

Uncovering Identity Complication in Season of Migration to the North a Novel by Tayeb Salih

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Abstract— The aim of this paper is to analyse and investigate the issue of identity in Tayeb Salih's novel *Season of Migration to the North* according to postcolonial theory. Identity crisis refers to the context in which a person questions the whole idea of life. Philosophically, the identity crisis has been studied under the theories of existentialism. The term is coined to indicate a person, whose egoism and personality is filled with questions regarding life foundation, feeling and arguing that life has no value. In the novel by Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, there are several instances that can be cited to indicate the existence of an identity crisis in the story. In this paper, we highlight and exemplify on such issues in an attempt to show how the theme of identity crisis has been presented in the novel. The paper considers the postcolonial theories of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha to analyse the novel in terms of their representation of identity crisis. **Keywords**— tour guides, tour guide performance, tourist satisfaction, destination and customer loyalty.

Keywords— Displacement, Homi Bhabha, Identity Crisis, Postcolonialism, Postcolonial Novel, Tayeb Salih.

I. INTRODUCTION

In *Season of Migration to the North*, the movement of people from their countries to colonizer's nations results into a new group of people at war with their traditions and that of the colonizer. According to Bill Ashcroft, colonized countries are still subjected to a new form of colonization that the independence is yet to solve (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2003, p. 2). In Africa mostly and in some part of Asia, tribal conflict is the main characteristics of postcolonial era. The conflict between different tribes is mostly due to the policies employed by colonial to colonize which was divide and rule or something similar. Most of the tribes struggle to have equal access to a various government position as other. During the scramble for Africa, Colonial government divided Africa by tribe. The inter-tribal rivalry was exposed, mostly in countries that were colonized by Britain. Britain failed in breaking down practices that mobilize Africans ethnically (Blanton, Mason, and Athow, 2001, p. 21). Besides, the effect of colonial exploitation due to the large plantation of pulling labor from

different communities continued after independence. A good example is Caribbean communities, where people from different communities were brought together to work in the colonial plantation (Hamil, 2019). The outcome is partial loss of their culture and partial absorption of western culture resulting in the identity crisis. The group working in European plantation was neither native nor did they assimilate western culture. The postcolonial era can be generalized at a time where there were tensions and struggle amongst the former colonies to achieve their cultural, political, and social identity. The search for identity is motivated by the gained freedom from the colonizers who mimicked them for a long period (Dizayi, 2015). The method used in this paper to reveal the identity complication is critical analytic, it investigates the issue through the text body of the novel considering all circumstances that are associate with it.

II. IDENTITY ISSUES IN SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH

In *Season of Migration to the North* by Salih, there is an indication that colonization is reversed (Dizayi, 2015). The former colonies were trying all they can to colonise their former master. This facilitated by the notion by the white women think about African men. Mustafa's life of lies also helps in attracting white women. Besides, the Mustafa gain power over the West, this is indicated by his position as a lecturer during his stay in Great Britain. The submission of white women to Mustafa especially Ann Hammond reveals that he succeeded in colonizing the West both mentally and physically (Bavanpouri, et al., 2018). From the moment when Mustafa arrives in Great Britain, he had a secret of the mission of sexual conquest. Mustafa responds to the British colonization of Sudan treating white women as his sexual objects. It is important to note that Mustafa valued his secret mission of colonizing more than education or happy life. He was aware of the implication of murdering Jean Morris will have on his life. After the Western women had realized that Mustafa has been lying to them all along, they lacked the value of themselves and committed suicide as a result with the exception of Jean Morris (Parry,

2005, p. 75).

Season of Migration to the North is an attack on colonialism from the perspective of a former colony. There is a possibility that Western can bring civilization to primitive and ignorant Africans through the use of the gun. Mustafa uses the same tactic with the ignorance of the western to revenge on behalf of the Africans. Mustafa despised colonialism stating that the Western used the so-called civilization to take advantage of the Africans. He goes on to claim that education brought to the East by West was to enable Africans as "Yes" in the language used by West (Lahcen, 2018). The statement by Mustafa that West brought to use the greatest form ever witnessed in Africa concurs with the postcolonial theory that West is the cause of tribal conflicts in Africa. The violence of Mustafa is nothing compared to the action of the West in Africa. Mustafa uses the same approach used by the West to colonise Africa to fight back. After the East had gained independence mostly through fighting the West, who had modern weapons, Mustafa continued with war but on Western soil (Abdullatif, 2016).

