Postcolonial Masculinity, Precarious Power and Desire in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*

Tayyaba Ahsan[1], Sarah Abdullah[2]

Abstract

Multiple feminists and postcolonial theorists have explored the "female experience" in the history of colonization and the postcolonial life. However male experience within the same context has not been processed enough. Gender scholars have recently begun to draw attention to the gap within postcolonial scholarship that represents male identity in legendary or heroic manner, thus repudiating the masculine sexual anxieties fostered by colonialism in the first place and by Orientalism afterwards. Taking up Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, this article will explore how the protagonist in the novel deploys his sexuality to occupy a privileged subject position in the novel; delineating how the sexualized political control over women's bodies inspires the construction of his postcolonial subjectivity. In doing so it will address the obscure notions of masculinity, the male postcolonial experience and the sexual anxieties of the African male in postcolonial African novel in opposition to the unidimensional representation of hypermasculinity in Oriental discourse.

Keywords: Desire, Masculinity, Novel, Postcolonial, Power, Tayeb Salih

Season of Migration to the North is considered as magnum opus of post-colonial travel narratives. It is written by Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih and focuses on the experience of an immigrant from the East in the western world. Mustafa Sa'eed, the protagonist of the novel, counters colonial violence by subjugating white women to his sexual prowess. The novel is referred to as a parody of colonial narrative by Wail S. Hassan (2003) as it erodes and disrupts the authority of colonialist European discourse through its double-voiced intertextuality of the past European and Arabian texts that thematizes the cross-cultural encounter in Europe (84). Mustafa, a very bright student whose wanderlust and intelligence takes him to England forms a very complex and disturbing relationship with the West in the novel. His troubled relationship with the western intellectuals and his love affairs with British women lie at the center of the narrative. Mustafa seems to attract women by appealing to their Oriental fantasies and bonding with them in unconventional ways. All his relationships end in tragedy as three of his mistresses commit suicide while he murders the fourth one. Mustafa's sexuality and the havoc it creates on himself and others is the focal point of the novel.

Setting Mustafa's life story in the era of British rule, Salih wants his reader to understand how cultural history and international politics affect the formation of postcolonial gender identity. By the violent dramatization of these turbulent relations between master/slave, white/black, Orient/Occident, Salih compels the reader to ponder and scrutinize the extent to which the colonial classifications of race allow themselves to be confronted. Just like the colonizers penetrated the land of the colonized which he considers "The Rape of Africa", the protagonist in Salih's novel wants to harm

colonizer's culture and national integrity as a whole by infecting their women with the same germ. This argumentation gives us an insight into the male postcolonial experience and feelings by placing his predicament into a broader historical narrative. It would be wrong here to define him and his actions only in sociocultural perspective.

The sexual act in its metaphorical meaning within the novel signifies the power politics in interracial relationships. The text is skeptical of any possibility for black man and a white woman to escape the relations of power in which they are initially steeped whether sexual or otherwise.

The question posed is of special relevance in view of the recent changes in the Middle East that have come to redefine the region's relations with Europe.

The article "On Borderline between Shores: Space and Place in Season of Migration to the North," argues that for the colonial "taking" of his country, Saeed commits to pursue revenge by seducing the British women with the pretention of satisfying their "orientalist fantasies" (Velez 191). But according to critics like Davidson, Mustafa's ventures with ladies in England, speaks of the resentment of the colonized subject against the colonizer. In his opinion the response to this novel is quite often a go to "re-establish the dominance of the emasculated, colonized male by attacking the women of the colonizer" (Davidson 388).

It is important to note here that Salih's idea of masculinity draws inspiration from the sexual politics of Fanon's work and the character sketch of Mustafa Saeed holds resemblance in particular to his theory of "New Algerian man". One of the chief strategies of colonialism was the way it striped the black men of their authority over their

women as the protectors of the house. Consequently it stirred impotency and insecurity within the colonized man who according to Fanon, wanted to occupy settler's place by sleeping in his bed with his wife to regain his lost masculinity.

