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**Cultural Displacement and Identity Loss in Tayib
Salih's *Season of Migration to the North***

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Abstract

This dissertation provides a textual analysis of the complex relationship between cultural displacement and identity loss within a postcolonial framework, focusing on Tayib Salih's novel *Season of Migration to the North*. Conceptual and theoretical frameworks, including Edward Said's Orientalism and Homi Bhabha's Hybridity, unhomeliness and In-between condition, were employed. The research explores how cultural displacement and movement between two cultures can affect an individual's sense of self, giving rise to alienation, isolation and internal struggles. It concludes that the novel depicts identity loss as a direct effect of cultural displacement, as strongly illustrated by the character of Mustafa Saeed. These narratives reveal that identity is fractured, divided, and constantly lost due to colonial influence. This examination emphasises the lasting effects of colonialism on postcolonial individuals and their identities, exposing these as unsettled struggles.

Keywords: Belonging, Colonialism, Displacement, Identity, In-between, Orientalism, Otherness, Sudan.

ملخص

تقدم هذه الأطروحة تحليلاً نصياً للعلاقة المعقدة بين النزوح الثقافي وفقدان الهوية ضمن الإطار ما بعد الاستعماري، مع التركيز على رواية طيب صالح "موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال" وباستخدام نظريات "الاستشراق" لإدوارد سعيد و "التهجين" و "الفضاء البيني" لهومي بهابها. يستكشف البحث كيف يمكن للنزوح الثقافي والحركة بين ثقافتين مختلفتين أن يؤثرًا على إحساس الفرد بالذات، والتي تؤدي إلى الاغتراب، العزلة والصراعات الداخلية. ويختم بأن الرواية تصور فقدان الهوية كأثر مباشر للنزوح الثقافي، وهو ما يتضح بقوة في شخصية مصطفى سعيد. تظهر هذه السرديات أن الهوية مكسورة، منقسمة، ومفقودة باستمرار بسبب التأثير الاستعماري. كما يؤكد هذا التحليل على الآثار الدائمة للاستعمار على أفراد ما بعد الاستعمار وهويتهم، ويعرضها على أنها صراع غير مستقر.

كلمات مفتاحية: النزوح، الهوية، الفضاء البيني، الاستعمار، السودان، الاختلاف، الاستشراق، الانتماء.

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General Introduction

For many years now, literature has been a crucial tool in helping communities navigate the challenges posed by both their external and internal environments. It has allowed humans not only to document time and history chronologically but also to explore much deeper themes such as memory, reality versus fiction, and how culture is preserved through generations. Through many forms, storytelling has long been an effective medium that connects individual awareness to the shared history of a given culture. Society has relied on narrative, in its oral and written forms, to create a sense of identity and belonging in an increasingly divided world. Today, storytelling carries forward its long-standing memory of conveying universal human experiences and struggles, such as migration, identity crises, and cultural conflicts.

Within the Twentieth-Century global literary context, the postcolonial modernist novel emerged as one of the most powerful genres that expresses the subtleties of cultural clash and identity crisis. It arose from the effects of colonisation on both the history of empire and the experience of the colonised people; it provided writers with an opportunity to critique and resist the broad historical narratives about them written by Westerners and to address the impact of colonialism on their own psyches.

European colonialism marked a transformative period in Sudan's history. It was a time of great change for both Africa and the Arab world, affecting their educational, cultural, and social systems through the establishment of Western-style administrative systems. During this time, the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899 to 1956) was established in Sudan, representing dual realities for those who lived there: one that was native in terms of culture, customs, and way of life, and one that was imposed through colonisation and the imposition of a new, alien system. Thus, colonialism caused not only politically motivated displacement, but it also caused huge disruptions in the intellectual landscape.

The colonial administrations, especially educational institutions, created a generation that was physically present in their homeland but culturally and mentally displaced, caught

between their own native traditions and Western civilisation. The legacy of colonialism has been one of the most important themes in both African and Arabic postcolonial literature. In response to these colonial legacies, the postcolonial modernist novel seeks to depict the horrific consequences of imperialism for culture and identity. Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) is considered a masterpiece in this literary genre. It was originally written in Arabic. It moves far beyond the limits of conventional Historical Fiction and offers an intense critique of colonialism.

Tayib Salih, a Sudanese novelist and broadcaster, was born in 1929 in Sudan's northern province. He is widely regarded as one of the leading figures in modern Arabic literature. He is the author of numerous notable books, including *Season of Migration to the North* and *The Wedding of Zein* and *Bandarshah*. He also had a successful career in International Media and Cultural Diplomacy. His writings are often described as exploring the relationship between the Arab and Western worlds.

In his novel, Tayib Salih examines the mechanisms of colonial encounter, cultural displacement, and the destructive loss of identity resulting from an individual's attempt to inhabit two cultures or worlds that cannot be reconciled. Cultural displacement, as presented in Salih's work, exists in a context much broader than simply physical movement from one place to another; it is an important aspect in shaping an individual's identity. The movement of Mustafa Saeed, the main character, is represented as more than just migration; it is a tumultuous clash between two realities (Sudan and England), resulting in separation from both his homeland and the foreign country.

As an Algerian, raised in a country with 132 years of struggle with colonialism, I have always been aware of how history affects the present we live in and how the vestiges of colonisation continue to shape the collective consciousness of people. While I have always had an interest in colonialism and the social and psychological impact it has on colonised countries,

my focus on Sudanese literature stems from a desire to examine how colonialism created shared wounds across Africa, thereby extending my field of study beyond my own borders. I have always been interested in the Sudanese case and their ongoing struggles, since it is a nation that has experienced British imperialism and continues to be involved in conflict and struggle today.

This MA Dissertation, titled “Cultural Displacement and Identity Loss in *Season of Migration to the North*”, aims to examine how cultural displacement manifests as the primary cause of identity loss by analysing the experiences of Mustafa Saeed, from Sudan to England and later his return to his homeland, Sudan.

The following research questions are formed in order to provide a structured framework for this study:

1. How does cultural displacement lead to identity loss in *Season of Migration to the North*?
2. How is cultural displacement experienced by Mustafa Saeed, and how does it affect his sense of belonging to the homeland?
3. How is identity loss manifested in Mustafa Saeed’s life and represented in the novel?

To answer these questions, the research operates on the following hypotheses

Regarding the first question, it is hypothesised that cultural displacement in the novel leads to identity loss by fostering a sense of alienation from both the homeland culture and the foreign culture.

For the second question, it is hypothesised that cultural displacement in *Season of Migration to the North* is experienced by Mustafa Saeed through his movement between Sudan and England. His behaviours, disconnection from home, tradition, and community, reflect his cultural conflict rather than a sense of belonging. Mustafa’s

detachment from both cultures demonstrates how cultural displacement fractures the stable bond to the homeland.

For the third question, it is hypothesised that identity loss is reflected in *Season of Migration to the North* through Mustafa Saeed's profound social isolation, internal struggles, and inability to belong to either culture, which prevent him from forming a stable sense of self.

To address the previous questions in depth, this dissertation is composed of three chapters. The first chapter lays the foundation for this research, with four distinct sections of focus. The first section provides the historical background of Sudan, from before the establishment of colonial rule to the Anglo-Egyptian condominium and colonisation, as they relate to educational practice. The second section presents the main concepts and theories associated with cultural displacement and identity loss, including Edward Said's "Orientalism" and Homi Bhabha's "In-between" space. The third section offers a clear definition of identity loss in postcolonial theory. The fourth section presents the literature review and examines the focus of earlier studies on Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. The second chapter of this research work explores Mustafa Saeed's experience of cultural displacement, from his early life in Sudan to his journey to England and his return to his homeland. The third and final chapter examines how this cultural displacement led to identity loss by analysing Mustafa Saeed's behaviours and showing the signs of identity loss.

This study adopts a qualitative, text-based methodology centred on close reading of Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (2003), supported by a postcolonial conceptual framework to analyse cultural displacement and identity loss in the novel chosen. Overall, this dissertation has been structurally organised in accordance with the standards of the seventh edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Chapter One:

Historical and Theoretical Frameworks

Introduction

Cultural displacement is considered one of the main issues in postcolonial literature, in which people often find themselves caught between multiple cultures, identities, traditions, and ways of life. This situation develops from the historical influence of colonialism, which transformed societies, identities and languages. Therefore, many characters in postcolonial texts experience a sense of alienation from both their native culture and the one shaped by colonial hegemony. In light of these concerns, this chapter discusses the concept of cultural displacement in postcolonial studies. The first section explores Sudan's colonial history and cites the key events that led to cultural displacement. The second section focuses on cultural displacement and postcolonial studies by defining postcolonial theory and cultural displacement and highlighting the principal theoretical concepts that facilitate clarifying its concerns, including the work of Said and Bhabha. The third section defines cultural displacement as a cause of identity loss. Finally, the fourth section explores previous studies on *Season of Migration to the North*, examines what scholars have written about the character of Mustafa Saeed, and identifies the gaps that guide this study's focus.

1. 1. Historical Context and Cultural Displacement: Colonial History in Sudan

To comprehend cultural displacement and identity loss in postcolonial Sudan, it is important to highlight the colonial history and the accompanying social and political shifts. The experience of colonialism in Sudan was principally shaped by Turco-Egyptian rule (1821-1885). During this period, Sudan was conquered by Egypt under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, marking Sudan's first foreign rule. This era was followed by the Mahdist state (1885-1898) and then by the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899-1956), when Sudan was under British and Egyptian colonial rule. This period had a deep influence on Sudanese society,

identity and culture. It produced the strongest Western impact through education, governance and cultural interaction. This interaction between tradition and modernity in the West created the historical conditions for cultural displacement and identity loss, which are currently widely examined in Sudanese literature.

1. 1. 1. Pre-Colonial Environment and the Mahdist State

Before the establishment of colonial governance, Sudan underwent a phase of native governance: the Mahdist state under the leadership of Ahmed al-Mahdi, who proclaimed himself the Mahdi, meaning “the Awaited Mahdi”¹. He believes he is the one who will guide people from darkness to light and seeks to reshape Islam, returning it to its original, pure form (Britannica). The Mahdiyyah movement aimed to establish an integrated Islamic government and resist the impact of Egyptian and European forces. As a result, it gained appreciable support, especially among people opposed to the current government. In establishing the Mahdist state, Islamic power played a major role, as the leadership was linked to Islamic religious beliefs and practices. Muhammad Ahmad-al-Mahdi’s governance centred on Islamic law and fundamentals, with Sharia (شريعة) governing both political control and everyday social life. The vast size of Sudan made it extremely difficult for the state to maintain control over all areas, particularly those far from the capital. This struggle to preserve control and dominance worsened as the state faced serious challenges, including internal conflicts, divisions, and regional variations, which reduced the state’s overall power.

Economic challenges and military conflicts also had a significant impact on the system of authority. As a result, the Mahdist State’s capacity to preserve its political solidarity over the long term was weakened by these stresses. This confusion weakened the Mahdist state, and it

¹ The Awaited Mahdi is a religious figure in Islamic tradition who is believed to be divinely guided and destined to establish justice and moral before the Day of Judgment.

ultimately fell to the British armed forces in 1898. Despite its brief existence, the Mahdist State was one of the meaningful efforts to establish an independent religious and political government free from external control, and it continues to be an important phase in Sudanese history because it supported the Sudanese people to protect their culture, traditions and their Islamic identity regardless of the colonial control before it. The fall of the Mahdist State marked the beginning of a new era of colonialism, namely the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, which restructured Sudanese culture and identity and reformed Sudan's social norms (Britannica).

1. 1. 2. The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium (1899-1956)

The fall of the Mahdist state marked a significant transition in Sudan's political and social order, as the country came under the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, a colonial authority officially shared by Egypt and Britain but dominated by British interests. As a result, the political and social structure of Sudan has undergone a huge change. Abushouk suggests that British administrators preserved authority not only through the use of force but also via a deliberate interaction strategy that included local Shaykhs, educated people, religious figures and traders within the ruling framework (208–209). This approach was effective in maintaining power, but it also shaped Sudanese society by establishing a hierarchical system that reinforced local rulers' dependence on the colonial administration. According to Abushouk, this shift in traditional structures divided social, political, and economic authority among a select group of people, weakening social connections and producing a sense of cultural displacement among Sudanese people (Abushouk 210).

This change is strongly linked to the creation of the Dar Bidayriyya Nazirate in Konfodan. The colonial government gathered local populations that had been scattered during the Mahdist state's period and resettled them into organised villages. Then, these villages were structured into fourteen distinct zones called Ummudiyas, with a senior leader Shaykh or Umda

placed in charge of each. Husyan Zaki al-Din of the Bidayriyya Dahmashiyya was appointed Umdat Umum in 1928 and later promoted to Nazir in 1934, giving him complete financial, judicial, and administrative authority over the Nazirate (Abushouk 210). Ordinary villagers' traditional autonomy and communal influence were drastically reduced within this system as they were progressively reduced to dependent clients of the Nazir and his fellow workers. At the same time, local leaders found themselves torn between their obligations to the regions they represented and their obligations to the colonial leadership. Due to this multiple tension, both the governed and the governed were forced to deal with new hierarchies, producing a complicated social dynamic that ultimately resulted in a persistent negotiation of authority and a broader loss of collective identity (Abushouk 210).

