

Colonial Shadow: Reflections on Identity and Colonialism in Tayeb Saleh The Seasons of Migration to the North and Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks

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Abstract:

In the realm of examining post-colonial literature, the literary works of Tayeb Saleh's Season of Migration to the North and Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks manifest as crucial pieces that intricately examine the intricate interplay between identity and colonialism. Both authors delve into the psychological ramifications of colonial histories on individual identities, unravelling the multifaceted layers of the post-colonial experience. This article investigates the idea of cultural hybridity and the ambivalence that arises from navigating multiple cultural influences. Through a critical analysis, the article seeks to highlight the characters' struggles for authentic selfhood and the broader implications of their experiences in a post-colonial world. Ultimately, this exploration provides insights into the enduring relevance of these themes and the intricate interplay between identity and colonialism in literature. The present article seeks to examine the nuanced ways in which Saleh's narrative and Fanon's psychoanalytic insights intersect, offering a profound understanding of the profound impact of colonialism on the construction and negotiation of identity in a post-colonial world. This study also investigates how the story's characters navigate their cultural heritage and sense of self in the years after colonial domination by using a postcolonial perspective.

Keywords: Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks, Identity, Colonialism, Postcolonial Theory, Tayeb Saleh, Season of Migration to the North

الظل الاستعماري: تأملات في الهوية والاستعمار في رواية الطيب صالح "موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال" و"الجلد الأسود والأقنعة البيضاء" لفرانز فانون

المخلص

في مجال دراسة الأدب ما بعد الاستعماري، تتجلى الأعمال الأدبية مثل "موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال" للطيب صالح و"بشرة سوداء وأقنعة بيضاء" لفرانز فانون كنصوص أساسية تدرس بدقة التفاعل المعقد بين الهوية والاستعمار. يتعمق المؤلفان في النداءات النفسية للتاريخ الاستعماري على الهويات الفردية، ويكشفان عن الطبقات المتعددة الأوجه للتجربة ما بعد الاستعمارية. تبحث هذه المقالة في فكرة الهجين الثقافي والتناقض الناشئ عن التنقل بين التأثيرات الثقافية المتعددة. من خلال التحليل النقدي، كما تسعى هذه المقالة إلى تسليط الضوء على نضالات الشخصيات من أجل الذات الحقيقية والآثار الأوسع لتجاربهم في عالم ما بعد الاستعمار. في نهاية المطاف، يوفر هذا الاستكشاف رؤى حول الأهمية الدائمة لهذه الموضوعات والتفاعل المعقد بين الهوية والاستعمار في الأدب. أيضا تسعى هذه المقالة إلى دراسة الطرق الدقيقة التي تتقاطع بها سردية صالح ورؤى فانون التحليلية النفسية، مما يوفر فهما عميقا للتأثير العميق للاستعمار على بناء الهوية والتفاوض عليها في عالم ما بعد الاستعمار. كما تبحث هذه الدراسة في كيفية تنقل شخصيات القصة عبر تراثهم الثقافي وإحساسهم بالذات في السنوات التي أعقبت الهيمنة الاستعمارية باستخدام مفهوم ما بعد الاستعمار.

الكلمات المفتاحية: فرانز فانون، البشرة السوداء، الأقنعة البيضاء، الهوية، الاستعمار، نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار، الطيب صالح، موسم الهجرة إلى الشمال

Introduction

Tayeb Saleh is a Sudanese novelist who was born in 1929 in the Northern state in a small village called karmakol. He has spent most of his life outside the land of his birth. He studied at 'Khartoum University' and left for the London University for further studies, then he worked at the 'British Broadcasting Corporation' as Head of Drama in the Arabic Service. He is best known for his novel *Season of Migration to the North* (1966), considered to be one of the most important novels in Arabic literature. Before writing *Season of Migration to the North*, Tayeb Salih published the novella *The Wedding of Zein*, which was made into an Arabic film that won an award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1976. He has also written several short stories; his novels and short stories have been translated into English and more than a dozen other languages.