III. ANALYSIS OF IDENTITY CRISIS IN SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH

In the final chapters of the novel, Mustafa is drowned in the river Nile as he attempts to solve his identity crisis. Mustafa is in control, and he attracted white women through his life lies. This is until Mustafa meets Jean Morris, who tells him he is not the kind that kills (Lahcen, 2018). After the murder of Jean, Mustafa is in an identity crisis, this is revealed during his trial when he fails to state his identity, but he stresses that he is not Othello. Mustafa had pretended to be Othello most of his life to attract Western women. After pretending to be in controls most of his life, finally, he gives in to the destructive forces of Nile which killed him. From his trial, Mustafa was sure that the only way to end his identity crisis was through death, drowning in river Nile marks that end. Mustafa's identity crisis is composed of Arabic identity, European identity, and the self-acquired identity (Lahcen, 2018).

As Mustafa himself claims, he is not "Othello" who is only a manufacturer of the oriental perspective. Just if characters defy the oriental outlook and item to generalizations, it appears to be likely that they will achieve a truly fulfilling life. Said's Orientalism is evidenced in this clause. Mustafa characterizes the variation in the life of the narrator, which leads him to face the world forcefully that he was so afraid of due to its changing nature. The simple and yet melancholy inquiry of who is Mustafa is resonating all through the story, illustrating the struggle that the narrator undergoes in his tussle between pragmatism and naivety. Relentlessly inquiring the significance of self-identity as well as membership, the speaker in the novel reveals a feeling of estrangement and incongruity with Mustafa and by the means of their precious phantasm relation, the speaker deliberates on the meaning of being a native insider against being an intruding outsider (Mufti, 2018).

As such, Mustafa's act of homicide sensationalizes Frantz Fanon's craving to deliberately re-organize the racially isolated world to shape the world in which roughness ought to be seen

as a purifying power with a specific end goal to free the colonized from the servitude of their masters (Fanon, 2007. pp. 73-4). Conversely, by such actions, Mustafa sustains the racial clash since he can't pull back himself from pioneer memory; a separation that Salih recommends is outlandish. During the scene of his trial, Mustafa also achieves dominance over the western mindset. Although his lawyer effortlessly tried to get him acquitted, Mustafa wanted to cry out without any reluctance, that he was an "alien whose fate should be determined" (Salih, 1969, p. 94). However, Mustafa thought that it was untrue and only a lie to get him acquitted. He knew he was the one who killed them in a desert of thirst for vengeance. He kept thinking that he could be sentenced to be hanged to death, so as to kill the big lie that he was (Salih, 1969, p. 33). By his thoughts, it seems that death might have been the only answer to defeat his dishonest identity and his cruel way of life that was all a lie (Lahcen, 2018).

In his revolutionary theory of approaching colonial discourse, Fanon argued that the best way out eliminate these challenges of decolonization would be best through a vehement revolution of the colonized people. In his conclusion, Fanon defined the colonialists as a 'Manichaeon' or catalogued society that is in two parts. The decent and respectable part of them having been eroded counter to their bad side. He noted of their divisions in different social groups such as the white and the black people, the rich and the poor, evil against humane whites, the rulers against the governed, etc. This separation led to rising in tension that could not be overlooked in society. For full decolonizing of the colonial societies, Fanon argued that only by creating a society of equality and democracy where "the last shall be first", shall the division no longer exist (Fanon, 2007, p. 2). Arising with a revitalized feeling of self-confidence, determination, and self-identity, the narrator became conscious that change does not characterize the peril of his childhood years anymore. Although it is true that the world has changed along with the speaker, life itself retained its true meaning due to those who strengthen it making every instant worthy. This novel demonstrates the powers of the human mindset and eventually relates the corresponding lives of two men who crisscross the thin boundary separating insanity from insanity. This kind of revelation and revolution is what Fanon advances for when he calls for mind intellectual development (Fanon, 2007, p. 4).