Besides the native community, the mechanism of collaboration spilt over to the larger political sphere. The colonial government influenced the 1953 pre-independence elections, particularly those involving the Uma Party and the National Unionist Party, by supporting certain groups. This ensured that the politics of emerging parties remained in line with established networks and colonial interests (Abushouk 209–210). Sudan's social transformation was exacerbated by the interaction between colonial power and native political structures, which also created new cultural divisions. As a result, Traditional social relationships were upended by these historical frameworks, which also introduced new patterns of power and dependency.

1. 1. 3. Western Education Influence on Sudanese Culture

During colonial rule, colonial authorities used education to influence the native population and reinforce their control over Sudan. According to Sarderson, education is “a social institution influenced by and influencing other social institutions, but subordinate to politics. It tends to reflect the values of the political rulers, and to be strongly conditioned by the history and geography of the territory concerned” (427). Education and schools are deeply

tied to government control, showing that they function not only as free institutions but also as instruments used to serve the economic and political interests of those in power, deliberately limiting social change to keep things exactly as the rulers want them. This means that the West's influence on education introduced new principles, skills, customs, and traditions that were often foreign to the native population, resulting in cultural displacement, with students caught between native norms and Western standards (Sarderson 429). While native Koranic schools emphasised cultural, religious and functional training to establish a stable community, colonial educational institutions focused on practical knowledge, governance skills and contestation for social progression, thereby promoting ambition but also weakening traditional values and social norms (Sarderson 429).

The limitations and key concerns of colonial governance were revealed through systemic problems that often kept girls and rural communities isolated (Sarderson 430-431). The imperial system produced a Sudanese community that appeared unified and devoted to its cultural heritage, but in reality, it was gradually drawn to Western administrations by favouring a select group of educated people (Sarderson 432). Overall, the educational system's goal during colonialism was not only to offer opportunities and new skills to Sudanese students but also to apply its strategies and use education as a tool for social advancement, as well as an instrument to weaken traditional, cultural, and social norms by emphasising Western knowledge. This created a sense of displacement between local norms and the expectations of the imperial authority and created a sense of alienation among the Sudanese people.

1. 1. 4. Cultural Reform in Sudanese Society

In addition to changing Sudan's systems of government, the Anglo-Egyptian colonial era and the development of the Western educational system also brought about significant changes to the nation's social and cultural landscape. The Arabic language and Arab identity spread across Northern Sudanese communities over Centuries through a process called Taarib

(تعريب), or Arabization. This process, which accelerated during the Funj Sultanate and began with the arrival of Arab Muslim nomads, eventually became a defining characteristic of northern Sudanese culture, especially in language (Sharkey 21–23). Arabic has been regarded as both a language of belief and education and a tool of social progress, opening doors to government jobs, business, and commercial opportunities throughout both colonial and post-colonial periods.

The British government maintained pre-existing social hierarchies during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium by giving individuals identifying as Arabs preference in employment and education while pushing non-Arabs, people of slave ancestry, and members of marginalised communities into lower social roles (Sharkey 29–30). A new educated elite whose conception of Sudanese identity was strongly linked to Arab and Islamic culture was created by this selective promotion of particular groups. By making language and heritage essential to social status and political authority, colonial policies not only preserved pre-existing inequalities but also established cultural hierarchies (Sharkey 31).

Sudanese scholars and nationalists began to claim a common cultural identity by the 1930s and 1940s under the term “Sudaniyyun” (Sudanese), which shifted from its prior meaning of servitude to one of patriotic pride (Sharkey 31–32). This newly formed national identity was purposefully linked to Islamic cultural legacy and the Arabic language, reflecting both the influence of Arab customs and the colonial educational heritage. Scholars and creative writers, such as Hamza al Malik Tambal, highlighted the richness and uniqueness of Sudanese Arabic literature, asserting cultural integrity by referencing Bedouin traditions, local conditions, and folk traditions (Sharkey 32–33). These initiatives show how Sudanese individuals achieved cultural change to gain authority, acceptance, and involvement in national governance, rather than having it imposed from above. However, conflicts and exclusions were also brought about by the Northern elites’ cultural advancement and the process of Arabization. Non-Arab

populations in Southern and Western territories opposed these initiatives, frequently using their own languages, faiths, and cultural customs to assert unique identities (Sharkey 25–26). This opposition shows that Sudan's cultural change was neither unified nor undisputed but rather the result of a dynamic interaction between the country's various social and ethnic groups, educated Northern elites, and the colonial system. Essentially, the Arabization and cultural transformation period prepared the way for later disputes and discussions about language policy, cultural leadership and national identity that would arise in the post-colonial period, as well as for a stronger Northern Sudanese identity (Sharkey 27–28).

1. 1. 5. Cultural Displacement in the Sudanese Context

The subsequent state of cultural displacement reflects the deep psychological and social detachment of the Sudanese people from their true culture, even though the previous examination of the Western educational system clarifies the process of social shifts. This sense of displacement is more than a loss of customs and tradition; it is a forced shift into a hybrid identity, a divided condition in which a person is no longer rooted in their ancestral customs, yet is still rejected by the state's idealised Arab-Islamic Centre. Tension between the dominant urban core and the marginalised areas, such as Darfur, Kordofan, and the Nubba Mountains, reflects this experience in the Sudanese context. This creates a national landscape where many citizens feel like internal outsiders, caught between imposed collective expectations and historical traditions (Beshir 29; de Waal 197).

1. 1. 5. 1. The Systemic Marginalisation of Peripheral Areas

The long-standing imperial system that emerged after the government's independence has played a key role in creating this alienation. The establishment of a centralised governance style, inherited from the previous colonial period, by Khartoum's contemporary government, which pushed individuals from the West, East, and South to the periphery of society, naturally favoured the residents of the Nile Valley (Sharkey 29). As Beshir highlights, the expansion of

national infrastructure and schools did not bring about the cohesion the state had hoped for; rather, it heightened people's awareness of their unique ethnic backgrounds and intensified regional rivalry for wealth and political authority (2–3).

During the colonial period, many systems were established, such as Native Administration, which altered the way local governance operated and established clear boundaries, granting particular leaders' legal authority over their regions (de Waal 192-194). Although these reforms were intended to maintain peace, they often oversimplified the locale's intricate social hierarchies, favouring larger populations and depriving smaller communities of a voice in their own government. As a result, there was a sense of social and political instability, with the national administration appearing less like a mechanism that depicted the inhabitants and more like an external power (Beshir 3; de Waal 192).

1. 1. 5. 2. The Challenges of Achieving National Unity

Many people were compelled to embrace a particular, uniform identity at the expense of their own indigenous languages and cultural traditions in an attempt to create a cohesive national identity (de Waal 197). Speaking Arabic, adopting new fashion trends, and adhering to a particular religious path were all part of this transition, which also included eschewing regional cuisine, dance, and music (197–198). This shift was a difficult reduction of centuries of rich and varied history in places such as the Nuba Mountains and Darfur (de Waal 198). The requests for unified nationhood were more than social; they were linked to the perceived worth of each person. An individual's original heritage was viewed as less significant because their social standing was frequently determined by how closely they adhered to the customs of the urban upper class (de Waal 197). According to Sharkey, this setting made it hard for people with hybrid identities to find a place where they truly belonged by forcing them to choose between being perceived as Arab or African (24).

1. 1. 5. 3. Imposed Division and Language Displacement

The sense of displacement developed more sharply because of state-enforced language policies and unstable beliefs about identity. Although Arabic functioned as a bridge among diverse communities, elevating it alone as a tool of cohesion left people whose core sense of belonging rested in other languages (Sharkey 22). The government's focus on a single, cohesive cultural belonging replaced the already blurred, adaptable identities with strict, distinct categories (Sharkey 24; de Waal 198). Both local leaders and external pressures contributed to the political construction of a rigid distinction among cultural identities, which frequently resulted in increased conflict and violence (de Waal 198-203). These social structures were strengthened by particular concepts of cultural supremacy, which were occasionally backed by external regional forces. As a result, many non-Arab populations began to strongly identify themselves as African because of their marginalisation from the administration (de Waal 197-200). For many Sudanese individuals, this struggle between a forced national identity and an authentic sense of regional belonging led to the establishment of a society that feels displaced and divided (de Waal 203; Sharkey 24).

1. 1. 5. 4. Social and Militarised Dimensions of Displacement

Cultural displacement in Sudan did not affect just the public and political spaces but also people's lives, social systems, and personal safety of marginalised populations. The changing gender roles and household demands imposed on marginalised communities, as they felt pressured to emulate the riverine Nile Valley ruling class, are a major component of this relocation. According to Alex De Waal, women in outlying areas were frequently forced to give up their traditional social and economic autonomy to support the domestic standards associated with the metropolitan Arab-Islamic middle class in order to achieve a unified national identity (197). Because of the transition from busy farm work and community tasks, many women found themselves stepping back into quieter household lives. Shifting routines like new ways of

dressings or behaving - labelled as "Sudanized" - showed others a family now fit the government's idea of proper living. These changes often weakened older female-led networks that once gave women stronger voices. Hidden behind such customs was a slow erasing of native structures built around shared power among kin groups (de Waal 197–198).

The militarisation of cultural identifiers, which turned flexible identities into survival mechanisms, exacerbated this social estrangement. The "Arab versus African" divide transformed from an ideological argument into a deadly reality on battlegrounds as the government and outside players used identity to dominate territory (de Waal 203). The communities in places like Darfur were compelled to abandon historically cooperative ties in order to seek safety within strict, externally imposed categories (de Waal 199–200). As a result, the Sudanese individuals live in an environment of constant internal isolation, which means that they are physically present in their country but culturally cut off from their heterogeneous past. This top-down national story, as suggested by Beshir and Sharkey, has placed regional communities in a state of enduring in-betweenness, where genuine legacy is diminished in support of a politically useful national name (Beshir 2; Sharkey 24).

1. 2. Cultural Displacement and Postcolonial Studies

A crucial foundation for understanding the complexity of the postcolonial perspective is cultural displacement. It is a complex social situation that profoundly alters how people view their past, their social status, and their own unique identities; it is by no means a simple explanation of physical migration (Overbey 145). To understand the importance of this position, it is essential to examine the relationship among historical change, colonial power, and individual psychology that creates a condition in which a person lives in a continual state of "In-betweenness" (Overbey 145). The "dislocated" status of individuals caught between

competing cultural landscapes can be better understood by examining displacement as a result of specific economic and political causes (Hassan 15).

1. 2. 1. Post-colonialism: Frameworks and Scope

Postcolonial theory explores the political, social, and cultural outcomes of colonialism, transcending a simple pre- and post-independence chronological framework. Overbey says that the word "postcolonial" was first used to refer to the period after the declaration of independence, indicating a clear break from colonial control. Since the late Twentieth Century; however, theorists have redefined the term to focus on its ideological aspect rather than just its chronological one (145). The postcolonial dilemma begins with the initial encounter between an oppressor and a group of oppressed individuals, a dynamic that continually shapes identity and power relations. This reflects a sociological critique of the apparent separation between the 'postcolonial' and colonial periods by describing relationships to colonialism that are disparate yet bound together through their mutual relation to one another and to the mixed identities that persist post-independence.

Postcolonial theory involves a review of the impact of colonialism today upon various cultures, histories and identities (Overbey 145). It investigates the power dynamics inherent in colonial interactions. As Shrikant B. Sawant suggests, both postcolonial theory and literature concentrate on the point when "two cultures clash, and one of them with accompanying ideology empowers and deems itself superior to the other" (120). This standpoint emphasises that imperialism functions through both political oppression and cultural and ideological hegemony. Postcolonial research seeks to examine and analyse the enduring frameworks of imperial dominance that continue to influence previously oppressed cultures.

1. 2. 1. 1. Post-colonialism as a Project of Liberation

In literary studies, post-colonial theory is known as a liberatory, "emancipatory" concept that enables scholars to move beyond the Eurocentric "canon" and challenge literary ideas once

taken for granted (Mukherjee qtd. in Sawant 120). Meenakshi Mukherjee claims, that this theoretical perspective allows the literature student to “interrogate many concepts of the study of literature that we were made to take for granted, enabling us not only to read our own texts in our own terms, but also to re-interpret some of the old canonical texts from Europe from the perspective of our specific historical and geographical location” (qtd. in Sawant 120-121). This change is an example of mental colonisation since it puts the oppressed society’s experiences, hardships, and goals front and centre, emphasising their cultural tensions, disappointments, anxieties, and dreams for the future (Sawant 121). This empowering strategy is essential for recovering a native identity among Sudanese literature that was formerly oppressive and expressed solely from the oppressor’s point of view.