Most of Salih's writings are generated from his personal experience of villagers and the complex sometimes he overstates stories about his African roots such as his life in jungle neighbouring charming snakes. These fake stories were used to seduce English women by giving them fake promises to marry them, as a result of counterfeit promises many British Women committed suicide, but he killed Jean Morris after marrying her.

Mustafa Saeed was exploited English Women sexually as a revengeful reaction to western exploitation for Africa. He describes the British women he sleeps with as "easy prey" (Salih, 2003, p. 30), and describes his bed room as "my bed room like an operating theatre in the hospital" that shows how he views his sexual experiences as without passion or feeling which assured that was a weapon to get revenge.

Mustafa Saeed was a good figure in London and many British women were considered him as an ideal oriental man. With a combination of admiration and spite we nicknamed him "the black Englishman"¹ that

social relationships. He tackled the themes of reality and illusions and the cultural dissonance between the West and the Orient.

Season of Migration to the North is a postcolonial African novel that tackles the intricate topics of colonialism and identity, and deals with the interaction between the East and West. *Season of Migration to the North* is a story of a young Sudanese boy grown up in Khartoum, the Capital of Sudan. His name is Mustafa Saeed. He was brought up by his careless mother because his father died several months before his birth. "I was born in Kartoum without a father, he having died several months before was born" (Salih, 2003, p. 19).

He was sent to school where he had shown that he is a genius and advanced swiftly his elementary education, so he was sent to Cairo for secondary education, then He was awarded scholarship to study in London. In London, he used to reflect African culture and traditions, but

represents how he was accepted in the western community but he didn't belong to either. On the other hand, Frantz Fanon (1925), was an Afro-French psychiatrist, philosopher, and politically radical thinker published his first book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) addresses the damaging psychological effects colonial racism.

Black Skin, White Masks is a key piece of postcolonial literature. In the framework of race and identity, it examines the psychological and sociopolitical repercussions of colonialism on people.

imperialistic attitude held by some Western nations, primarily European powers, toward the peoples of Africa, Asia, and other regions they considered "less developed" or "barbaric."

The concept is closely associated with the idea that it was the moral and social responsibility of the European colonial powers to bring the benefits of Western civilization, Christianity, and modernity to the supposedly inferior and uncivilized peoples they encountered in their colonies. The phrase itself gained prominence through the poem "The White Man's Burden" written by Rudyard Kipling in 1899, which urged the United States to take up its imperialistic responsibilities in the Philippines, a newly acquired colony.

¹ This phrase reminds one of the idea of "The white man's burden" which is a concept that emerged during the era of European colonialism, particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is a phrase that encapsulates the paternalistic and

In *Black Skin, White Masks* Frantz Fanon argues that colonial racism has psychopathological effects. In other words, it fosters mentally disturbed behavior. culture of a colonized people is replaced by the culture of the colonial power. Fanon argues that this profoundly damages colonized people.

Colonialism, which reached its height in the 19th and early 20th centuries, involved the domination and exploitation of one group of people by another for economic, political, and social gain. Colonial powers, primarily European nations, often held a sense of superiority and Eurocentrism, viewing their own cultures as more advanced and civilized than those of the colonized territories. This mindset influenced policies, governance structures, and social interactions.

Colonizers often established hierarchies based on race and culture, where individuals were classified according to their ethnic background, skin color, and cultural customs. This hierarchical system served as a means to justify discriminatory policies and actions. The research paper delves into the ways in which colonialism fosters a harsh hierarchy centered around structures, and comprehension of human connections.

Colonialism had long and profound impact on identity formation in Africa, so we can say that identities, as a complex concept indeed, have been the dominant trait of colonial and postcolonial subjects. Native inhabitants were subjected to the languages, religions, and cultural norms of European colonizers, frequently under threats. In addition to the marginalization of African languages and cultures, this resulted in the disruption of indigenous traditions, practices, and ways of life. Arbitrary border-making and resource extraction further weakened regional economies and social systems, leaving behind enduring effects of injustice, poverty, and political instability.

