me nine months ago and had found me drunk and in the arms of a woman. I don’t recollect now which woman it was; I do, though, recollect that I felt no sadness – it was as though the matter was of absolutely no concern to me. I wept so much I thought I would never stop. (*Season of Migration*, pp.131-132)

In *On Borderline between Shores Space and Place in Season of Migration to the North*, Mike Velez points out: “when Sa’eed arrives in England, his mental topography of the North becomes conjoined with a feminized other. This Other he intends to conquer and conquer literally, woman by woman” (Velez 2010: 194). Velez’s great analysis demonstrates how Mustafa fights back against colonialism by treating western women like the “Other” and just sexual objects. Mustafa declares himself as the “colonizer” (*Season of Migration*, p. 94). Realizing that Mustafa has been deceiving them, all these disappointed, cheated women are driven to suicide, except for Jean Morris.

Another crucial moment Mustafa gains superiority over the western mind is the scene of the trial. Despite his lawyer’s efforts to acquit him, he wants to exclaim without any hesitation: “I am the intruder whose fate must be decided” (Ibid., p.94). When Professor Maxwell Foster-Keen attempts to save him from accusations and from the gallows by claiming he is “a noble person whose mind was able to absorb Western civilization but it broke his heart (Ibid., p. 33), Mustafa’s inner voice says: “This is untrue, a fabrication. It was I who killed them. I am the desert of thirst. I am no Othello. I am a lie. Why don’t you sentence me to be hanged and so kill the lie?” (Ibid., p. 33). Maybe death would be the only solution to annihilate his deceitful personality and way of life full of lies. In this way he can get rid of remorse and give an end to a stereotypical lifestyle which Othello was also exposed to. When Isabella Seymour asks him about his race, Mustafa first identifies himself with Othello: “I am like Othello—Arab-African” (Ibid., p. 38), but during the trial he stresses his difference from Othello in a challenge against oriental mindset which imprisons both him and Othello to restricted racial descriptions and stereotypes and which does not reflect the reality. In fact, his conflicting point of view truly denotes how hard it is for him to find his real identity in the face of imposed labels and clichés.

Mustafa is the legacy of colonialism and a product of western culture in terms of education, perspective and tendency. He feels in a position of control and power to subjugate that West at his command, and he confirms it by practicing his power over western women. In his article entitled *The Empire Renarrated: “Season of Migration to the North” and the Reinvention of the Present*, Makdisi indicates Mustafa was born in Khartoum in 1898, the year of the bloody defeat of the Mahdist forces by Kitchener’s army in the battle of Omdurman, which signaled the final collapse of Sudanese

resistance to British encroachment. Rather than passively accepting this defeat, however, “Mustafa’s life is spent trying to symbolically ‘reverse’ the history of modern European colonialism[...].After his appointment at the University of London, he begins his campaign to throw colonialism back on the colonizers” (Makdisi 1912: 811).

However, Mustafa’s acute confrontation with the Occident takes place through Jean Morris who intervenes his colonizing process. She seems to have come to decolonize Sa’eed, the symbol of Orient. She touches his point of weakness by humiliating him with stereotypical racial descriptions differently from other female victims. For instance, Isabella Seymour says: “Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god” (*Season of Migration*, p.106) and Sheila Greenwood exclaims: “ how marvelous your black color is! ... the color of magic and mystery and obscenities”(Ibid., p. 139), while Ann Hammond worships him with these words: “you are Mustafa, my master and my lord...and I am Sausan (name of one of Abu Nuwas’ lover), your slave girl”(Ibid., p. 146). On the other hand, Morris is aware of Mustafa’s tricks and she provokingly defies him when he tells her he will kill her: “My sweet, you’re not the kind of man that kills” (Ibid., p. 159). Upon this, Mustafa experiences “a feeling of ignominy, loneliness, and loss” (p. 159). Especially when Morris announces she will hate him until death, Mustafa feels the slave and prey of the West again despite his social status, civilized appearance, which provides his acceptance in the English society. As John E. Davidson indicates in his 1989 article *In Search of a Middle Point: The Origins of Oppression in Tayeb Salih’s “Season of Migration to the North”*, “the Europeans, Mustafa realizes, want him to forget his intellect and thus remain a savage in their eyes; hence, his decision to stay abroad to wage war on the English by refusing to do so by maintaining his grasp on his intellect, Mustafa defeats their objectification” (p. 390).