1. 2. 1. 2. Scope of Postcolonial Studies

Postcolonial studies are a broad and interdisciplinary field. They go beyond literary analysis to look at the cultural, social, and political effects of colonialism. Shehla Burney explains that postcolonial theory serves as a critical method to examine how colonial power has influenced systems of representation, identity, and knowledge in societies that were once colonised (42). This theory is not restricted to a single discipline; it is used across many fields to study the lasting effects of imperial rule. A key focus of postcolonial studies is understanding identity and how it forms in colonial and postcolonial settings.

The theory addresses issues of race, gender, class, ethnicity, and nationality, revealing how these factors are shaped by historical power dynamics (Burney 42). It also looks at language as both a way to control and a means of resistance. This highlights the link between language and power in forming the identities of marginalised groups, especially the subaltern (Burney 42–43). Postcolonial theory also addresses many political and cultural problems, such as history, geopolitics, nationalism, and the effects of colonial educational systems (Burney 42).

It also looks into how colonial discourse creates and shows the "Other," and how these depictions help processes of isolation and marginalisation in many cultures.

Postcolonial studies, through their critical structure, examine the production of meaning via distinction and the contestation and reinterpretation of dominant narratives (Burney 42-43). Postcolonial literature also looks at how globalisation and migration have changed cultures. It examines how diasporic events and cultural interactions generate diverse, mixed identities, illustrating the persistent impact of colonial heritages in modern societies (Burney 43-44). Overall, this broad scope shows that postcolonial investigations are not limited to literature but also offer a comprehensive way to comprehend the political, cultural, and social aspects of the postcolonial world, all of which are linked. The field provides significant knowledge into the enduring impacts of imperialism on contemporary realities through the analysis of language, culture, identity and authority.

1. 2. 1. 3. Core Concepts in Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory, a framework that describes how colonial power affected cultures, identities, and educational systems, is based on several core concepts. One of the most basic ideas is binary opposition, which describes the separation of the universe into contrasting categories, such as East and West or civilised and primitive. These hierarchical, non-neutral distinctions promote Western power and marginalise non-Western communities by favouring one side over the other (Burney 178). This approach is essential for understanding how colonial discourse created imbalanced power dynamics. This is closely related to the idea of the Centre and Margin, which shows how imperial rulers saw themselves as the "centre" of culture and politics while colonised communities were pushed to the "margins." This contrast served to legitimise colonial power by depicting the colonised countries as dependent or primitive and the West as superior (Burney 180). These differences still shape how people think about their knowledge, education, power, and cultural values, even after colonial dominance ended.

Colonial discourse is another important idea. It is the way that knowledge and representation are used to define and control colonised societies. Colonial ideology justified control by depicting the conquered as primitive and in need of being civilised through literature, language, and traditional cultural narratives (Burney 181). This illustrates how authority functions by both political domination and through ideologies and representation.

The "Other" is also an important concept in post-colonialism. "Othering" refers to the procedure of characterising colonial individuals as fundamentally inferior and different from the coloniser. This framework expands the divide between "us" and "them" by reducing complex identities to harmful stereotypes (Burney 192). These depictions, which are essential to the formation of cultural identity, made colonised people feel isolated and displaced. In addition to these concepts, postcolonial theory examines imperialism and colonialism as essential structures that shaped interactions between colonisers and the colonised. While colonialism refers to the direct control and occupation of a particular region by another, leading to unfair and oppressive relationships between the urban area and the colony (Burney 182), imperialism operates as a broader framework of control through political, economic, and cultural influence (Burney 190). These processes produced long-lasting hierarchies that continue to affect colonised societies.

Postcolonial theory also emphasises the concept of diaspora, which characterises the movement and displacement of people resulting from colonialism, enslavement, and migration. These shifts developed a hybrid identity that blended their original cultures with the adopted one through interaction and exchange between the two (Burney 183-184). This idea is closely linked to Hybridity, a concept developed by Bhabha (1994). It refers to a process in which identities develop through interaction and exchange between cultures rather than remaining fixed or pure (Burney 189). To understand the displaced and evolving character of identity in postcolonial studies, it is necessary to grasp these key concepts. Another important concept is

Hegemony, which clarifies how colonial rule is upheld by both agreement and oppression. Colonised people absorb these structures of authority as dominant communities impose their beliefs, principles, and educational standards in ways that seem logical and fundamental (Burney 189). This highlights how cultural impact and ideologies continue to exist and continue to play a major role in the imbalance even after colonisation. Finally, the lived experiences of Exile and the Subaltern are also two main concepts in postcolonial theory.

Exile is a term used to describe psychological and physical displacement in which people feel cut off from their cultural origins, resulting in a fractured sense of self (Burney 187). In the same way, the Subaltern stands for people who have historically, socially, and politically been excluded and whose voices are frequently left out of dominant narratives (Burney 192). These ideas are crucial to comprehending how colonial history now results in identity struggles, silence, and marginalisation. As a whole, these ideas and concepts show that postcolonial theory offers a critical framework for understanding how identity, authority, and representation continue to influence societies in the contemporary world, and that it is not restricted to historical inquiry alone.

1. 2. 1. 4. Analytical Concerns of Postcolonial Studies

Postcolonial scholarship investigates both the historical experience of colonialism and its impact on the Western literary and conceptual legacy (Hamadi 39). The idea of representation ranks among the main issues in postcolonial theory, especially in light of how the West has constructed an image of the East. Compared to a logical and advanced West, the Orient is frequently portrayed as a "primitive", "uncivilised" and "Other". This division between the Orient and the Occident shapes how non-Western communities are perceived (Hamadi 40). The issue of power is closely tied to representation.

The Orient was shown in ways that encouraged the expansion of colonialism, in addition to being explained. Because they depicted the East as uncivilised and in need of control, these

depictions helped to justify and legitimise colonial dominance. Since colonialism's effects persist in many ways in formerly occupied areas, the effects of these representations have not vanished (Hamadi 40). The language and culture, on the other hand, played a major role in colonial domination. While the colonial powers enforced their culture and language, the cultural systems, language, and values of the colonised populations were excluded, marginalised, and neglected. All of this was justified as educating them, guiding them, civilising them, and even humanising them (Hamadi 40). This process influenced how colonised individuals began to see themselves and how they were presented, prompting them to question their own cultural identity and creating cultural conflicts between their native traditions and the enforced Western culture.

Within this process, Edward Said is presented as the main figure in the evolution of postcolonial studies. His work, *Orientalism* (1978), is regarded as a significant contribution to the field. It highlighted how Western conceptions of the Orient were created and how they shaped cultural and scholarly perceptions. The formation of postcolonial theory as a critical field of study was greatly influenced by this work (Hamadi 39–40).

Another important figure in postcolonial studies is Homi Bhabha, who offers an alternative perspective on postcolonial identity by questioning the notion that identity is fixed or unified. He claims that the colonial subject is not fixed but rather is constructed through “conflictual positions”, which make identity complex and fragmented rather than unique (Easthope 145). Following this, Bhabha also presents the idea of hybridity, which describes the blending of identities and cultures due to colonial interactions. According to this theory, cultural identity is always formed through interaction and diversity rather than being purely defined (Easthope 145–146).

1. 2. 2. Cultural Displacement

According to Fathey Hassan, cultural displacement is a “postcolonial theory that expounds the issue of identity as a product of Colonialism” (15). This definition emphasises

that displacement, which happens when a foreign culture is systematically imposed over an indigenous society, is more than just a geographical relocation; rather, it is a deep dissociation from an individual's native roots (F. Hassan 15). In contrast to straightforward migration, this process entails a "dislocated" sense of self in which ruling colonial or global standards often replace, reject, or alternative traditions (F. Hassan 16). The historical mechanisms of colonialism are frequently the root causes of this phenomenon. The colonial governments enforce integration by replacing native customs, norms, and social structures with those of the imperial power, leaving native communities feeling fundamentally inferior and culturally alienated (Overbey 145).

Beyond this colonial past, contemporary factors such as the rise of globalisation, economic instability, and conflict-driven forced migration hasten identity loss, as people are frequently compelled to leave their native countries in search of better living conditions abroad (F. Hassan 16). This displacement has a catastrophic psychological effect on one's sense of self and frequently results in "cultural bereavement." In this situation, the person experiences a period of loss not only of a physical location but also of religious traditions, familiar cultural standards, and societal support systems (Bhugra and Becker 18). This results in a lingering sense of being stuck in "border zones" or "liminal spaces" where an individual is neither fully accepted by the new host culture nor fully integrated into the native environment (Overbey 145).

The displaced individual frequently encounters a gap between their standards and the realities of their social standing as they navigate this unfamiliar setting, which causes a deep sense of cultural ambiguity and detachment (Bhugra and Becker 19). Additionally, outside influences like racism, joblessness, and low-quality housing in a foreign nation increase the displacement process and may result in "deculturation", a total loss of cultural identity that causes isolation and melancholy (Bhugra and Becker 19). In the end, cultural displacement acts

as a psychological trauma that destroys a solid sense of identity, resulting in a lifelong sense of "misplacement" in which the person is caught between a culture that views them as alien and a home they are unable to go back to (Overbey 145; F. Hassan 17).

1. 2. 3. Edward Said's Orientalism

According to Edward Said's basic theory of Orientalism, the Orient is a strategic representation and a hegemonic Western construct rather than a geographical or physical reality (Burney 41). In order for this Western creation to function, a Manichean allegory, a binary system of opposites, is established, in which the East is reduced to an exotic, romanticised, and irrational Other while the West is described as logical, moral, and centred (Burney 41, 48). Such depictions undermine historical and cultural validity by reducing the Orient to a succession of idealised images and landscapes that hardly resemble lived realities (Burney 41).

For the postcolonial subject, this systematic deception has serious repercussions and generally takes the form of identity dislocation. Postcolonial people are frequently forced to view themselves through a dominant Western perspective, which politicises and shapes their identity to fit imperial objectives, because the Orient is a constructed image (Burney 43). As a result of this process, people develop a disjunctive identity due to the fake European representation (Burney 41). Furthermore, cultural displacement through location politics is fundamentally connected to the production of the exoticised subject. In postcolonial subject matter, the experience of colonial oppression begins with the loss of an individual's sense of belonging to external forces; geography and location are not only passive backdrops but also crucial to the formation of identity (Burney 44, 46).

An act of geographical violence that uprooted the local subject from their personal spatial identity occurred when an imperial authority mapped and classified a territory (Burney 46). The drive to adopt Western norms results in a hybrid identity that is neither entirely indigenous nor entirely Western, leaving the subject in a state of ambivalence, a complicated,

conflicted relationship with the coloniser's culture (Burney 44, 47). In the end, Orientalism serves as the fundamental framework for a field that aims to elevate these underrepresented voices from the periphery of study to a centre position of criticism (Burney 42).

1. 2. 4. Homi K. Bhabha: Hybridity and “in between” Space

Building on Said's work of Orientalism and the Occident's representation of the Orient, a hierarchy was created in which the Orient are seen as backward and inferior. Bhabha developed and criticised Said's work, suggesting that the colonial subject is unstable and exists between the space created by colonialism and personal experience (Easthope 145). Bhabha, in his book *The Location of Culture*, describes the experience of identity among people living in diasporic and political conditions as unstable, displaced, and always shifting (19). He portrays the “colored” South African as being a type of liminal realm formed by displacement and division rather than truly belonging to either culture.

Due to the struggle, people cannot have a normal sense of home and belonging (19). Additionally, he demonstrates how boundaries like past-present and private-public overlap in what he calls interstitial intimacy and are no longer separate, meaning a close connection that occurs in the in-between space where boundaries mix (19). This gives rise to the concept of hybridity, which refers to the mixing of cultures and identities and to what Bhabha calls an in-between space. This space shows that identity is not pure or fixed; instead, it's fluid and negotiated, allowing for diversity without rigid hierarchies (Easthope 145).

In his book, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that hybridity is the combination of cultural concepts, language, and behaviour between colonisers and colonised. This creates something mixed and new, far from just coloniser and colonised. The hybrid zone that gives rise to new cultural norms, identities, and meanings is, for Bhabha, the third space. Overall, Bhabha, through his concepts, shows that the relationship between coloniser and colonised is

more complex than mere control or domination; it creates confusion and tension that lead to the formation of hybrid identities.

Another important concept introduced by Bhabha is unhomeliness. In his book *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha argues that unhomeliness does not simply mean “not having a home”; rather, it reflects a profound psychological and internal displacement, in which an individual feels neither fully accepted in his homeland nor in the foreign culture they enter. He emphasises that “home” and private life are no longer secure or complete, and identity becomes divided between two cultural worlds. This condition occurs when a subject experiences a deeper cultural identity crisis. In this state, the individuals experience a sense of “in betweenness”, where they cannot belong to either culture, leading to feelings of confusion and alienation.

In postcolonial theory, unhomeliness is strongly related to Bhabha’s concept of hybridity and “in-between” condition. It is defined not only as a physical state of being without a home, but as a deep emotional and psychological condition caused by identity crises (Farahbakhsh and Ranjbar 107-108).