Pramod Nayar (2008) argues that "Postcolonial studies are alert to the racial, colonial, and imperial dimensions of canonical English/European writing from Shakespeare to the post moderns" (p. 75). Thus, post-colonial literature came as a response to the unfair legacy of colonialism and the struggle for

One of his key points refers to the process of cultural assimilation, a process that occurs when the native

complexion, ultimately shaping one's sense of self. Faced with the oppression of colonial rule, Fanon underscores the imperative of decolonization and the reclamation of one's authentic identity through his analysis. Examining the historical epistemological sources of the concept of self reveals that it was originally intended to facilitate self-examination and introspection, in order to instigate personal transformation. In various theological frameworks, such as those found in Greco-Roman and Latin cultures, the self was regarded as a catalyst for fostering change. This notion gradually permeated diverse cultural narratives, assuming distinct forms and manifestations. Consequently, in the writings of intellectuals and thinkers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the concept of self predominantly serves to underscore the process of self-formation and its utilization across different discourses to influence transformations in social dynamics, power

independence in many African countries during the 20th century.

It includes writings by authors from formerly colonized countries that explore issues including cultural identity, the effects of colonialism, the struggle for self-determination, and the difficulties of nation-building after colonization.²

² "A century and a half ago, Karl Marx described many types of social segments deprived of all citizenship rights by using the term 'the have-nots'. Ambedkar used the term 'Dalit'. How does one describe in our present context all of the classes being treated as less than citizens, a kind of second-class citizens? We can probably call them, for linguistic ease, 'the gastfleets', the ones afflicted by the goods and services tax (GST), the prized trophy of the current dispensation. These include the ones who have no jobs and housing, no access to education and healthcare, no Aadhaar card, no legal remedy, no possibility of restructuring their farm loans, and no real say in forming governments" (Nandy, *Vision for a Nation* 36).

Postcolonial Theory and Psychoanalysis

Ashis Nandy (2019) says the worst form of colonization is the psychological colonization as it has the ability to leave crippled an entire civilization which is why decolonization of the mind is necessary. He opines:

States that consciously encourage creating societies that forget to produce a critique of the system generate what the ancient Latin described as 'hegemony'. The term refers to the nature of power, but in hegemonies such uncontested power becomes possible entirely out of the majority's self-approved willingness to promote the dominant ideas and perspectives.... Hegemony that the amoral, complaisant and unthinking majorities

mind awakening of the individual self will take place that would enable them to take control of their culture and history and produce an original historical account of their struggle and not the one illustrated by the colonizers.

what its limits are. In this clearly and comprehensively written book Greedharry deconstructs the seemingly "natural" and obvious relationship between postcolonial studies and psychoanalysis" (p.417).

To be more specific, Greedharry provides insight into Frantz Fanon's psychoanalytic reading of the colonized black man, which is frequently regarded as the foundation of psychoanalytic studies of colonialism and race. Fanon uses psychoanalysis to comprehend more than just purely psychological processes by taking into account the social, political, and economic circumstances in the French Antilles.

Frantz Fanon's the black skin, white mask is seminal work the explores the effects of colonialism on the mind of the natives. It basically influences the mind to

fuel results in a politico-psychological illness that the ancient Greeks called 'hubris' among the ruling order. It looks like pride, but is a lot more than an ordinary person's pride in things good. It makes the ruling order forget why they are where they are. Hubris shuns dialogue. It avoids questions. It leads the ruling order to generate deafening self-righteous rhetoric, and makes it entirely remorseless. (p. 40)

The stress is primarily on uprooting the scars of colonialism from the memory to decolonize the mind. Once the mind is decolonized it is easier for an individual to decipher how the colonial discourse really functions. Their strategies, power hierarchy, and installing systems of hatred becomes clear. With decolonization of