Exploiting English women by seducing and then betraying them can be seen as reverse form of colonization and means of Mustafa's anticolonial resistance while some critic hold the view that Mustafa launches a "racially centered sexual crusade against Britain" (Tran 2). On the contrary it can be said that Mustafa wages a war of vengeance against the West in the similar way in which it "penetrated", "possessed" and "emasculated" the East/South. So he adopts colonial mimicry as a strategy of defiance against colonial discourse. In this sense European woman's body is an emblem of western supremacy guaranteeing the feelings of power and possession to the colonized with each sexual triumph. Salih's postcolonial aesthetics does not stand isolated from the colonial memories of the past at least on the part of the African male, as in the interracial relationships race implies a larger meaning that is battle for self-respect. (Hodge & Mishra 285).

Mike Velez in his article, points out that "when Sa'eed arrives in England, his psychological topography of the North ends up conjoined with the feminized "Other". This Other he intends to conquer and conquer literally, woman by woman" (194). Mustafa declares himself as the "invader" who could not forget or forgive the cruelty and arrogance of the colonial occupation in the East and the South. Consequently, it spurs him to counter this brutality of the West. As "The west won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying

organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do" (Huntington 51).

In an interview Salih, in response to Mustafa's 'violent female conquests,' comments that Mustafa wants to bring, on Europe, the same humiliation which it had inflicted upon his people. He wants to rape Europe in an allegoric manner. (Berkley & Ahmed 15-16). To use Salih's own phrase from the novel, colonialism infected the colonized victims with "the germ of violence" who combat this disease in ways that is at once problematic and effective. The above- mentioned phrase refers to the colonial history of violence.

Instead of resisting the same institution that has invaded his masculinity, Mustafa mimics the sexual violation of the colonial master by reducing white women to sexual objects and positioning them as the objectified "Other". In his excursion to the North, he is not propelled just by hatred towards the West, but also by ambition, the ambition to overpower the colonizer in his twisted ways. Rather than choosing to be a silent victim, Mustafa tries to affect the history of colonialism by launching his sexual campaign to throw back colonialism at the colonizers and avenge them in their ways. As colonization was a violent process so is decolonization, argues Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (35), Mustafa uses "sexual violence" to wage a war of vengeance upon the West so that it helps the native (Mustafa here) to get rid of his inferiority complex and set himself free from despair and inaction, erase his fears and restores his self-respect. (Fanon 94).

The "germ of violence" was sowed by the colonizer for their colonizing mission a thousand years ago. The colonized is the recipient of this germ of violence. It gets

stimulated by the instigation of colonial memory through the use of stereotypic Oriental discourse by those women who he believes hold a fascination for him the same way their forefathers were fascinated by his homeland. The women's credulous acceptance of Mustafa's lies reassures this notion and illustrates broader perspective of race relations. This supports the argument that it is the essential nature of North to yearn for the South. Those women were not attracted to Mustafa Sa'eed as a person but as an "object" of fascination belonging to South; they were attracted to his luring stories and his primitive culture. In the same manner what tempted the North to colonize the South was their wealth of natural resources, the raw materials and the mines

Mustafa accepts and make use of the very colonial discourse he seeks to dismantle and to retain colonial classifications of race in his relations with the women of the colonizer. This helps him to identify his mistresses as women of oppressive former masters, against whom he plots a revenge. The figure of the English woman arouses a threatening fear in him (as argued by Wail S. Hassan 2003) because the British Empire extended under the regime of a mighty woman, Queen Victoria, whose name is suggestive of "Victory" over those she subdued. Also, throughout the novel the metropolitan space is constantly gendered in the feminine. Thus, wherever Mustafa goes in London, he gets haunted by Victorian images. The repeated phrase; "the train carried away me to the Victoria Station", is symbolic of his journey from South to North, to the same station from which the armed troops of Britain set on their journey to conquest South. So is can be said, that crime of raping Africa was committed by or for the sake of a woman, the Queen who assumes the masculine role in this regard and possesses the phallic traits of

colonial violence. Thus Queen Victoria becomes a ubiquitous image of a cruel mighty goddess for Mustafa and every British woman appears to him, her proxy. Mustafa's masculine suffering and sexual anxiety turns his resentment towards West into his wrath and fury and he plays a revenge upon his English mistresses by subjugating them sexually in an exertion of metaphoric rejection of the West and to purify Africa from its history of colonial violence and oppression.

Fanon's identification of female body as the principal target of power and the political implications of sexual pleasure and eroticism have helped in highlighting the intricate relationship between power politics and sexuality. The black man not only remained subjected to colonial oppression and injustice, but also treated as an "object" of sexual pleasure by the white woman. In this sense he is being as much used by the English women he sleeps with for their "exotic fantasies" as he uses their bodies to infect the colonizers' territory.