Mustafa’s victory is, however, ended by Morris, who destroys all his life. Evidently Mustafa confesses: “having been a hunter, I had become the quarry” (*Season of Migration*, p.159). This reversal leads to his downfall as a tragic hero and collapses his dignity in the English society. For the defeated hero there has nothing to do other than to return to his home country to which he will canalize his skills and knowledge as a productive man of country.

As far as colonialism is concerned, we can call *Season of Migration* as a text that sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly attacks colonialism and its double face reflected on its victims. Maybe the West came to bring civilization to uncivilized, ignorant East through force, violence and power, but how could it imagine the victims will follow the same tactics to take revenge on victimizers? Mustafa depicts colonial activities as such: “the ships at first sailed down the Nile carrying guns not bread, and the railways were originally set up to transport troops; the schools were started so as to teach us how to say “Yes” in their language. They imported to us the germ of the greatest European violence”(*Season of Migration*, p.95). This hypocrisy of colonialism spurs victims to fight back against colonialism with the same violent methods and policies as a reflection of cruel, double-faced colonial activities. Violence is like a germ of a deadly disease for Mustafa and other colonial subjects. Therefore, he keeps these words as his inner thoughts during the trial: “yes, my dear sirs, I came as an invader into your very homes: a drop of the poison which you have injected into the veins of history. ‘I am no Othello. Othello was a lie” (Ibid., p.95).

One of the central themes of *Season of Migration* is the position of women in search of identity, justice, and meaning in the patriarchal Arabic society, which regards women as mere sex objects and inferior to men. In *Season of Migration*, Mustafa Sa’eed’s wife, Hosna, is a great example of oppressed women forced to marriage and exploited in every part of life. As a consequence of a colonial past, it is inevitable that some changes took place in Sudan by the so-called civilizing mission of the West. Nevertheless, Mahjoub tells the narrator: “the World hasn’t changed as much as you think. Some things have changed—pumps instead of water-wheels, iron ploughs instead of wooden ones, sending our daughters to school, radios, cars, learning to drink whisky and beer instead of arak and millet wine—yet even so everything’s as it was” (Ibid., p.100). It seems that despite all these social developments in daily life the village could still not totally capsize its traditional perspective on women controlled by patriarchy. *Season of Migration* underscores the bitter reality that Hosna is condemned even by village women following their masculine counterparts, as she refuses to marry the decrepit and lusty man, Wad Rayyes after the disappearance of Mustafa Sa’eed. To the narrator, Hosna clearly expresses: “If they force me to marry, I’ll kill him and kill myself” (Ibid., p.96). Despite

his confession of love for Hosna, the narrator avoids playing an active role by accepting marriage with Hosna to prevent her forced marriage. Rather, he prefers remaining passive and overlooks her tragic end deliberately although he feels frustrated in this coercive society. Considering Hosna's fatal rebellion, Wail S. Hassan (2003) notes in his brilliant work:

Hosna dares the unthinkable—and, for the villagers, the unspeakable. Her retaliation against the abuses of patriarchy—her castration and killing of Wad Rayyes, who represents the worst aspects of traditional culture—is payback in kind for her own genital mutilation, which until then had been the subject of casual remarks and jokes for the village patriarchs, though a taboo subject in Arabic literature and in public discourse generally.(p. 87)