1. 3. Conceptualising Identity Loss in Postcolonial Theory

In postcolonial studies, identity loss is a key aspect formerly associated with cultural displacement. Individuals in this situation may feel alienated and find it difficult to determine their identity in a new society when they are removed from their homeland, whether by migration, colonialism, or forced relocation (Rasool et al. 98–99). In this circumstance, which disrupts the harmony of cultural and personal identity, they feel themselves existing between two cultures, “here” and “there,” and do not fully belong to either (Rasool et al. 99).

Many scholars highlight the complexity of identity crisis. They emphasise that identity is “fluid” and “multidimensional”, which means it is not fixed; instead, it is fluid, can change depending on context and experience and it has many layers such as culture, language, and religion (Rasool et al. 100). According to Hall (1990), identity is not something that you are

born with and still stay the same. Instead, he claims that it is “incomplete production” that is always being made and remade. It is shaped by culture, society, personal experience, and history and it is a mix of who people are now (“being”) and who they might become (“becoming”) which means it is always open to change (qtd. in Rasool et al. 99). This approach casts doubt on the idea of a single, cohesive self and emphasises how identity is constantly negotiated in response to outside forces like relocation. Homi Bhabha, in a similar vein, highlights identity as a hybrid which emerged from a combination of several cultural influences.

People who are displaced frequently have to deal with competing cultural standards, which leaves them feeling confused and unsure of who they are (Rasool 98–99). Within this framework, Identity is reinterpreted as an adaptable, evolving concept that reflects the conflict between tradition and host cultures rather than being lost. In a postcolonial context, the psychological effects of displacement provide further evidence of how complex and fragile identity is. Migrants generally try to assimilate into or replicate the prevailing culture, but their attempts are usually unsuccessful, leaving them with a partial sense of belonging (Rasool et al. 98–99). Displacement leads to a mixed existence, combining the traditions of the new culture with the fundamental principles of their own traditions. This combination of cultures can be gratifying in its own right, but it also makes living on the periphery unstable. This led to psychological discomfort and physical isolation, which also led to fundamental problems with identification and belonging (Rasool 99).

In general, cultural displacement causes identity loss, a complex process of fragmentation and negotiation. As they negotiate the tensions between their own culture and accepted norms, people separated from their homeland by migration, colonialism, or forced displacement feel alienated, confused, and conflicted (Rasool 98–101).

1. 4. Literature Review of Studies on Belonging and Identity

For postcolonial subject, displacement is not just a physical movement from one culture to another, but also linked to deep internal conflicts and struggles that shape an individual's sense of self and identity. In Tayib Salih's, *Season of Migration to the North*, the character Mustafa Saeed depicts an identity crisis, mainly the loss of self that emerged from being displaced within his homeland.

Scholars have long discussed whether the encounter with Western society led to successful cultural integration or to a terminal state of alienation and identity crisis. This section examines the previous research on the novel to create the foundation for an analysis of cultural displacement and identity loss.

Displacement and identity are two themes that are extensively developed by many postcolonial scholars from a historical perspective. Among the most influential works engaging with displacement and identity is *The Island of Missing Trees* by Elif Shafak. In their study analysing Shafak's novel, Moin Ud et al. explore how cultural displacement and historical trauma create a deep identity crisis. They claim that identity is not a fixed state but a perpetual negotiation affected by societal changes and environmental instability. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* are three works that also represent the themes of displacement and identity crises. Hiba Afzal and Maria Maqsood, in their article "Cultural Displacement and Identity Formation in Postcolonial Literature", offer a comparative study between these three works to show the relationship between cultural displacement and identity formation. They argue that identity is fluid and an ongoing process of negotiation rather than a fixed state. The previous examples highlight a broader pattern that is further examined in Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, which addresses cultural displacement as a primary source of identity loss.

Season of Migration to the North, published by Tayib Salih in 1966, is a novel that has attracted significant academic attention in both Western and Arabic literary studies and is widely regarded as one of the most influential works of postcolonial literature in modern Arabic literature. According to many scholars and critics, the novel explores themes of identity, colonialism, and the cultural effects of interactions between Eastern and Western societies. Its significance does not rely solely on its narrative intricacy but also on its challenging engagement with colonial ideology and on the portrayal of Arab and African identities by Western writers and scholars.

Many research studies on *Season of Migration to the North* focus on Mustafa Saeed as a character, mainly on his psychological complexity by analysing him through a psychological approach to understand his inner issues, trauma and conflicts. As Adam (2015) argues, Mustafa turns intimacy and his relationship with European women into a weapon shaped by colonial trauma in order to take revenge for the crime caused by the colonisation in Africa (qtd. in Hassan et al. 1157). This shows that the character's behaviour is not personal, but it is deeply related to the trauma caused by colonialism.

Afaf Ahmed Hasan Al-Saidi's analysis of *Season of Migration to the North* represents the political and ethnic clash of civilisation between Western and Eastern cultures and how colonialism left a legacy of identity crisis in colonised societies like Sudan. She argues that Mustafa Saeed undermines the power of colonialism from within the dominant culture through the use of "hybridity"-the adoption of Western values and education- as an instrument of strategic power. The author also emphasises that Mustafa's life serves as a "sexual crusade" and racial revenge that fails to settle the deeply rooted tension and clash between the two cultures.

Mohammad Jamshed's article on *Season of Migration to the North* investigates the concept of "Otherness" and how the representation of Western societies gives rise to a deep

“self-estrangement” through employing the theories of Franz Fanon and Edward Said. He examines the inner disconnection of Mustafa Saeed, who became detached from his native community due to the influence of colonial education. He also focused on the destructive relationship between Jean Morris and Mustafa as the most figurative of colonial destruction and violence.

Saman A. Husain’s work on the novel offers a profound examination of Mustafa Saeed’s life as a “reverse of colonialism”. He depicts Mustafa’s academic proficiency and sexual exploits as intentional colonisation of the Westerns. Building on Fanon’s theories, the author represents Mustafa’s destructive and violent acts as a power that liberates him from being a servant of colonialism. This study concludes that Mustafa’s identity was a big lie and a false way of life.

Isyaku Hassan et al.’s research paper explores identity instability and struggles between the East and the West in the novel. They analysed *Season of Migration to the North* through imagery and symbolism, focusing on the novel as a reaction against European narratives. This study also portrayed Mustafa Saeed as a culturally hybrid character who lives in isolation and silence between two worlds. They also examine his relationships with Western women as a form of revenge for the crimes committed by colonialism in Africa.

Despite the wide range of this research and studies that explored themes of identity crisis, migration, exile, and cultural struggles and mentioned identity and displacement separately, little attention was given to how cultural displacement is linked to identity loss and how it is presented as the main source of identity loss, specifically in Tayib Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*. This gap is important to address because cultural displacement in the novel is not treated as a side issue; instead, it is at the heart of the protagonist’s experience, which helps analyse the characters’ loss of identity more deeply. This study examines identity loss in the context of cultural displacement through a post-colonial theoretical lens.

Conclusion

This chapter aims to build a theoretical basis for understanding the relationship among cultural displacement, identity, and postcolonial theory. It highlights how colonial administrations and power created a sense of alienation and displacement among the Sudanese population and how its impact still exists even after the end of imperialism. Through post-colonial studies, it examines the long-term effects of colonialism that persist in society, culture, and people's minds. The discussion of the core theoretical concepts has emphasised that identity is unstable and fluid, as it is primarily shaped by the interplay among different cultures. Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity provide important tools for understanding Western representations of the East and how these representations can undermine people's sense of self and lead to the formation of hybrid identities.

The literature review highlights previous studies on Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and how scholars described the character of Mustapha Saeed and his role in showing postcolonial issues. It also mentions the previous studies on themes of identity and cultural displacement, as well as the research gap concerning the relationship between cultural displacement and identity loss, and justifies why this gap has been chosen as the main concern of the current study.

Chapter Two

Cultural Displacement and Colonial Legacy

Introduction

Cultural displacement is described not only as physical movement from one territory to another but also as a complicated psychological process, including the rejection or loss of an individual's native cultural background. Salim and Dave claim that cultural displacement is strongly linked to migration and physical displacement, yet it is characterised by the internal conflict between an individual's inherited background and the expectations of a foreign social environment (1). This chapter tackles the theme of cultural displacement as a main focus in Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, emphasising how characters' contact between two cultures and how they are affected by colonialism. Throughout the novel, displacement is depicted as an internal and cultural phenomenon that affects and shapes social relations, beliefs, and people's understanding of the world, rather than merely a physical movement between Sudan and England. The chapter also focuses on Mustafa Saeed, the main character who represents cultural displacement, by analysing how his interactions with both cultures, "Sudanese and Western", led to rising tension, confusion, and, later on, alienation. By examining these aspects, the chapter shows the importance of cultural displacement and how it is shown as a central force in the novel and how the experiences of characters are presented in the novel.

2. 1. Mustafa Saeed's Journey from Sudan to England

The movement of Mustafa Saeed from Sudan to Europe, mainly England, represents an important pivotal moment in Tayib Salih's novel *Season of Migration to the North*. His academic achievements, emotional detachment, and remarkable brilliance shaped his experience in Sudan and encouraged him to finally leave his hometown and country to pursue a better education in England. As a result, this shift from his homeland to a new environment made him realise the differences between England and Sudan.

2. 1. 1. Mustafa's Childhood and Motivation for Departure

The childhood and life of Mustafa Saeed in Sudan are shown as simple, full of experiences and shaped by both intelligence and a deep lack of emotional involvement. He was raised without a father and siblings in a peaceful, modest home. Despite having everything he needed to live, his childhood was empty and lacking emotional warmth, especially in his relationship with his mother, as he states, “we used not to talk much” (Salih 25). He describes her as cold, distant, and she feels like a stranger, not a real parent. This description and admission that they were not close reflect a childhood characterised by silence and emotional distance rather than love and family closeness. As a result, this emotional detachment shows his isolation and difference from other children from an early age by stating, “yet I had felt it from childhood that I- that I was different- I mean that I was not like other children of my age” (Salih 25).

In contrast to normal children, Mustapha lacks normal emotional reactions; he claims that he does not feel happy when praised or feel sad when punished. He often describes himself as, “something rounded, made of rubber: you throw it in the water and it doesn't get wet, you throw it on the ground, and it bounces back” (Salih 25). This emphasises that he is cut off from his surroundings long before he actually leaves Sudan and highlights his ability and desire to leave it easily.

Mustafa's remarkable intelligence and academic abilities from a very young age helped his educational advancement. His progress in learning was very quick; he did not find any difficulties or struggles, winning the attention and respect of his teachers while keeping a personal distance from everyone. He characterises his thinking and mind as “a sharp knife, cutting with cold effectiveness” (Salih 26), which means his intelligence and brain take over as his primary motivator, shaping his future path and creating opportunities beyond his immediate surroundings. The feeling of alienation from his own community and his desire to learn and

succeed are two main reasons that pushed Mustafa to leave Sudan. Starting school is a pivotal moment in his life, as it was his first autonomous decision. From that time, Mustafa dedicated himself and his life solely to studying, which ultimately prompted him to look for other chances abroad, especially after the Englishman said to him, “This country hasn’t got the scope for that brain of yours, so take yourself off. Go to Egypt or Lebanon or England. We have nothing further to give you” (Salih 27). After this encouragement to leave Sudan and finish his studies abroad, Mustapha showed no doubt in his decision to travel to Cairo. His departure is marked not only by uncertainty, hesitation, and emotional struggles but also by a strong sense of freedom and detachment. Since he believes he has no close emotional or social links that stop him from leaving his own country. From a postcolonial perspective, this condition can be understood through Homi Bhabha’s notion of unhomeliness, in which the individual feels displaced and detached within their homeland. Mustafa Saeed exhibits this condition even before leaving Sudan. Despite being born and raised there, he remains emotionally detached from his family and community and fails to develop a strong sense of attachment to his homeland.

2. 1. 2. Arrival in England: First Encounters with the West

After Mustafa Saeed moves to England, he encounters a new social and cultural setting that feels very different to him from Cairo and Sudan. His first impression of England is that it is very controlled and structured, with everything following a system. Compared to Sudan, the movement of people and the flow of everyday life in England all exhibit a feeling of control and discipline. This highlights a sense of aesthetics, order, and control that, in his eyes, define Western society. However, this initial impression is shaped not only by adoration or admiration but also by detachment, as he observes the setting from the perspective of an outsider trying to comprehend and adapt to this new environment.

Although Mustapha has a high level of observational and intellectual awareness to analyse his surroundings, this ability does not support his emotional integration in any way. By stating “that feeling of being nowhere, alone, before and behind me either eternity or nothingness” (Salih 29), he captures a deep sense of psychological isolation and feeling cut off from both his location and from any stable sense of identity which means that these emotions continue to exist even after his arrival to England which emphasises that his displacement is both psychological and geographical as he is unable to create a sense of belonging.