If we observe after the hegemony of imperialism, Orientalism emerged as an attempt to construct an image of western superiority. Colonial powers did not only invade the lands of the natives but also infringed their representative faculty through art and literature. By means of western consciousness, the imperial power set up a biased discursive Orientalist discourse based on stereotypes, prejudices and insults about the Orient. This is how the West endeavoured to represent the Orient as Other in order to maintain the hierarchy of power. This again made a segregation between the East and the West, the former as culturally and intellectually inferior while the latter as culturally and morally superior. For the sustainability of these beliefs, stereotypes were

made clichés by their daemonic repetition in such a realistic manner that they seemed to be true. Colonization interposed the Orient's identity, culture and the language and divided the world into East-West axis i.e. masters-slaves, barbaric-civilized, traditional-modern which would never be same again. Hence colonization resulted in fragmented postcolonial identities and hegemonic Orientalist discourse of western consciousness further reinforced this division and contributed to an identity crisis.

This brings us face to face with a dilemma of black man's life. His predicament is, he has no other way but to define himself against the white man. Assimilation or hybridity cannot help him in a society that forever castes him an 'outsider' as he doesn't belong to the 'white spaces' and is despised when speaks 'too white'. This adds to his bewilderment. In such a situation there are two ways for the Orient male to reclaim his identity and lost masculinity. One is the straight rejection of the imposed "otherness" and confrontation with the colonists' narrative and stereotypic discourse. Second is the negation of his "negation" through acceptance as a covert form of defiance which Mustafa adopts by becoming what the westerners expect him to be, the "exotic Other". The reductive colonial discourses, full of stereotypes, clichés, prejudices and degradation of the "Other", compel Mustafa to counter this humiliation with the same violent approach and strategy as a reflection of barbaric and deceitful colonial activities. Mustafa teasingly exploits European's incalculable fallacies about Arabs and Africans alike. He cannot help defining his identity in any other way possible because he has already been defined in a stereotypic manner by the Orientalist imagination of the western society (Cartelli 156).

Mustafa's European partners perceive him as an Oriental text. For his mistresses, Mustafa's body is metonymic encryption of fascinating landscapes, "exotic" like those portrayed in Orientalist paintings and sketches. It tends to evoke general associations with what is wild and primitive and speaks volumes about evil carnal desire and craving for black sexuality. Mustafa's deceitful representation of exotic kind of masculinity breeds and sustains its belief of cultural superiority. In this sense, Mustafa has a close resemblance to Othello, Europe's oldest literary depiction of the 'Other'. However unlike Othello, in Saleh's novel, Mustafa's resistance to hegemonic colonial discourse becomes operative as his postcolonial subjectivity comes to play a subversive role within the text.

In Salih's novel gender becomes the appropriate means of demonstration of the cultural clash between the East and the West. Mustafa's sexaholics "preys" and "victims" are driven by their figment of imagination to the sexual prowess of the African "Incubus". Isabella Saymour turns this myth into reality when she pleas to Sa'eed in her passion, "Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god. Let me twist and turn in your wild and impassioned rites" (Salih 106). And this is where Mustafa questions his identity. It is perplexing to him to see how a person born on the other side of the Equator is treated by some as a slave and by others as a god. Where lies the focal point? Where lies his true identity? (Salih 108)

Ann, Isabella and Jean are not mere characters of the novel, in fact they are archetypes and representative of their culture, which is obvious in the way, the narrator associates them with the European city; the city often transforms into a woman. For

example: In Sa'eed's first meeting with Isabella, he tells the narrator, "The city has changed into a woman" (39). The episode of sexual encounter between Mustafa and Jean Morris if rightly said it is a 'clash', because of the metaphoric warfare setting that is suggestive of a battle between the two, the woman again appears as a city. "The city was transformed into an extraordinary woman, with her symbols and her mysterious calls, towards whom I drove my camels till their entrails ached and I myself almost died for yearning for her" (34)

As a 'liberator' Mustafa's mission is to save Africa by the destruction of the aphrodisiac "germ" of imperialistic myths that has always lain in "these woman" and the culture they belong to; the infection of the deadly disease that had plagued those women couple of years ago except that it has lain inactive for many years waiting for appropriate stimulation. But the West has made those accountable for this germ who merely "stirred" it from its centuries-long suppression, or slumber; "I had stirred up the latent depths of the disease until it had got out of control and had killed" (Salih 34) those women. The same logic works in Isabella's case when "she met him and discovered deep within herself dark areas that had previously been closed" (140) by the time.