In her impressive article called *Images of Arab Women in Midaq Alley by Naguib Mahfouz, and Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih*, Mona Takieddine-Amyuni(1986), skillfully portrays Hosna as the representative of the birth of the modern Arab woman by her decided, sacrificing and challenging attitudes against patriarchy like this: “Hosna is the precursor of the future woman of the Sudan, for she is not allowed to live her present, to live her life. She is treated as an indecent, mad, citified woman by a conservative male society that condones Wad Rayyes's senile demands over her”(p.35). Nevertheless, Hosna's revolt signifies the beginning of a new phase for women in Arab World. As John E. Davidson (1989) indicates in his significant article *In Search of a Middle Point: The Origins of Oppression in Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North*, Hosna “accomplishes in the village what Mustafa failed to do in England: she changes the way the village can look at the world—she affects history”(p. 394).

3. CONCLUSION

Season of Migration is the story of two doubling figures, who attempt to find themselves in their home-country after a period of time spent in the western world. Finding also some traces from Edward Said's discourse about oriental images or stereotypes, one can say that Mustafa Sa'eed is depicted as “evil, savage, exotic, mysterious black god”, pursuing for his desires and pleasures just to reverse the colonial phase as a way of taking revenge on colonizers. Psychologically Mustafa Sa'eed tries to collapse all his female victims and drives them to suicide by deceiving them. In a way Sa'eed rewrites imperialism by imposing a kind of psychological imperialism on women. As referred by Wail S. Hassan (2003) in his excellent book *Tayeb Salih: Ideology & Craft of Fiction, Season of Migration* “parodies, through double-voiced intertextuality, previous European and Arabic texts that thematize the cross-cultural encounter between Europe on the one hand and Africa and the Arab World on the other and Salih undermines the colonialist premises of the European text” (p. 84) Through the end of the novel we clearly see that every character strives to create their own world by death or rebirth in a patriarchal society on the verge of modernization.

After the rumors that Mustafa Sa'eed probably drowned in the Nile, the narrator starts to doubt his own existence and, like his dual character, he dives into the river in an instant mental disorder, but he suddenly opposes death and choose life. He puts forward this excuse: “I choose life. I shall live because there are a few people I want to stay with for the longest possible time and because I have duties to discharge... If I am unable to forgive, then I shall try to forget” (*Season of Migration*, p.169). Despite all his hatred he feels in charge to maintain his life. In her *article Cultural Hybridity and Contamination in Tayeb Salih's “Mawsim al-hijra ila al-Shamal (Season of Migration to the North)”*, as a solution to cultural contamination, Patricia Greesey suggests that “like the lemon tree graft that can produce both lemons and oranges, the more productive figure of biculturality is one who rejects ‘the germ of contagion’ that forces one to become ‘a lie’ of one's own making” (p.139). As Mustafa Sa'eed himself claims, he is not “Othello” who is just a fabrication of the oriental view. Only if characters rebel against the oriental mindset and object to stereotypes, it seems likely that they will reach a genuinely satisfying life. When the narrator Meihemeed opens Sa'eed's life story, on the first page he comes across his dedication: “to those who see with one eye, speak with one tongue and see things as either black or White, either Eastern or Western” (*Season of Migration*, p.151). This dedication ironically shows how it is hard to appreciate the hybrid nature of all cultures and intercultural experiences without having two eyes, two tongues or seeing things in a hybrid way and *Season Tayeb*.

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Dr Afaf Ahmed Hassan Al-Saidi a Yemeni national. I was appointed in Aden University in 1990. Finished my Master Degree at Aden University 1994 and my Ph.D. from College of Arts, Cairo University 2000. I started my teaching career immediately after my appointment in Aden University 1990. My Master Degree as well as my Ph.D. are in literature (The Novel). Therefore, I have taught all literature courses in Aden University. Moreover, I have published many papers in the field of literature.

I was promoted to associate professor at Aden University 2008. I have realized my interest in literature when I was student at Aden University and developed this interest in my higher education (Master and Ph.D.). I have contributed in several literature conferences inside and outside Yemen.

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