As a matter of fact, his contradictory perspective signified how hard it was for him to get his real identity in the face of forced tags and platitudes. Through the sense that Mustafa Had recently gained, he felt that he was unclean and he yearned for death to bury the shame of his past acts. When considering Fanon's theory through which Mustafa acted, then the use of violence for decolonization can be deduced to have a retributive action against those who adopt it. Considering all the independence fighters and states that used violence, then this instance of Mustafa proves that their chosen way of ending colonialism drove them to the predicaments that they faced after colonialism. After fighting against colonialism violently, many countries were left in anguish and not as the narrator had hinted that colonialists would leave the infrastructure intact for the

natives to enjoy. Most of the countries suffered the destruction of their amenities and rebuilding has been a challenge (Mufti, 2018).

Whilst courageously confronting the mysterious world of Mustafa, the author portrays how the narrator gradually audaciously recognizes all lies that Mustafa had built in his resonating life. By challenging the apparition that had almost become a descriptor of his life, the speaker apprehends that he had to go on with life and that he had to terminate everything regarding Mustafa. As he admits, he talks of how a blazing fire was set to consume these deceptions out his newly found life (Salih, 1969, p. 128). Swinging in and out of unconsciousness, the speaker lastly reaches at a crucial moment in between the north and south shores. At this point, he woke up from the horrendous hallucinations, and he made it clear in his mind cleared and his association with the world was defined. He feels liberated from his choked life, and he was filled with a sense of renewal, hope, and fortitude.

In his work, *Orientalism*, Edward Said examined several fictitious, chronological and historical manuscripts so as to point out how the West tried to characterize the Orient as Other by use of Orientalist discourses. By depicting that the East was invaluable in terms of their culture and intellect, they were able to create a view of Western preeminence (Hamil, 2019). To sustain their dehumanizing dogmas, objectives were stated in a practical way such that they appeared to be true. The imperialist supremacy relationship of the west and east furthered the beliefs, enabling the West to seem justified during colonization, which they dubbed as a 'civilising mission' (Said, 1978, p.15). In the narrator's description, his village signifies a sanctuary him, a symbol of stability and strength that gave him a sense of safety that assumingly shielded him from the dynamic world that surrounded him. The narrator comments that he knew that everything was fairly well with life since he felt assured since he was around his roots and had a defined purpose (Salih, 1969, p. 4). In this regard, the narrator indicates that he felt insecure, and his words reveal how exposed he felt and how susceptible he was to the hostile whenever he was not with the protection of the village. Said's *Orientalism* portrays such acts as dehumanised since the Western society considered the African culture to be inhumane and uncivilised (Hamil, 2019).

Colonial discourse theory also pressurizes its dependency on the notion of fixation to the conceptual creation of difference (Bhabha, 1984, p. 130). Through the process of mimicry, colonialists made those they governed feel quite different from them, portraying a difference in identity. This racially based classification of authority made the Western colonialists only to identify other societies as colonial groupings. Mustafa evoked colonial discourse so as to challenge the colonial power. The theme of mimicry is evident in his actions. As Bhabha describes it, colonial mimicry is the yearning for a transformed 'Other', or, posing as a threat to punitive power so that it creates semblance and menace respectively (Bhabha, 1984, p. 128). By the portrayed position that Mustafa held socially as a lecturer in England, it is possible to see that he gained power over European women similarly through his sexual subjugations due

to his murderous, fraudulent plays on Western females including Sheila, Isabella, and Ann. Their acquiescence to his will indicates how Mustafa accomplished to colonise them by conquering their bodies as well as their psychology. When Mustafa arrived in London, his mindset topography of the North became adjoined with another one that was feminized (Hamil, 2019). The new one leads him into his intentions of conquering and conquering every woman one by one. This shows how Mustafa combat against colonization by considering Western females as sexual objects to please him and fall under his command. Mustafa considers himself to be a colonizer, given his actions to those women (Salih, 1969, p. 94). Upon the realization of Mustafa's deceit on them, all these frustrated, resentful women commit suicide, apart from Jean Morris.

The development of the story in this novel shows that, through the violent female conquests that Mustafa carried out he wanted to mete out to Europe, the dilapidation that their people had levied upon the Africans. In a symbolism way, it can be said that Mustafa wanted to accomplish his afflictions to Europe by raping her. Mustafa considered the touch of those white women's breasts as a way of transferring white civilization and identity to him, making him the ruler of those women (Dizayi, 2015). The identity that the body of a European woman is a site of Western power is evidenced here, accentuating the sense of supremacy and possession felt by those that Mustafa colonized with each of his sexual conquests (Abbas and Mitchell, 1985, p. 20). The author understands that inter-ethnicity relations of the colonial period were seen as actions that could not be detached from historical colonization memories. This is especially true for every African man of the post-colonial period, yet the men are what largely determined the morals and norms of the African society. Thus, sex and dominance were interwoven for Mustafa, and he used them as a tool of repression to the women. Nonetheless, so as to accomplish his sexual revenge, Mustafa introduced vehemence against himself, through the willful embodiment of the great Orientalist myth-fantasy for the sake of his victims.