The political aspect of the cultural conflict becomes evident when one reflects upon the idea that "politics not only ought to be but inevitably is the outcome of social interests and conflicts, and that it is in fact a superstructure upon society" (Canovan 66). In other words, politics is the framework of social believes, societal rules, regulations and philosophies upon which the social structure of any community rests. His Professor Maxwell Foster-Keen' perceives Mustafa's symbolic trial in this sense of clash of

cultures; "Mustafa Sa'eed, gentlemen of the jury, is a noble person whose mind was able to absorb western civilization but it broke his heart." So he is actually a "victim" of the "struggle" of the "conflict between two worlds" (33). Subsequently along with Sa'eed, the western civilization is also put to trial. Mustafa in this regard is aware of the truth that it is the case which is important not "him" because, obviously he is "the best example of the fact that our civilizing mission in Africa is of no avail" (93). Therefore, the relation of love and affection between the West and Africa is as impossible as it is between Sa'eed and his western mistresses.

Jean Morris, a symbol of Britain itself, is ravished by the desire to possess Mustafa, the man who represents the Orient with all its fantasies intact. The all-consuming and destructive relationship between the two has all the bearings of a tragic end. The repeated references to "The train carried me to Victoria Station and to the world of Jean Morris (29, 31, 33) is a proof of Mustafa's infatuation with the woman who emerges powerful and out of reach, an intuitive image and symbol of Empire. To Mustafa, Jean is as unachievable as Victoria Station, the city of London, and the Empire. She, just like them, is beyond his reach, ungraspable like clouds, which he always desires to possess, "a mirage [that] shimmered before me in the wilderness of longing" (Salih 33).

Throughout the novel we observe that the colonial discourse distorts the notion of gender and sexuality and puts Mustafa's masculinity into question. As compared to Ann, Sheila and Isabella who were attracted to him due to his Oriental persona, Jean Morris relates to him more as a man than as an African. She is different from the rest of his mistresses in the way she arouses genuine violence and passion in him. She is

what he at once craves and despises. For Mustafa, Jean Morris is the spectre of haunting suspicions, fears, resentment and insecurities that he harbours towards the West.

Her insults that are directed at his masculinity render him impotent in his mind. He wants to conquer the white civilization by possessing their women but Jean Morris is unconquerable. He fails to defeat and discard her like the rest of his mistresses, so he kills her. As soon as Mustafa meets Jean Morris, his avenger game and victorious crusade against his colonizers begins to show the signs of defeat. This keeps him awake all night and in the morning, he feels that he has lost the combat once again. "When I grasped her it was like grasping at clouds" (Salih 34). She is an "object" he can never possess, instead, he is "possessed" by her. "I was the invader who had come from the South, and this was the icy battlefield from which I would not make a safe return. I was the pirate sailor and Jean Morris the shore of destruction" (Salih 160). He enters North as a "pirate sailor" to invade but "hath boarded a land carrack" (1.2.50) that threatens to wreck him and leave him in shambles.

Mustafa's efforts to possess her are futile. He realizes that he has been defeated by Jean Morris in this battle. So, the only way left to get triumph over her is to murder her. His triumph is not complete, even after killing her as she refuses to die alone. In her last words to him, she desires to die with him: "Come with me Come with me. Don't let me go alone" (165). Jean's call to die with her haunts him, "the train will always carry him to Victoria Station and to the world of Jean Morris" until he answers it. He states, "Everything which happened before my meeting her was a premonition; everything I did after I killed her was an apology; not for killing her, but for the lie that was my life" (Salih 29).

Jean at once accepts and challenges socially assigned gender and racial roles in her own way. She does not question Mustafa's misogyny, engrained in the rhetoric of colonial discourse. Like Mustafa conforming to Africanist and Orientalist stereotypes she too complies with gender stereotypes in an effort to challenge Mustafa's notions of masculinity. In Hassan's words if he acts like Shahrayar, she becomes Sheherazade, (the characters from The Arabian Nights) and if he claims to be Othello, she acts out Desdemona (the characters from Shakespearean play Othello). However, Jean presents a rendition of these roles, distinguishing herself from her female prototypes, without overtly contesting them.