This detachment shows up in his relationship with culture and language. He masters English well and becomes very articulate, as he states, "My mind was like a keen knife. The language is not my language"(Salih 30). He has identified what is clearly already a deeper issue: the discrepancy between his outward performance of being "one of them" and his internal reality about who he really is. In this regard, language has functioned as a medium through which he projects himself to others, rather than as an authentic expression of the individual he is within. He can exist in society, but will not ever really be part of it. This suggests a hybrid formation of identity as theorised by Bhabha, where identity is not fixed but formed in an “in between” space. For Mustafa, emotional connections with people, especially women, are exchanged for control over them. He has openly stated that if he wants to pursue another woman, then he definitely “would do everything to entice a woman to my bed” (Salih 31). This indicates that, for him, relationships are more about dominance than intimacy. His actions show that he has developed a personality that incorporates the cultural differences between himself and others, using them to gain attraction and power. Therefore, Mustafa is both connected to the Western societal system and simultaneously exploits it in order to create his own identity.

While Mustafa takes part in England’s cultural and intellectual life, there is a hollowness to it all. Outwardly, he joins in, and he goes through the motions, but he never really connects. He is more on the sidelines, watching and performing rather than feeling like he

belongs. So, coming to England does not bridge the gap for Mustafa; instead, it actually makes him feel even more separate and displaced. He knows how to fit in on the outside, but inside, he still feels alienated and displaced. This feeling goes even deeper into the idea of cultural displacement, which is not just about moving to a new place or environment, but it is also about being internally distanced from the self.

2. 1. 3. Adaptation and Emergence of a New Selfhood

Mustafa's first analysis shifts from observation into an active participation in Western society, where his identity is deliberately produced in relation to social conditions. As he becomes more involved and starts to adapt to life in England, his adaptation is more about creating an identity that enables him to live in a new environment than about comprehending it. In terms of Homi Bhabha's theory, this reflects a hybrid identity shaped by both Sudanese origins and Western influence. Rather than fully identifying with one culture, Mustafa combines elements of both, resulting in an identity that belongs completely to neither. Instead of looking for a place to fit in, he begins to develop a version of himself who can navigate many social settings with ease and adapt his conduct to the situation. His understanding of how other people see him is intimately related to this process. Mustafa takes advantage of the fact that his outsider status might draw attention, especially among the women there. Because he presents himself differently depending on the circumstance, his identity becomes fluid rather than permanent. His admission that he lived under several identities, namely, "Hassan and Charles and Amin and Mustafa and Richard" (Salih 35), makes this clear. The fact that he goes by many identities and different names implies that his personality is unstable and divided into multiple roles. Rather than disclosing his identity, each character becomes an element of a plan.

In his interactions, when identity becomes a manipulative weapon, this manufactured character is most apparent. Mustafa builds relationships via influence and power rather than emotion. He freely admits that he had many relationships at the same time and that he gave

each one of them “the impression” that he would marry her. Such conduct demonstrates that his relationships are manipulated rather than authentic.

The idea that his identity is something he uses rather than something he truly is is reinforced by the fact that each connection becomes part of the character he performs. He even questions his own existence, saying, “Mustafa Saeed does not exist. He’s an illusion, a lie.” (Salih 33), which shows that he is unable to fully accept the identity he had created. This depicts how his adaptability has affected both his social conduct and his sense of self. He no longer merely poses as someone else; instead, he has lost touch with himself.

At the same time, self-assurance and control conceal a more profound insecurity. Mustafa’s way of life has had serious impacts on people in general and on his life specifically. His behaviours become more damaging the more he depends on control and performance. His relationships and interactions do not stay normal and simple; instead, they cause actual harm, such as mental distress or even death, to the women he used to know. This implies that the character he has created is inextricably linked to its consequences. It is a force that influences his behaviours and their results rather than merely an appearance. Overall, the new life of Mustafa Saeed in England does not lead him to stability or a sense of belonging; instead, it results in a disjointed, ever-changing, and ultimately unstable identity. This loss of sense of self later plays a major role in his subsequent experiences.

2. 1. 4. Otherness and Cultural Distance

Throughout his time in England, Mustafa Saeed becomes more conscious of how his social standing is influenced by both his own behaviour and the way others see him. He is often perceived as an outsider, and his presence is explained in terms of cultural differences rather than personal identity. This indicates that he is interpreted and perceived via assumptions about his background, origin, and looks rather than being fully invested as an individual in his own position. His encounters are consistently marked by a sense of cultural isolation stemming from

this experience. This reflects the logic of Edward Said's Orientalism, where the West see the East as exotic and different. In this case, Mustafa is perceived not as an individual but as an Oriental figure shaped by stereotypes.

Mustafa maintains a hidden distance from those around him, even in social or intellectual settings. He is someone whose identification has symbolic importance that extends beyond the immediate contact, rather than just being another part of society. After giving it some thought, he realises that his existence in England has been formed by his constant consciousness of this situation, where belonging is constantly conditional rather than fully granted. This is supported by his own observation of how people see him socially. He emphasises that he received many judgments from people, such as when someone told him, "You're not a human being... You're a heartless machine" (Salih 30). This implies that he is reduced to an abstract or warped image rather than being completely comprehended on a human level. As a result, his identity becomes perceived from the outside rather than recognised by both sides, strengthening a sense of separation even in intimate interactions with others. He also seems to be seen as exotic and different, which means he is treated as something that attracts attention but is fundamentally misunderstood. This depiction captures the essence of his situation: he is noticeable yet disconnected from a genuine sense of belonging.

This way of seeing Mustafa in England is closely linked to Edward Said's theory, in which cultural diversity is shaped by systems of representation that define the "Other" as distinct and separate rather than as impartial. In Mustafa's case, this is conveyed through nuanced modes of classification and interpretation that shape how he is perceived and understood in Western society, rather than through direct rejection. Mohammad Jamshed, in his article "Cross-Cultural Encounters, Self- Estrangement and Mutual Understanding in Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*", claims that Mustafa Saeed is frequently viewed via a colonial perspective that transforms him into a figure of the "Other". His connection with Ann

Hammond, who views him as “a symbol of all these hankerings of hers”; rather than as a person, clearly demonstrates this. She saw Mustafa as an extension of a fictional character rather than a real person because of the exotic images he created for himself, such as “tropical climes, cruel suns, purple horizons” (6).

Despite his academic success, this underlying view prevents Mustafa from fully integrating. He knows that he will always be seen through the lens of difference, and that his presence is never free from cultural interpretation. This creates a sense of displacement and alienation that is both social and symbolic, rather than just physical, in which belonging is constantly interrupted by the awareness of being seen as different. Overall, Mustafa Saeed’s encounter with England demonstrates that cultural distance stems from both personal feelings and others’ perceptions of him. His identity is influenced by the gaze of those around him, which repeatedly places him outside the boundaries of full acceptance. Therefore, he lives in Western society but is continuously defined by his differences from it.

2. 2. Relationships as a Space of Cultural Conflict and Revenge

At the heart of Tayib Salih’s novel, Mustafa Saeed’s interactions and relationships with Western women play a crucial role in illuminating the cultural conflicts. These relationships illustrate how intimacy may become a space for the expression of more profound cultural tensions between the Orient and the Occident, as they are shaped by difference and unequal perceptions rather than being portrayed as typical or solely emotional, inevitably leading to unbalanced and unstable connections.

2. 2. 1. Attraction, Misperception and Cultural Projection

The relationships and exchanges Mustafa has with Western women are among the most important aspects for analysing cultural tension, emotional manipulation, and power imbalance. His connections are depicted as complicated interactions shaped by miscommunication, desire, and the need to own what is seen as "different," rather than as typical romantic engagements.

Despite the fact that each woman, like Isabella Seymour, Sheila Greenwood, Ann Hammond, and Jean Morris, represents a distinct variety of this relationship, they are all linked by the fact that their first interest in Mustafa stems from curiosity and cultural projection.

The way Mustafa is perceived by women there as an exotic person characterises his arrival in England from the very beginning. The ladies he meets are impressed by and attracted to him, not just as unique individuals or ordinary people, but also as embodiments of stereotypes about the Orient. The excitement and curiosity about his background, his seeming mystery, and the symbolic significance linked with his identity all influence their attraction to him. On the other hand, Mustafa is aware of this desire and understands that his uniqueness is the foundation of his attractiveness. He deliberately engages with these perceptions rather than rejecting them, in order to create an image that fits Western norms.

This is shown through his experience with Ann Hammond, whose fascination with Mustafa is fictional rather than real, meaning that the fantasy landscapes and symbolic connections captivate her more than his actual personality does, transforming him into an instrument for escaping from her own world. As the gap between fantasy and reality widens, this process of projection and idealisation gradually turns harmful rather than helpful. The emotional illusion eventually falls apart, and the picture she creates of Mustafa cannot be maintained in real life. This is clear from their relationship's terrible conclusion, when she was found dead and behind her a note that is addressed to Mustafa stating: "Mr Saeed, may God damn you" (Salih 32). This thoroughly illustrates the effects of confusion and misidentification that lead to psychological destruction. Overall, Mustafa becomes, in her eyes, more of a symbol of what she lacks rather than a person, which means that his relationships are based on perception instead of true interaction and understanding. This can be read through Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, where the Other is constructed as an image rather than encountered as a subject.

Similarly, with Sheila Greenwood and Isabella Seymour, as Mohammed Jamshed analyses in his article, the relationship between Mustafa and Isabella Seymour. He highlights how Saeed uses an exoticised persona, the "African demon", to manipulate her, causing her to leave a stable marriage in favour of a destructive, "turbulent" passion that ultimately results in her suicide (6). In a similar vein, Sheila Greenwood's connection with him is shown as a romance driven by "honeyed words" and Sheila's foolish expectations that their love might transcend the racist standards of British culture (Jamshed 7). In the end, both relationships are marked by a cycle of abuse and self-estrangement in which the women fall prey to the terrible results of Saeed's role as an invader who psychologically dominates his victims by using the coloniser's instruments.

Mustafa actively contributes to maintaining this illusion. He deliberately creates a persona that fits the demands made of him, using cultural stereotypes as tools of control and attraction. He strategically influenced these perceptions since he is conscious of how others see him. As he modifies himself to suit the fancies of everyone he meets, his sense of identity becomes crucial to his interactions. From a postcolonial perspective informed by Said's Orientalist gaze, this performance is interpreted as a response to being criticised and characterised by outside perception. By doing this, he turns intimacy into a controlled setting in which he sets the rules for interaction.

Mustafa experiences a major change in his relationship with Jean Morris compared to his prior relationships. While Ann Hammond acts out of curiosity about him, and Sheila Greenwood shows admiration and develops an emotional attachment to him, neither response will come from Jean. Instead, she has been non-compliant with Mustafa since they first met, greeting him with no interest and, on occasion, hostility by stating: "You are ugly Jean Morris said to me on the second occasion. I've never seen an uglier face than yours" (Salih 31). Through this, Mustafa himself recognises that this is not a typical response from the women he

has previously been in relationships with. She was more like “a challenge” to him; his attraction to her stems from his desire to overcome her non-compliance, rather than from a true desire for her. Their relationship was defined by tension rather than fascination, and by conflict rather than projection. Mohammad Jamshed described their relationship as the most symbolic and important in the novel. He argues that this relationship highlights the devastating impact of colonialism through psychological conflict, violence, and mutual aggression rather than love. As Mustapha attempts to dominate her, imagining himself as an invader, he reveals that he views relationships as acts of conquest rather than emotional connection (6). Therefore, Mustafa’s relationships illustrate that they are not fundamentally moments of genuine connection but rather represent a growing visibility of his cultural displacement.

Even though these women and Mustafa may seem to have some level of emotional intimacy with each other, their experiences together are all conditioned by dishonesty and miscommunication stemming from cultural differences and misunderstandings between them. Because he is either publicly opposed, emotionally misinterpreted, or relegated to an exotic picture, each interaction represents a failure to reach mutual understanding. As a result, his interactions with these ladies do not resolve his cultural displacement; instead, they reveal his inability to fully belong to the cultural and emotional structures of the society he lives in, highlighting that physical proximity to others reveal his inability to fully belong to the cultural and emotional structures of the society he lives in, highlighting that physical proximity to others does not guarantee an authentic emotional experience.

2. 2. 2. Intimacy as a Site of Symbolic Revenge and Power Reversal

Mustafa Saeed’s relationships with Western women are not based solely on attraction and difference; they eventually show a more profound and intentional purpose. They serve as an instrument for him to enact symbolic revenge against the colonial West. These connections are motivated by a deliberate effort to undo historical power dynamics rather than an emotional

need or a desire for connection. In this way, intimacy becomes a setting in which interpersonal communication is inextricably linked to broader political and cultural conflicts.