In her review to Postcolonial Theory and Psychoanalysis, Mrinalini Greedharry (2010) focuses on how "psychoanalysis came to be such an influential method in understanding issues of colonialism and race, how it contributes to our understanding of these issues, and an extent that changes the cultural, social and political history of a landscape. Aijaz Ahmed (2010) argues:

West has needed to constitute the Orient as its Other in order to constitute itself and its own subject position. This idea of constituting Identity through Difference points, again, not to the realm of political economy- nor to those other social materialities of a non-discursive kind- wherein colonization may be seen as a process of capitalist accumulation, but to a necessity which arises within discourse and has always been there at the origin of discourse, so that not only is the modern Orientalist presumably already there in Dante and Euripides but modern imperialism itself appear~ to be an effect that arises, as if naturally, from the necessary practices of discourse. That is one sort of difficulty. But there is also another- namely, that the matter of Identity-through-Difference

doubtless points to the primacy of representation over all other human activities. But why must representation also inferiorize the Other? (p. 82)

Thus, how is the other constituted in the external world is equally crucial because the way we define the other is also the way we define our own selves. The other is primarily a reflection of our own biology. In this regard Merleau Ponty (2013) writes:

There are two modes of being, and two only: being in itself, which is that of objects arrayed in space, and being for itself, which is that of consciousness. Now, another person would seem to stand before me as an in-itself and yet to exist for himself, thus requiring of

me, in order to be perceived, a contradictory operation, since I ought both to distinguish him from myself, and therefore place him in the world of objects, and think of him as a consciousness, that is, the sort of being with no outside and no parts, to which I have access merely because that being is myself, and because the thinker and the thought about are amalgamated in him. There is thus no place for other people and a plurality of consciousnesses in objective thought. In so far as I constitute the world, I cannot conceive another consciousness, for it too would have to constitute the world and, at least as regards this other view of the world, I should not be the constituting agent. Even if I succeeded in thinking of it as constituting the world, it would be I who would be constituting the consciousness as such, and once more I should be the sole constituting agent. (p. 407)³

Identity Transformation in Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks:

Rachele Dini (2017) suggests that "there are two core themes in Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks: dehumanization and the psychopathology of colonial racism"(p. 35). In this regard, Fanon's influential book Black Skin, White Masks examines the psychological and societal impacts of racism and colonialism on the

Black person. Fanon explores the intricate mechanics of identity development as well as the manner in which Black people internalize and are impacted by the dominant white culture in this significant work. Fanon's book continues to make an important contribution to the field postcolonial studies. It challenges us to confront oppressive institutions and work toward a more inclusive and equitable world by encouraging readers to critically explore the widespread impact of racism and colonialism on personal and community identities-the shared sense of belonging, values, culture, and collective consciousness among a group of people who identify with and relate to one another. It is the recognition and affirmation of a common identity that binds individuals together within a specific community. Community identity is shaped by various factors, including shared history, cultural practices, language, traditions, and shared experiences.

Season of Migration to the North: African Man and Identity Alteration

Postcolonial literature changes the configuration of the self of an individual by targeting its culture, society and political. As opposed to the traditional belief that assumes identity as fixed and a stable category, postcolonial situation punctures this idea of stable identity. It brings attention to the vulnerability of the human identity. The moment nations change their geographical and political boundaries has a direct impact on the identity of an individual.

The moment one steps in a different land becomes an 'outsider' and outcaste and an 'other'. The whole postcolonial discourse is based on the self/other binary. There are collective as well as individual identities and their alteration is largely defined by their socio-political situation. Identity in postcolonial novel is a focal point in which imaging the crisis and the conflict of the colonized's struggle to find a way for the identification between the previous native heritage and history and the power of dominant culture that's imposed by the colonizers. The stake of this discussion is the question "how we can speak of the foreign, without robbing it from its foreignness."

³ For more details, see "Other selves and the Human world" in Merleau Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*.