If Sheherazade and Desdemona are paragon of male desire, Jean refuses to be its embodiment, instead acting out its antithesis. Like Sheherazade who ends Shahrayar's daily crucifixion of women as some distorted form of revenge on the other sex, Jean puts an end to Mustafa's crusade against the English women. And like Sheherazade, she does so by complying with patriarchal gender discourse. They are similar despite the fact that they exemplify completely opposite paradigms of femininity in masculine imagination. Sheherazade is ever the submissive and devoted wife, and even her crafty handling of the king through storytelling leads to his ethical and spiritual reform while Jean remains the dominant and controlling wife.

Standing in contrast to Sheherazade, Jean is the 'femme fatale' who lures her husband into dangerous or troubled situations. Instead of Sheherazade's artistic tales, Jean tells self-fabricated and exaggerated unbelievable stories about the common incidents that occur to her and about the people she meets; her tales parallels Mustafa's

role playing of Othello and parodies his seductive lies. This undermines the audacity with which he plays his various assumed roles. She constantly emasculates him by destroying the objects of self-exoticism in his house. In one episode of the novel, she smacks down an antique vase, pulls into pieces an old Arabic script, and burns a prayer mat and kicks him right between his thighs (156-57) which is a metaphoric castration in a sense that she reduces him to a dephallicized, emasculated man. Such role reversals converts the masquerading Shahrayar (Mustafa) from king to slave and his great Sassanian capital, an analogy to Mustafa's Oriental bedroom, a harem where sexual fantasies are woven, into a destroyed city afflicted by an epidemic.

The 'murder scene' in the novel is quite significant in its connection to Mustafa's sexual crusade and his anti-colonial mission. However, colonial stereotypes of a savage black man killing a white woman, let say Othello's killing of Desdemona is portrayed quite graphically. Yet Salih manipulates it in such a way that it gives the impression of white woman craving to die with his lover in the throes of sexual ecstasy. By deconstructing the stereotypical image of a racialized murder, Salih enables both Mustafa and Jean to set themselves free from the burden of former stereotypical roles of a superior westerner and treacherous native. This scene is an annihilation of racial stereotypes as their interracial marriage is no longer constrained by bars of racial differences.

However, it is important to take into account that after Jean's frequent call to die with her, Mustafa does not die with her. Despite his genuine love for Jean, the tragedy is that he fails to view her as anything other than a white woman. It is the reflection of

same struggle within Isabella to view him as anything other than a black man and this thing is the cause of their destruction. Even when he admires Jean's beauty the selection of his words is like; she seems more beautiful than "anything" rather than "anyone' in the universe.

After joining the University of London and committing to spend his life in an effort to symbolically "reverse" the British history of colonialism that exists in the binaries of master/salve, Mustafa launches a psychological war of vengeance upon the colonizers. (Makdisi 811). However, Mustafa's intense battle with the Occident takes place when Jean Morris comes in his life. She intercedes his colonizing mission by serious confrontation. She seems to be the emblem of Queen Victoria or Britishers ready to recolonize Sa'eed, the East. She is aware of his weaknesses and humiliates him differently from his other mistresses. She is different from Isabella Seymour, who begs him to take her. "Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god" (Salih 106) and Sheila Greenwood who exclaims: "how marvelous your black color is! (…) the color of magic and mystery and obscenities" (Salih 139),and Ann who wants to be her sex slave: "you are Mustafa, my master and my lord….and I am Sausan (name of one of Abu Nuwas' lover), your slave girl" (Salih146).

On the other hand, Jean doesn't get trapped in Mustafa's tricks and instead she confronts him and dares him when she is told that he will kill her: "My sweet, you're not the kind of man that kills."(Salih 159) This burns in him "a feeling of ignominy, loneliness, and loss" (Salih 159). Jean vows to hate him until death and this hatred of her makes him feel the slave and the prey of the West again. Regardless of his

"civilized" appearance and social status, this English society will despise him forever. Jean concludes Mustafa's conquest that becomes the cause of his destruction. Mustafa clearly admits: "having been a hunter, I had become the quarry" (Salih 159). This blow of misfortune leads to his downfall as a tragic hero who came to West as an invader, but returns to his home town defeated.