Mustafa is clearly placing his actions within the colonial framework when he says, “I’ll liberate Africa with my penis” (Salih 88). This illustrates how much of what he does is influenced by his desire to use sexual conquest as a method of responding to the oppressive nature of colonialism. Instead of trying to understand himself or to achieve equality with others, he regards intimacy as a source of conflict and uses it to gain control over those who represent the coloniser’s world, in a broader historical context. As a result, his relationships become a distorted way of resisting through domination rather than through connection. In her article “A Quest for Liberation: Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North* as a Postcolonial Rewriting”, Nuha Atroosh clearly supports this idea: In *Tayeb Salih Speaks: Four Interviews with the Sudanese Novelist*,

Tayeb Salih speaks about Mustafa’s “Female misogynistic conquest” by saying “Mustafa wants to inflict on Europe the degradation which it had imposed upon his people. He wants to rape Europe in a metaphorical fashion”. In other words, sexual domination becomes Mustafa’s instrument in his battle against the British Empire (46).

This desire for revenge is also reinforced by his self-portrayal as changing the colonial power structure by dominating Western women, as he states, “I have come to you as a conqueror” (Salih 50), which depicts his effort to establish authority in a setting influenced by the colonial past. In his interactions with many women, such as Sheila Greenwood and Isabella Seymour, this situation is clear in the way he creates an emotional distance while claiming psychological authority with them. He does not put himself in a position of vulnerability and intimacy, nor does he allow any term in the relationship to be defined by anyone other than himself. The ladies, who approach him with varying degrees of honesty, are progressively drawn into a

relationship in which he maintains his distance while they grow attached to him. This situation is not indicative of an emotional evolution toward something that comes naturally, but rather a purposeful plan to control. Thus, the primary purpose of his relationships is domination and control rather than genuine connection.

Ann Hammond and Sheila Greenwood are two women whose experiences exemplify both the destructive consequences of this approach and the emotional intensity and instability of the relationships. Their deaths by suicide illustrate how Mustafa's response to these women is marked by his emotional distance rather than grief. Instead of mourning the deaths of these women, they become just another illustration of the larger pattern of domination that defines his relationships with them.

Unlike other women, Jean Morris does not let Mustafa dominate her via his will and beliefs regarding what her role should be in his world. Her unwillingness to comply with Mustafa's efforts to shape her as a subordinate creates a struggle between the two of them for control over their lives and relationship, to the detriment of both parties. In the course of growing to love her, Mustafa becomes increasingly obsessed with Jean because she does not conform to the expectations and framework of domination he established. She verbally and emotionally rejects him, loudly insulting him and claiming that his face is the most disgusting she has ever seen. His sense of dominance is severely damaged by this encounter, which also marks a change in their relationship. Mustafa's deepest reaction is a desire for revenge by stating, "I swore I would one day make her pay for that" (Salih 31). The relationship between him and his estranged wife ends with Mustafa killing her, which represents an ultimate act of mutual destruction. It therefore represents the violent failure of his attempt to use personal methods to control her.

Overall, Mustafa Saeed's relationships are shown in *Season of Migration to the North* as intensely conflicted spaces where revenge, desire and colonial memory collide. These

interactions show how profoundly colonial power systems still influence identity, people's behaviour, and relationships, even when they seem to oppose those structures. Thereby making social interaction a place of conflict, tension, and psychological breakdown.

2. 3. Return to Sudan and Reverse Displacement

Mustafa's movement between Sudan and England does not constitute a simple migration; instead, it leads to a return to violence, identity confusion, and internal struggle and instability. Reverse displacement in *Season of Migration to the North* refers to Mustafa Saeed's inability to find stability in his homeland. Despite his return to Sudan, he is still shaped and affected by his previous experiences in England, which create a form of internal division and exile.

2. 3. 1. Reintegration in Sudan and the Illusion of Belonging

Mustafa Saeed's arrival back in Sudan is a welcome return to the end of a long process of cultural displacement. His return to reside in the Nile Valley after having spent many years in England implies a move towards familiarity, security, and cultural ties again. His rejoining of Sudanese society appears to be perfect on the surface, as he adopts the outward signs of a stable and respectable life. However, this return conceals a more profound, ongoing sense of cultural alienation, creating the appearance of reintegration rather than a true sense of belonging. Mustafa consciously shapes his life in accordance with local norms upon arriving in the Sudanese village. He marries Hosna Bint Mahmoud, builds a home, and integrates into all aspects of village life. By doing so, he allows the community to perceive him as an average member, thereby enabling him to become part of the social structure without revealing anything about his past in England. His actions demonstrate that he is intentionally trying to fit in, as he chooses not to talk about his time living in England and tries to make himself appear like an average, ordinary person. Therefore, his return is both performative and physical, as he

deliberately controls how others see him. The views of the people around him also create this assumed normality for him.

To the village people, Mustafa is seen as a timid, quiet, and respectable person: “Mustafa during his whole stay in the village had never done anything which could cause offence, that he regularly attended the mosque for Friday prayers, and that he was ‘always ready to give of his labour and his means in glad times and sad’” (Salih 16). The complicated past hidden beneath his composed exterior is not readily apparent, at least not at first. Yet, the unnamed narrator himself had a little curiosity about Mustafa from the first time he saw him. He seemed very calm and strange to him; he did not recognise his face at their first meeting, which made him curious about who he was. However, on the surface, Mustafa appeared completely immersed in the village’s rhythms. As a result, this external look of belonging shaped the perception that his homecoming had eased the tensions caused by his previous displacement from his homeland.

Throughout the story, it becomes apparent that this sense of belonging to a community holds little significance. Mustafa’s refusal to discuss his history is a purposeful act of concealment more than mere modesty. For him, there is an absolute division between his old life in England and his new life in Sudan, as if the two cannot lie together. This reflects Bhabha’s notion of unhomeliness, as he is stuck between two cultural spaces. The narrator learns that this separation is indicated when he is not entirely truthful in his narrative, emphasising that there are parts of his life he chooses not to share. His selective retelling of his experience indicates that his attempt to fit back into village life has been very carefully planned so it allows him to participate in the village but, at the same time, not to be completely familiar with or known by the community, as the narrator’s father described him:” a man who kept himself to himself and about whom not much was known” (Salih 14).

Although his domestic life looks to be stable, he does not have a genuine emotional connection with the people there. His marriage, for instance, does not seem to represent a strong personal bond; rather, it seems to satisfy social norms. As a result, his lifestyle in Sudan is governed more by fitting in with society than by having a place where he truly fits in. He has been given a place in society, but that place does not necessarily represent how he feels inside. As a result, his reintegration into society is based mainly on how he appears on the outside, rather than on how he has reconciled things on the inside.

The return of Mustafa to Sudan highlights the idea that belonging can sometimes be a false sense of reality, seen through the contrast between his simple life in his original village and the unresolved complexities of his previous life in England. While he has adopted the customs and norms of that village and appears to be reintegrated into it, the past is not entirely hidden from his new life there. Those experiences represent a hidden aspect of Mustafa's identity and disrupt the artificial sense of normality he has created for himself.

The narrator's confession to Mustafa makes it painfully clear that his return to Sudan was not an effort to restore innocence and wholeness, but rather an effort to contain and control his experiences, which could never be erased. In this case, his return serves as a kind of calculated escape, which is closely linked to Bhabha's notion of unhomeliness, as he attempts to escape the internal struggles created by colonialism. By moving to the village and adopting a traditional lifestyle, he avoids confronting his psychological conflicts. But this apparent stability is fragile, maintained more by secrecy and silence than by authentic reconciliation. Thus, his reintegration is only superficial, under which a profound sense of alienation exists, indicating that his cultural displacement has only been changed rather than resolved.

2. 3. 2. Enduring Cultural Displacement and Estrangement

The physical return of Mustafa Saeed to Sudan does not signify the end of his cultural alienation and displacement, as these continue to operate in a more subtle, internalised manner.

Instead of conveying his sense of displacement through obvious differences, he expresses it through secrecy, distance, and the difficulty of building authentic connections with those around him. His life in the village does not equate to being reintegrated, but rather illustrates how he continues to live in his homeland without really being part of it. Mustafa's tendency to isolate himself from his rural community is one of the strongest signs of his alienation, which reinforces Bhabha's idea of unhomeliness. While other villagers openly participate in many shared social and cultural activities, Mustafa keeps himself slightly distanced from them. His interactions with others are often characterised by being very measured and controlled; he barely gives others access to his internal world. This sense of distance is clearly intentional on his part, indicating that his previous experiences of living abroad have fundamentally changed his relationship to his own cultural surroundings in ways that are difficult to restore.

The existence of the hidden room in Mustafa's house further reinforces the feeling of separation. The room has a deeply significant and powerful importance for him, which symbolises the unresolved state of displacement from his overall past life. It is hidden from the rest of the community; it holds physical items, objects, memories and books from his past spent in England. It represents a part of his identity that cannot be accessed by people around him. Since Mustafa has successfully drawn a line between his visible life in Sudan and the inner truth shaped by his experiences abroad, the narrator's discovery of this place underscores the extent of the division in Mustafa's life. Thus, the room serves as proof that even though he has returned to his homeland, he has not erased his previous experiences because they become part of his identity structure, and they have now been transferred to a hidden, private sphere of his life.

Through the character of Mustafa Saeed, *Season of Migration to the North* presents the condition of cultural displacement not only as a temporary situation that can simply be returned from, but also as an everlasting state that reconfigures an individual's relationship to origins,

community, and self. The physical return of Mustafa to his own homeland does not ensure cultural reunification; instead, it reveals the extent of enduring estrangement. Thus, his existence in his own homeland is defined by an unresolved distance rather than by true belonging to Sudan.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* through the character of Mustafa Saeed, who represents cultural displacement as a complicated and lasting phenomenon that unfolds across multiple social, geographical, and symbolic spaces. By examining Mustafa Saeed's life from his early years in Sudan to his relocation to England and ultimately his return to his homeland, cultural displacement is shown as a process that is not only caused by physical migration but also created and maintained by unequal cultural encounters and representation systems that influence how people are viewed and positioned.

His departure for England offered him not only opportunities for success but also the chance to separate from his native origins. His connections with Western civilisation highlight the complexities of cultural perception and otherness, "the term used by Edward Said", as he is both observed and understood through pre-existing perceptions. This condition is not solved by his adaptation to England; rather, it has been reshaped.

His relationships with Western women provide a space for negotiation of cultural differences that are sometimes misconceived. These types of relations reflect larger colonial tensions and struggles. It was simply an extension of his original separation from Sudan and his desire to broaden his career. Going to the West offered him both opportunities and separation from his native origins. The cultural displacement experienced by Mustafa Saeed was not limited to his social relationships and interactions but also affected his sense of self, leading to his recent loss of identity

Chapter Three:

Identity Loss

Introduction

Based on the previous chapter, which analyses cultural displacement in *Season of Migration to the North* as a lived experience situation that influenced Mustafa's connections, behaviours, and position within various cultural settings, cultural displacement is not only an external factor that separates individuals from their surroundings and community but also has an internal influence on the formation, comprehension and maintenance of identity. Thus, displacement not only represents a state of non-belonging but also serves as a mechanism for redefining personal identity. This chapter shifts attention from external indicators of cultural displacement to the internal effects by examining Mustafa Saeed's shifting between cultural backgrounds, which led him to lose a stable, coherent sense of self over time. His experiences in both Sudan and England created a situation in which no single identity could be properly maintained. Thus, this chapter examines how identity loss arises directly from prolonged cultural displacement. This draws attention to the way in which physical movement and external dislocation result in internal conflict and instability, showing that the loss of self-belonging eventually mirrors the inability to fit into any cultural environment.

3. 1. The Fragmented Sense of Self and the Construction of False

Identities

In Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, Mustafa Saeed's identity is not presented as cohesive and stable; instead, it is constantly fractured and rebuilt throughout his life in both Sudan and England. The contradictions that have contributed to shaping his identity are the product of how others perceive and interpret him, and how he behaves and performs in different contexts, both within and outside Sudan. Rather than having a stable inner core from which he could grow, Mustafa's identity is expressed through a number of changing roles and self-created personas that adapt to the expectations of the surrounding situation. This collapse

does not occur only temporarily; it is established as a defining characteristic of his life, revealing the fundamental lack of stability by which he understands and presents himself.

3. 1. 1. The Adoption of Fabricated Identities

The life of Mustafa Saeed in England is characterised by an ongoing creation of fake and false identities that helped him create a situation in a society that sees him through rigid colonial stereotypes. Instead of rejecting them and asserting a consistent, stable, and real identity, he internalises these preconceptions and transforms them into roles he carefully plays. As a result, his identity becomes a site of creation rather than of existence, shaped by what he believes the colonial imagination requires of him. Through this way, Mustafa deliberately creates several identities rather than just "having" them, thereby eliminating the notion of a single, cohesive, and stable sense of self.

In several situations, especially with English women, Mustafa represents himself in different ways when he takes on identities and stories that support the stereotype of the mysterious and dangerous “Oriental”. He uses his own background and heritage to impress women by crafting elaborate stories about the desert, camels, and exotic locations. These are not an accurate representation of who he is or his origins, but are used to satisfy Westerners’ fantasy world. This aligns with Said’s Orientalism, as Mustafa exploits Western fantasies about the exotic Eastern man. He is aware that English women view him through Orientalist stereotypes, and he uses these expectations to attract and manipulate them. Thus, this fake depiction of himself presents him not as a man with a stable, coherent identity but as a symbolic persona formed by exotic visuals.