Otherwise put, what does it mean to be open for the otherness of the other?

Marianne Moyaert (2018) argues:

How can we take the identity differences of the other serious? How can we open ourselves to the other without reducing him to familiar religious categories? It is conspicuous that pluralists and particularists both accuse each other of a lack of openness. The particularists reproach the pluralists of indifference toward differences. They are said to focus too much on commonalities at the cost of interreligious particularities. The pluralists for their part state that particularism is actually a form of confessional parochialism. They treasure their religious roots in such a way that it results in an exclusivist closure. In the following, I not only present both pluralism and particularism and their respective understanding of the value of dialogical openness, I also criticize both approaches from a Levinasian perspective. The guiding principle thereby is the above explained contrast between face and form of the other. ("In response to the religious other" p. 2)

These ideas can be said to have stark reflection in Salih's unnamed narrator and the focal character of Mustafa Sa'eed. Enduring a sense of dislocation, the unnamed narrator and Mustafa find themselves marginalized by community and placed in an in-between space of cultural hybridity.

Dislocation and Hybrid Identities:

One of the major themes developed in postcolonial literature is the production of hyphenated, divided, dislocated or hybrid identities. The term 'hybridity' is coined by Homi K. Bhabha with reference to formation of colonizer/colonized relations in a

postcolonial setup. Bhabha (2013) defines it as "the perplexity of the living as it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life; it is an instance of iteration, in the minority discourse, of the time of the arbitrary sign — 'the minus in the origin' — through which all forms of cultural meaning are open to translation because their enunciation resists totalization" (p. 314).

These are called hybrid or dislocated because they are born or more precisely created due to the fissures that emerge in a society time and again. Bhabha stresses that both the colonizer and colonized influences the formation of each other's selves. This hybridization or dislocation is produced primarily due to the intersection of various cross-cultural forms such as languages, religion, caste, race, belief systems, cultural and political values.

In postcolonial discourse, hybridity refers to cross cultural exchange and it is often recognized as the 'third space' where power relations and hierarchy does not exist. Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation' (1994, p. 37). Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent⁴ space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate. Homi Bhabha (2013) argues:

The 'locality' of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as 'other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it. What emerges as an effect of such 'incomplete signification' is a turning of boundaries and limits into

⁴ It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the 'origins' of nation as a sign of the 'modernity' of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality.

the in-between spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated. It is from such narrative positions between cultures and nations, theories and texts, the political, the poetic and the painterly, the past and the present, that Nation and Narration seeks to affirm and extend Frantz Fanon's revolutionary credo: 'National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension'. It is this international dimension both within the margins of the nation-space and in the boundaries in-between nations and peoples that the authors of this book have sought to represent in their essays....The 'other' is never outside or beyond us; it emerges forcefully, within cultural discourse, when we think we speak most intimately and indigenously 'between ourselves'. (p. 4)

Ambivalence in the postcolonial discourse signifies the simultaneous allure and repulsion towards the imperial structure. In actuality, the colonial system crafted an atmosphere of genuineness around itself, captivating the psyche of the indigenous people by presenting itself as a symbol of progress, technological advancement, and a superior civilization. Consequently, the indigenous population developed a fascination towards the dominating imperial structure, while simultaneously detesting the colonial system for the injustice it inflicted upon them. This intricate relationship is characterized by ambivalence, as the colonized subject is never solely and entirely opposed to the colonizer.

Ambivalence emerges as a paramount tool of dissent for the colonized, as it allows them to immerse themselves in a state of uncertainty rather than blindly imitating the culture of the colonizer, as desired by the colonizer. This ambivalence embodies doubt, questioning, and suspicion, posing a significant threat to the colonizer.