Mustafa in his relations with his European lovers views them essentially alike and places them in same category of oppressive West as for him all his English mistresses, due to their race are directly or indirectly responsible for the continuation of the norm of colonial oppression. Jean appears to be the symbol of the colonial forces and Mustafa's killing her could thus be inferred as an unconscious act of retaliation, cleansing Africa's history to level the scores. In this way, Mustafa's act of killing demonstrates a desire to "strategically reorganize the racially isolated to a place where violence ought to be seen as a purgative force so as to set the colonized free from permanent suffering" (Fanon 73-4). As for him violence proves to be a catharsis or cleansing force for the oppressed ones. In his theory of "liberatory mediation", Lewis Gordon claims that the colonizer tries to achieve psychological freedom by mistreating his oppressor (71).

Irrepressible violence is not anger or ferocity which is a general meaning implied to violence, neither the reviving of violent instincts nor even the result of hatred: on a deeper level it is man recreating himself. Through violence the oppressed finds an outlet for his boiling rage and anger that cures him of colonial neurosis. In this way he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself (Sartre 18). But one should take into account that violence here is used in its wider meaning, it does not only

stands for bullets, knives and stones. Violence basically is a form of "taking" which will not be willingly surrendered. (Gordon 80). To Mustafa Saeed, an invader reclaiming his masculinity and lost identity, a European woman's body appears as an emblem of western sovereignty; he wants her under his subservience; the idea of power, authority and ownership reverberates after each sexual conquest. The notion of race in cross-cultural relations becomes integrated with a greater struggle for self-respect. Fanon's idea of freedom entails psychological liberation in such a way that it brings creation of a new man. In his conviction through violence the colonized individual can transform from his earlier existence as a "thing" into his new existence as a "human being". However, Salih's novel brings the understanding of the dilemma of Mustafa's life to his readers. In the creation of "new" him, he inevitably perpetuates racial stereotypes as he cannot divorce himself from colonial consciousness. A detachment from the colonial memory is quite necessary for this purpose. To our surprise Mustafa's most cherished relationship, the one with Jean Morris culminates in her demise as she keeps on pleading Mustafa to murder her during sexual intercourse and with that his ships sail towards the shores of destruction.

Indeed in this game of deceits and lies the truth is spoken for the very first time during the murder episode: this scene in the novel acts as critical phase of progress towards the possible destruction of racism within the novel, as before this incident Mustafa wasn't willing to show any kind of compassion or kindness towards his lovers. The display of mixed emotions of affection and hostility towards Jean in the murder scene is thus the finest expression of 'love' which the readers also witness. The desired

insertion of knife in Jean's chest is symbolic of a moment of 'ecstasy'. Thus the sadistic act of murder highlights Jean's yearning for death in the hands of her lover as some form of sexual gratification.

However, as Mustafa leans over to kiss her, he expresses his genuine love towards his wife. This delayed moment of intimacy between the two sets the pace for the murder, the climax of sex, yet an act of 'love' which suggests that the relation of love between a migrant and a former colonists is possible if it's free from the burden of memories of the past and every sort of gender and racial stereotypes. Subjecting the white women to his sexual prowess is the only way for him to assert his dominance over the West and in doing so, he mimics the very power structures he seeks to dismantle. Through his sexual encounters he avenges the penetration of the East by the West and "liberate Africa with [his] penis" (120). By enticing the English women he reclaims his "masculinity" a metonymic equivalent of annihilating the territory and playing the revenge in the ways of his enemies (Hassan 92). Hence the novel deals with the dilemma of his masculinity linked to the sexualization of colonial politics. In his remorseless struggle of survival and pursuit for a true identity he suffers disillusionment in the end. He suffers masculine and sexual anxiety.

After Mustafa's sudden disappearance, the narrator of the novel starts to question his own existence and in this nervousness he too jumps into the Nile, but all of sudden he prefers life over death. He swims to the shore with this excuse: "I choose life. I shall live because there are a few people I want to stay with for the longest possible time and because I have duties to discharge…If I am unable to forgive, then I shall try to forget"

(169). The words "forgive" and "forget" here are noteworthy. Perhaps it's Salih's appeal to forgive and forget the colonial memories of the past and start living in a new world of peace and acceptance. Mustafa's autobiography on its first page has this dedication: "To those who see with one eye, speak with one tongue and see things as either black or White, either Eastern or Western." (151). Indeed this statement is heart wrenching and is evocative of his struggle to live in a society devoid of individual freedom, racial and cultural equality and justice.

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