Mustafa’s admission of using different names when the lawyers asked him, “that you were Hassan and Charles and Amin and Mustafa and Richard?” “Yes” (Salih 35) further strengthened the instability of his identity and showed that he is aware of what he was doing.

Every name represents a distinct version of Mustafa, implying that his identity is neither constant nor unchanging. Instead, it is something that he creates and destroys, depending on the situation. This diversity of names reveals a more profound division: rather than having a single identity that changes, he has multiple identities that are incompatible. His adoption of these various identities stems from his inability to maintain a stable sense of self after living between two cultural worlds. His admission, “I am no Othello. I am a lie”, “This Mustafa Saeed does not exist. He is an illusion, a lie. I ask of you to rule that the lie be killed” (Salih 33), highlights his awareness that these identities are fake and fabricated, and it reflects his fragmentation and loss of his authentic selfhood.

Mustafa’s fabricated identities are not just temporary coping mechanisms but have become the primary means by which he interacts with the world in England. His identity depends entirely upon the way others see him and how they want him to be. This reflects what Bhabha call “in-betweenness”, where he negotiates between conflicting cultural identities, and also aligns with Edward Said’s Otherness, as he constructs these identities based on Western expectations. His encounters with Western women are not built on seeing him as a real and cohesive person with his own individuality, but as an exotic creation, and he consciously perpetuates this view of himself. Therefore, he has become both a creator and a product of colonial fantasy. As these identities develop together, Mustafa’s authenticity is destroyed, and he can no longer distinguish between performance and his selfhood.

Overall, Mustafa’s adoption of these fabricated identities represents significant identity loss rather than cultural adaptation. As Esmail Zohdi highlights in his article “Lost-identity; A Result of ‘Hybridity’ and ‘Ambivalence’ in Tayeb Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*”:

Hybridity and merged identity happen to the ones who are trapped between two different cultures, that of the colonizers and that of themselves as the colonized.

They live a dual life; sometimes among the colonizers with the images of their

own culture and home, and sometimes among themselves with the images of the alien culture which they have lived for some periods. As the result, these people are all along their lives vacillating between two cultures which brings them merged identity. But Mustafa loses his identity because on the way of his goal to revenge on the colonizers' and the North's world, he has become a part of them. Thus, he cannot escape from the coloniser's world (150).

Mustafa has neither assimilated into the foreign society nor retained any continuity of his Sudanese identity; rather, he exists within a fragmented space in which identity is constantly constructed, reconstructed, and eliminated. This is closely related to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which led to the creation of an "in-between" identity in which Mustafa's sense of self is characterised by division, fragmentation, and instability.

3. 1. 2. The Inability to Belong and the Condition of "In-Betweenness"

Mustafa Saeed's identity in *Season of Migration to the North* represents the condition of "in betweenness," in which he is caught between two distinct cultural societies, to which he cannot fully belong. This relates to Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, in which identity is formed between two cultures. However, in the case of Mustafa, "in-between" space does not foster a positive and creative hybrid identity but rather creates fragmentation and disintegration. Upon coming back from England, he is not able to reintegrate into society as a Sudanese man, nor does he continue to be connected to how he was once before living in his homeland. Instead, he occupies a liminal space between two distinct worlds that have both failed to fully assimilate him, resulting in perpetual existential displacement. This displacement represents more than just geographical or cultural isolation; it has led to a larger existential crisis of belonging.

Even though Mustafa physically returned to Sudan, there is no sense of actually reintegrating into the community. In fact, he lives in isolation, refuses to have intimate relationships with others in the village, and keeps his verbal communication very limited, especially about who he was in the past. Even the narrator's father described him not as a local person but as "a stranger who had come here five years ago" (Salih 14). His encounters with people are limited and formal, suggesting that he no longer shares the same social and cultural background as those around him. In his participation in the village activities, there seems to be an inner, fundamental feeling of being away from where he is, as if he has just returned physically, but not in terms of existence and belonging.

Mustafa's connection to his homeland is defined by distance and absence rather than genuine interaction. In his eyes, the Sudan he once left is no longer the same as the one he returned to, and he is now a completely different man from when he departed, because his experiences in England have changed his identity and perception. The gap created between them through both transformations cannot be crossed. The fact that he does not speak about his past time and life in England exacerbates this division and fragmentation. His lack of a full narration about his life there reaffirms his status as an outsider to the community from which he originally came. The state of "in-betweenness" is further highlighted by the narrator's slow realisation of Mustafa's internal division. By the time he constructs Mustafa's story from all the pieces he has put together, he realises that Mustafa exists both inside and outside of several identities, but he does not truly belong to any of them. This not only reflects the concept of "hybridity," which emerges from the combination of two cultures, but also represents a state of fragmentation in which neither of the two cultures is fully joined to him. His life is built on absence, isolation, and his absence from both cultures, which characterise his relationship with both England and Sudan.

Overall, Mustafa Saeed exemplifies a complete lack of belonging through an ongoing sense of being suspended between two cultures which can never be reconciled. His existence becomes characterised by isolation, fragmentation and silence from both Sudan and England. Through this process, identity became a realm of displacement rather than connection. Thus, Mustafa's life exemplifies a self that remains part of multiple worlds yet never fully exists in any one world.

3. 2. Secrecy, Doubling, and the Hidden Self

Secrecy and concealment are two key terms that play a significant role in the way Mustafa Saeed's fragmented identity is depicted in Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. Mustafa is not presented to readers as a whole and transparent self but is created through concealment, staying silent, and revealing himself in a controlled manner. This duality leads to a clear delineation between what can be seen and the invisible. His life is structured around this duality: an external identity that appears stable yet is integrated with the villagers as a unit; and an internal identity that comprises layers of complexity, conflicting experiences, and unresolved matters from his past in England.

3. 2. 1. The Secret Room as a Symbol of a Divided Identity

The narrator's discovery of Mustafa's hidden room functions as a significant moment in the novel. It serves as a concealed interior place where the unresolved pieces of his past are hidden and offers a clear picture of his divided and conflicted sense of self, which means that it is more than just a place or room; it is a secured archive of a life that is incompatible with his current existence in Sudan. Thus, Tayeb Salih materialises Mustafa's identity loss through this hidden room, turning an overview psychological state into a concrete, geographical reality.

The secrecy of the room provides the foundation for its meaning. The act of deliberately omitting it from the views of anyone around him, even those who are close to him, serves to

keep this aspect of his identity hidden. His act of concealment symbolises an unwillingness or inability to connect his past with his present, which is closely related to Homi Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness, which describes the internal condition of feeling disconnected from the homeland. The room becomes a divided space that separates an external, composed and silent villager from someone who has developed characteristics from his time spent in England. The separation of space by a lock also adds to the symbolic interpretation as something repressed or contained; this signifies not only a division but also a partitioned identity. What is inside the room is not to exist with his outer life but rather to exist as a separate entity.

Mustafa's simple life in the village contrasts sharply with what the narrator finds when he eventually enters the room. By stating "Not a single Arabic book. A graveyard. A mausoleum. An insane idea. A prison. A huge joke. A treasure chamber." (Salih 98), the narrator's use of this conflicting terms serve to capture the shocking and contradictory nature of the room. It is stocked with items from a foreign world, including furniture, books, and personal items that depict his past life in England, which have been carefully arranged in a way that is intended to create a sense of continuity and to create an atmosphere that reminds him of his past life in England.

Through the room, the narrator comes across an empty notebook, which was meant to be Saeed's autobiography, but there is no content other than the dedication. The fact that the notebook is blank represents Mustafa's complete loss of identity. While he has thousands of English-language books, rich in vocabulary, he cannot find enough words to tell his own story because his identity has been lost between two worlds. Therefore, the room acts as an encapsulated, fragmented portion of another identity that did not vanish but was concealed.

The fact that there are several Western items present within the context of the Sudanese room strengthens the symbolically embodied meaning that the room has as a site of tension for Mustafa. It is a reflection of the internal conflict within Mustafa and the various aspects of these

contrary cultural spaces in his own identity, existing apart from one another yet incapable of forming a harmonious synthesis; instead, they remain at odds, separated by concealment. This room represents fragmentation and loss, in which two mismatched identities are placed in a state of separation from each other. Thus, it reflects the coexistence of two or more cultures, and it demonstrates the inability to have these cultural fits together simultaneously within one cohesive individual.

Overall, the secret room symbolises an identity that has become so fragmented that it can no longer exist as a whole. It shows identity as something split across different spaces, kept in pieces, and disconnected from real experiences. It does not help to explain Mustafa's identity; rather, it shows the impossibility of understanding him. Accordingly, the room merely demonstrates disconnection and represents the physical reality of a self that has lost coherence and continuity.

3. 2. 2. Living a Double Life in the Village

The life of Mustafa Saeed in the village of Wad Hamid is characterised by a continual state of doubling, in which his external presence is interwoven with an unclear, unsettled interior. This duplication does not have the symbolic nature that the secret room represents; rather, it exists on the immediate level of everyday life, reflected through his interactions and behaviours. To the villagers, he is a figure of stability and virtue, "always ready to give of his labour and his means in glad times and sad" (Salih 16). He appears calm, orderly, and normal; however, beneath this external calm lies a deep sense of internal instability and division that are never fully revealed.

After Mustafa's return to Sudan, he does not integrate his experiences in England into his current African identity. He makes a clean break from his previous life and creates a new identity as a well-respected and decent family man in Sudan. He bought him a farm, married Hosna bint Mahmoud, participated in the village's activities, and developed himself in

agriculture. The development of this perfect, normal life allows him to avoid any attention that would expose his hidden past in England.

To the inhabitants of the village, he was a man of significance; yet, their vision of him is limited to the outward appearance he presents. The narrator is increasingly wary of the mask Mustafa created because it appears too perfect in its integration into the community. This integration and respectability imply a tool for silencing the past, yet they prove that the original and combined identity has been lost.

The narrator's suspicions are confirmed on a night filled with drinking. When the narrator is with some of the local inhabitants, they witness this very same villager (Mustafa), who has always been unflappable, speaking Arabic, suddenly start reciting English poetry. He was impressed by how well the poetry was performed: "I heard him reciting English poetry in a clear voice and with an impeccable accent" (Salih 21). This functions as both the primary evidence of Mustafa's doubling and as a moment of awareness which helped the narrator realise that he is another person from who he appears to be, by stating, "it's a clear you're someone other than the person you claim to be," I said to him. 'Wouldn't it be better if you told me the truth?" (Salih 22). His silence and emotional distance create curiosity and ambiguity. Thus, it transformed Mustafa from a neighbour and normal person to a mystery that hides a deep colonial experience.

Mustafa's performance is driven by an intense fear of social exposure. He is conscious that the community of Wad Hamid operates under strict religious faith and tradition. His greatest fear was that the villagers would learn about his disgraceful past in England, including his predatory relationships with Western women and the trial for his wife's murder. He would automatically be described as an infidel or an outsider. This fear of the villagers' tongues is shown by stating:

I was afraid you'd go and talk to the others, that you'd tell them I wasn't the man I claimed, which would — would cause a certain amount of embarrassment to them and to me. I thus have one request to make of you — that you promise me on your honour, that you swear to me, you won't divulge to a soul anything of what I'm going to tell you tonight.' He gave me a searching look, and I said to him: 'That depends upon what you say to me. How can I promise when I know nothing about you?' I swear to you,' he said, 'that nothing of what I shall tell you will affect my presence in this village. I'm a man in full possession of my faculties, peaceful, and wanting only good for this village and its people. (Salih 23).

As a result, this doubling serves as a defence against the destructive force of social judgment.

Mustafa Saeed's doubling is the final indication of identity loss. He has developed a character with two shadows, where each shadow comes from a different sun, creating a total darkness for him. He successfully performs normality, which fools an entire community; however, he is still unable to achieve a feeling of peace or belonging to his homeland. His silence, performance, and secrets all suggest a division of self and a loss of identity that cannot be easily reconstructed. Tayib Salih portrays, through the character of Mustafa Saeed, how the postcolonial experience often leaves individuals in a state of duplicity, leading a life they do not own to hide a sense of self they can no longer find. This duplicity can be interpreted through Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness, where identities become fragmented and lost in response to cultural displacement and internal division.

3. 2. 3. The Unknowability of the Self

In *Season of Migration to the North*, the high point of identity loss does not occur through an epiphany or a sudden disclosure of the truth, but rather through the narrator's recognition that Mustafa Saeed is unknowable and cannot be understood. The narrator attempts

to reconstruct Mustafa's true character from the remaining pieces of his multiple personalities. Nonetheless, Mustafa's identity is extremely inscrutable and uncertain, indicating that his divided self, shaped by colonial experience, has not only disjoined him but also eclipsed the essence of his belonging. The inability to know the true self of Mustafa is a result of multiple contradictory identities being played out by him- the scholar, murderer, predator, and righteous farmer-which led to an ultimate void that cannot be filled by any manner of investigation.