The holistic understanding of both Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, reflect deep understanding of resistance for colonialism and its impact on the individual and collective identity. We can better grasp the nuanced interactions between the colonizer and the colonized, as well as the significant effects of colonialism on both individual and collective identities, by reading Salih's work through the prism of Fanon's analysis. The world's differences are incommensurable, incompatible and untranslatable, thus making dialogue actually impossible. The outcome of particularism is a dichotomy between insiders and outsiders. Hidden behind the so-called xenophilia is actually a xenophobia which experiences the alien not merely as differing from the familiar, but also as threatening to such familiarity.

Both Salih and Fanon highlight how the colonial gaze objectifies and exoticizes the colonized person, having a degrading effect. When Mustafa Sa'eed seduces European ladies in *Season of Migration to the North*, it might be said that he is resisting the colonial gaze. However, this resistance ultimately serves no purpose because it only serves to exoticize his identity and reinforce prejudices, turning him into a sexualized 'Other'. This idea is supported by Fanon's analysis, which contends that the colonizer's fetishization of the colonized maintains power disparities and the objectification of black people.

The character of Mustafa Sa'eed is representational to the crisis of identity in Africa and that reflects Fanon's idea of double consciousness, or the internal struggle between one's true identity and the forced racial identity. As Mustafa embraces his European education while embracing his African ancestry, a shattered identity split between two realities results. The legacy of colonialism, which places cultural, social, and psychological demands on the colonized individual, makes this struggle for self-identity much more difficult. The interpretation of Fanon, I believe, offers a framework for comprehending Mustafa's internalized oppression and his continual struggle to reconcile his African heritage with his European experiences

Conclusion

Season of Migration to the North and Black Skin, White Masks provide insightful critiques of the lives of colonized people and the complex impacts of colonialism. They encourage readers to evaluate colonialism's legacy critically and to fight its repressive institutions by challenging prevailing narratives and offering alternative perspectives. Through their postcolonial counter-narratives, both Fanon and Salih emphasize the importance of understanding the multiple ramifications of colonialism and participating in the ongoing struggle for liberation and self-determination. Fanon (1952) writes in the foreword of his text:

The representative figure of such a perversion, I want to suggest, is the image of post-enlightenment man tethered to, not confronted by, his dark reflection, the shadow of colonized man, that splits his presence, distorts his outline, breaches his boundaries, repeats his action at a distance, disturbs and divides the very time of his being. This ambivalent identification of the racist world-moving on two planes without being in the least embarrassed by it, as Sartre says of the anti-Semitic consciousness-turns on the idea of Man as his alienated image, not Self and Other but the 'Otherness' of the self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity. (p. xv).

By juxtaposing Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North to Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, white masks we can have a holistic understanding of how colonialism impacts the development of identity. Both literary works shed light on the colonial gaze's dehumanizing influence, the fight for identity, and the significance of resistance and decolonization. Through their literary studies, Salih and Fanon, I believe, enable us to critically engage with the complicated relationship of identity and colonialism, prompting us

to fight the mechanisms that sustain these power dynamics in our own communities.

The only solution to the distorted social relations and xenophobic understanding of the other is to orient oneself to a future oriented and pluralistic self, through a cultivation of a intercultural, interreligious dialogue between communities.

The analysing of Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North in the light of Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks has shown profound insights into the complex relationship between colonialism and the construction of identity. Through the prism of postcolonial literature, these works clearly illustrate the dehumanizing impact of the colonial gaze, the internal struggles for identity that result, and the vital role of resistance and decolonization in reclaiming agency. Salih and Fanon, as literary builders, not only present a sophisticated grasp of the psychological ramifications of colonialism, but also empower readers to critically interact with and question the power systems that perpetuate these relationships.

Their narratives serve as foundation stones to all the debates around the postcolonial gaze, challenging us to oppose and deconstruct oppressive institutions in our own communities. By recognizing their creative contributions, we are encouraged to strive for a more just and equitable world, fostering an environment in which varied identities can flourish free of the shackles of colonial legacies. As we navigate the difficulties of identity and colonialism, the works of Salih and Fanon serve as guiding lights, inspiring us to stand up to the hegemonic systems that undermine the diversity and autonomy of individual and collective identities.

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