Mustafa's insinuations of his distinction from others began early in the novel when he claims that he was similar to a rounded object made of elastic material that doesn't get wet when tossed in the water and when thrown to the ground, it bounces back (Salih, 1969, p. 20). This separation, even impartial rationalization, denotes that Mustafa felt distinct from others, an ethical emptiness at the core of his being. According to him, his experience is an actuality in his life, the way people were placed in his way by chance to assist him, and people for whom I had no sentiments of appreciation thus he used to take their assistance just as it were some obligation they had to perform for him (Salih, 1969, p. 23). Mustafa's misunderstanding of his own sacredness is the first sign of the focal result of his endeavor at absorption in the West, an endeavor that correspondingly removes him from his own kin and society. As Frantz Fanon notes, each colonized people or each individual in whose spirit a feeling of inferiority has been made by the demise and internment of its local culture originality gets itself head-on with the language of the civilizing

nation; that is, with the way of life of the motherland. The colonized is hoisted over his inhuman status in proportion to his adoption of the motherland's standards.

Amid the ascension of modernization, society started to relate firmly 'the Negro' with the genitals (Fanon, 2007, p. 150). Alongside the thought of exoticism and other stereotyped sexual qualities related to the African male, their image was fueled by their sexual strength, acting to escalate the sexual craving of the white woman for the black man as an appealing Other. One could thus conclude that the black man was the subject of political colonisation as well as being turned into a sexual prey of white women as the connection between prejudice and sexuality become the mastermind of the colonialist's society (Abdullatif, 2016).

In the novel *Season of Migration to the North*, two characters use narrating to create new personalities that appear to fit conveniently into one side of the twofold that battle against one another. However, during the time spent narrating a false self into a solitary cultural setting, Mustafa and the narrator disregard the remaining constituents of their intrinsic cultural deception. Mustafa forms two separate personalities, a Western and a Sudanese one, both of which are built to conciliate his audience. In England, he epitomizes the over-eroticized Western model of Orientalism, whereas, in Sudan, he changes into a prototypical individual from the village in which he lives. In this modification of self through narrative, the real hybrid self is lost and every one of those remaining parts is the story that his self-has ended up (Hamil, 2019).

It is in the river Nile where the narrator finally establishes his self and his identity. The narrator's intention of swimming may be unclear, but the main thing is he thinks he is not part of the Nile. The balance the narrator finds in the river Nile, which enables him to stay alive, signifies the new-found balance of life between him and the community (John, Tarawneh, and Tawarneh, 1986, p. 166).

CONCLUSION

From Edward Said's postcolonial theory, we can concur that Mustafa is portrayed as a person who is driven by his ego and lust for sex. Mustafa uses tools used by the West to colonize Africa to revenge for Africans. He uses White women's ignorance and naivety to use them for sexual pleasure and later deceive them to commit suicide. The story of the *Season of Migration to the North* is a criticism of colonialism (Dizayi, 2015).

As postcolonial literature, *Season of Migration to the North*'s main characters' endeavor to end up in their nation of origin after spending some time in the Western world. Considering Edward Said's theory of the oriental image, we can say that Mustafa is delineated as wicked, savage, bizarre, enigmatic black God, who seeks after his desires just to invert the colonial phase as a method for revenging against the colonizers. The novel straightforwardly criticizes colonialism and shows how it originated from the germ of brutality caused on victims who battled back against imperialism with the same mental counter attack. Mentally Mustafa tries to break down all his female

victims and drives them to suicide by misdirecting them. In a way, Mustafa reworks colonialism by forcing a sort of mental colonialism on ladies. *Season of Migration to the North* satires, through twofold voiced inter textually, past European and Arabic messages that schematize the culturally diverse experience between Europe from one perspective and Africa and the Arab World on another (Hassan, 2003, p.83). In the end, it is obvious that each character endeavors to make their own reality by death or rebirth in a patriarchal society nearing modernism.

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