The narrator becomes increasingly obsessed with and captivated by Mustafa, with a strong desire to understand everything and to form an organised narrative. Despite all of his efforts to create this coherent structure, the opposite occurs; Mustafa's existence resists having any form. Even after he enters the hidden chamber and reads the various private papers from Mustafa's past life, the narrator finds himself asking more questions rather than finding the answers. The way he lived in the village with a double identity suggested that he did not exist as a real person but as an illusion of who he was and of his own reality.

The ambiguity the narrator feels is echoed in his growing frustration as he begins to recognise that the man he thought was a friend is a stranger, and that he will never know the true depth of who he was. The enduring impact of colonial experiences leaves the individual with nothing more than the existence of being a "phantom," a word the narrator uses to describe the erasure of the authentic self. Thus, Mustafa has a presence, but he has no definable form. This sense of absence is vividly conveyed through the narrator's portrayal of Mustafa as a creature of shadow. He muses, "Occasionally the disturbing thought occurs to me that Mustafa Saeed never happened, that he was in fact a lie, a phantom, a dream or a nightmare that had come to the people of that village one suffocatingly dark night, and when they opened their eyes to the sunlight he was nowhere to be seen" (Salih 41). This suggests that the loss of identity has made Mustafa both a historical and psychological impossibility. He experiences life as a series of reflections in others' eyes. He never has any consistency with which to build an interior

being that can be understood directly by others. Mustafa's lack of consistency in personality made the narrator see him as "an insane idea" and "a huge joke". Thus, he has lost all sense of identity, going from human to ghost or icon.

Moreover, the "unknowable" nature of Mustafa Saeed serves as a reflection of the narrator's emerging identity crisis. The narrator is faced with the inadequacies of his identity through his inability to comprehend Mustafa. When gazing at Mustafa's reflection, the narrator sees his own image in the glass. Mustafa's ambiguity is not an isolated instance; it is shared by others who were influenced by the North. His inability to provide a clear autobiography of himself, leaving behind just an empty book with an ambiguous dedication, can be viewed both as an act of final resistance and as an admission of failure to know himself.

3. 3. Destructive Behaviours and Disappearance as Evidence of Identity

Loss

The final sign of identity loss is found in the shift from a fragmented self internally to a dislocated self externally. The life of Mustafa Saeed is driven by a force that led him toward the end of his own life. His inability to hold onto both lives resulted in violent acts and eventually led to his disappearance. This final act does not just signify the end of his physical presence but also serves as a symbolic conclusion to his loss of identity. Through Mustafa's destructive behaviours, including manipulation, violence, and fabricated identities, Salih demonstrates that a self created from false identification and colonial influence will ultimately fail from its inability to sustain itself. The result will be an explosive collapse, which occurs when a self becomes weighed down by conflicting information and can no longer maintain any sense of reality.

3. 3. 1. Violence and the Breakdown of Moral Identity

In the life of Mustafa Saeed, the violence that occurs is not unplanned or an outside event; rather, it is the product of a deep inner breakdown of his being. The murder of Jean

Morris functions both as an absolute breaking down of his moral self and as the moment when his fractured identities finally collapse on one another. Thus, killing Jean Morris is the only solution he sees for a life based on the transitory nature of colonial influence and personal revenge. His confusion over how to separate desire, power, and his own identity leads him to lose all sense of ethics and self-coherence, implying that when the self is lost, destruction becomes the only remaining way for self-expression.

The relationships that Mustafa Saeed built in England were never created on an emotional connection; they were purely based on intellectual level and sexual conquest, which replicated the violent nature of colonialism and its influence on him. He regarded himself as a "conqueror" or an "invader" in relation to English women he seduces, through seeing them as territories to be occupied.

Unlike other women, Jean Morris challenges these dynamics and offers a different way of looking at Mustafa's situation as the exotic man. Their relationship is shocking because it is not only marked by violence but also by how desire, love, and destruction are all mixed together. Jean mocks Mustafa's "Oriental" performance, which led to tearing away his defensive psychological armour. Through her actions, Jean destroys the most important cultural symbols of Western culture to Mustafa: his books, silk scarves and rare manuscripts. This led him to release the emptiness and void within himself, forcing him to confront his own hollow existential state without items or symbols. The violence between them represents the "germ of infection", the psychological influence and displacement caused by colonialism, which has overtaken Mustafa's inner control. The description of the murder scene itself has a haunting, ritualistic quality, which discloses the complete absence of any moral compass.

Mustafa recalls the event not as a crime of passion; it was a moment of extreme clarity when he experienced his desire and hate towards her coming together. He says: "pressed down the dagger with my chest until it had all disappeared between her breasts. I could feel the hot

blood gushing from her chest.” (Salih 115). This moment marks the final destruction and loss of identity. Mustafa kills Jean to not only liberate himself from her but also as a form of revenge and in an attempt to liberate the colonial subject within him that she had imprisoned, the colonial subject who had been defined through European eyes. It is ironic that, in engaging in this act of self-liberation, he commits the worst ethical crime, demonstrating how much his ethical being has been destroyed by his existence. Mustafa can no longer tell the difference between pursuing love and pursuing power. Therefore, to possess someone is to destroy that person, and to be known means to die.

Ultimately, the destruction of the moral self functions as a strong indicator of how far Saeed has fractured his own sense of self. The act of committing violence is convincing proof that he has lost his identity completely because he is no longer able to rely on an ethical and stable core to guide his behaviour. This violence against Jean Morris also signifies the impossibility of the postcolonial subject to achieve peace across a split identity. Mustafa’s inability to distinguish between his desires and the power dynamics that accompany the colonial experience and influence results in a situation in which he can never achieve an accurate self-identification.

3. 3. 2. Disappearance as a Final Act of Identity Loss

The end of Mustafa Saeed’s struggle with identity is not expressed through revealing or reconciling, but through an unanticipated and unmerited disappearance. His death, which is presumed to have happened in the Nile, is reported without certainty of its occurrence and without any witnesses present at the time. This ambiguity is not accidental; it is a significant component of Mustafa’s loss of identity as presented in the novel. Mustafa reaches no ultimate self-awareness, nor does he create a cohesive narrative that could offer insight into his life. Thus, Mustafa’s end and disappearance are characterised by uncertainty, absence and silence,

rather than by any sense of identity completion. The circumstances of his disappearance raise many questions that cannot be easily answered. The villagers have super actively sought him without any conclusive evidence of his location: “the whole village, carrying lamps, combed the river bank, while some put out in boats, but though they searched the whole night through it was without avail” (Salih 41). In this case, death is assumed rather than verified, created by conjecture rather than absolute certainty.

The narrator’s own thoughts about Mustafa’s death further show the uncertainty and increased ambiguity, as he is unable to determine whether it was an accidental death or a suicidal act: “in any case, he had died, by drowning or by suicide— God alone knows.” (Salih 51). Mustafa’s disappearance is understood as the last sign of the inner division and identity loss on which his former existence was built. In *Season of Migration to the North*, Mustafa’s identity has always been defined as divided, hidden, and complex. He has created multiple versions of himself, assumes various personas, and hides important parts of his past life in England, yet none of these identities is cohesive and stable. His disappearance serves as the final act, where he can no longer maintain any of those fractured senses of self, and it represents the lack of a cohesive or unified identity, meaning nothing remains to be understood and recovered. As a result, His death not only ended his internal struggle, but also confirmed that his identity had been completely destroyed and lost.

Overall, the disappearance of Mustafa Saeed shows that identity formation is impossible through cultural displacement, because he could not bring his conflicting identities into a cohesive, stable self. He lacked inner continuity, and thus he disappeared, leaving behind only fragments and unanswered questions. This is profoundly related to Homi Bhabha’s notion of unhomeliness, where the individual completely loses his sense of belonging to the homeland. In Tayib Salih’s *Season of Migration to the North*, his disappearance functions as the most

powerful sign of the complete and final loss of identity, where the self is no longer divided or fragmented, but completely lost.

Conclusion

Through the examination of Mustafa Saeed's trajectory, it is shown that in a postcolonial framework, identity loss is not a singular event; it is a progressive fragmentation driven by the influence and trauma of cultural displacement. This chapter has demonstrated how identity loss in *Season of Migration to the North* is experienced by Mustafa Saeed as a consequence of his migration to England. Moving beyond the examination of cultural displacement in the preceding chapter, the analysis has concentrated on the visible and symbolic signs of identity loss, showing how his sense of self becomes increasingly unstable, fragmented and finally lost.

The discussion first reached the conclusion that Mustafa's identity lacks stability, is socially constructed, performed, and repeatedly denied, creating an individual with no authentic, cohesive self. Rather than maintaining a fixed identity, he adopts multiple false identities in response to external expectations. His failure and inability to unify all these experiences into a single cohesive identity left him suspended in a state of "in-betweenness" and unhomeliness, based on the notion of Homi Bhabha, making it impossible to belong to either culture.

This inner division leads an individual to live a secretive life, in which the hidden self is buried beneath many layers of masks and intellectual role-playing. The chapter has demonstrated how the loss of personal coherence can lead to a collapse of the moral self. Finally, the disappearance of Mustafa Saeed functions as the final act of identity loss. His death mirrors his inner struggles and conflicts, suggesting that for the postcolonial individual, being displaced from one's homeland is a significant emotional burden. Through the examination of

Mustafa Saeed's lost identity, it is clear that cultural displacement is a force that deprives people of their morals, their identity, and ultimately their entire existence.

General Conclusion

Cultural displacement and identity loss, as represented in Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, are not only themes in this particular postcolonial narrative but also signify an ongoing existential crisis that parallels the broader struggle to define self-existence among Sudanese people after the end of colonial rule.

This dissertation aims to investigate the cultural and psychological gap that has emerged from the colonial past, examining how cultural displacement leads to identity loss by tracing Mustafa Saeed's journey from Sudan to England, which, over time, destabilised his identity. Building on Edward Said's work on *Orientalism* and Homi Bhabha's concept of Hybridity, unhomeliness and "In-between" space, this study has shown how the interaction between two cultural frameworks can cause not only a hybrid identity but also a divided and disjointed sense of self. Mustafa's experiences illuminate the darker dimension of this interaction, where an individual's identity is constructed, enacted, and then lost altogether.

This research was guided by three research questions that directed the analysis throughout the study:

1. How does cultural displacement lead to identity loss in *Season of Migration to the North*?
2. How is cultural displacement experienced by Mustafa Saeed, and how does it effect his sense of belonging?
3. How is identity loss manifested in Mustafa Saeed's life and represented in the novel?

To answer these research questions, the study began by providing a framework for understanding Mustafa Saeed's cultural displacement in the historical context of Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where the establishment of a new cultural system and the adoption of a foreign language produced a new generation of people who were intellectually caught between two cultural worlds. Following the influence of Western education as a tool to reinforce their control over Sudan. The first part also discussed the social reforms of that period, which posed

challenges for the Sudanese people in achieving national unity. Theories of Edward Said's Orientalism and Homi Bhabha's "In between" space serve as critical instruments for exploring the lived experience of cultural displacement and its consequences.

Mustafa Saeed's experience of cultural displacement is shaped by his earlier detachment from his homeland. From childhood, his connections and interactions were characterised by emotional distance, most evident in his relationship with his mother in the first case. His journey to England was marked by a strong feeling of freedom and a desire to succeed in his career. However, his encounters with Western society heightened his sense of otherness and cultural difference. This lasting impression created a condition of instability and isolation rather than integration. His return to Sudan does not resolve his cultural displacement; it reinforces his estrangement. This condition creates a sense of unhomeliness, a concept used by Homi Bhabha, and leaves him caught between two cultures, never belonging to either, which ultimately leads to the loss of his sense of self.

Building on these conditions, the examination of identity loss shows how Saeed's sense of self and belonging became divided and ultimately lost. The adoption of false identities, reliance on performance and behaviour, and manipulation of language and origins all point to the absence of a cohesive, stable core identity. Mustafa's inability to establish a hybrid identity that combines his experiences is reflected in his silence and isolation, which have left him caught between two cultures, unable to belong to either. The final sign of identity loss is shown in his disappearance. His death symbolised the complete destruction of the self.

Overall, this research concludes that Tayib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* presents cultural displacement as the primary force that profoundly affects identity stability and consistency. The character Mustafa has been subjected to the pressures resulting from the oppression of colonialism, culture and society. Thus, his identity can no longer be characterised as steady or stable.

Based on the findings of this dissertation, future research could analyse the concept of identity loss throughout *Season of Migration to the North*, with a focus on the unnamed narrator, who experienced identity instability in a different way from Mustafa Saeed due to his profound obsession with Mustafa's story. This obsession later gave rise to a sense of inner struggle and confusion. This insight could provide broader opportunities to conduct a comparative study of the unnamed narrator's experience of an identity crisis and Mustafa Saeed's case. This would broaden the understanding of identity loss in the novel beyond Mustafa's narrative.

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