Tayeb Salih'in *Kuzeye Göç Mevsimi* Adlı Romanındaki Arada Kalmışlık Temasının Yansıtılması

Öğr. Gör. Serdar Takva

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3432-2043>

Trabzon Üniversitesi, Fatih Eğitim Fakültesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi
Anabilim Dalı, Trabzon – TÜRKİYE

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Gökşen Aras

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2523-4976>

Atılım Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, Ankara – TÜRKİYE

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Öz

On yedinci ve on sekizinci yüzyıllara dayanan Avrupa Emperyalizmi, dünyanın farklı bölgelerindeki insanların hayatlarını şekillendirmiştir. Sanayileşmeyle beraber ortaya çıkan hammadde ihtiyacı ve bunları elde etmek için ortaya çıkan rekabet ortamı, başta İngiltere olmak üzere birçok ülkenin sömürge faaliyetlerine başlamasına neden oldu. Diğer ulusların güç kullanılarak kolonileştirilmesi, işgalcileri için çalışmak zorunda bırakılan köleleştirilmiş ve baskılanmış yerli insanlar oluşmasına neden oldu. Bu insanlar kültürel ve politik açıdan hegemonya altına alındılar, dolayısıyla ikinci sınıf bir vatandaş topluluğu yaratılmış oldu. Diğer halkların ekonomik ve kültürel anlamda sömürülmesi, belli bir süre sonra, bağımsızlık elde etme arzusunun harekete geçirdi ve bu istek bağımsız ulusların ortaya çıkmasına sebep oldu. Bir zamanlar sömürülen halklar, sömürgecilik sonrası diye adlandırılan yeni bir döneme girdiler. Sözde bağımsızlık, baskılanmış insanların acılarına bir son vermedi, tam tersine ana vatana göç etmekten kaynaklanan aşağılık kompleksi, kölelik, ayrımcılık, ve arada kalmışlık gibi tartışmalı konuların ortaya çıkmasına neden oldu. İyi bir eğitim hayali, para kazanma kaygısı gibi pek çok sebeple yurdunu terkeden göçmenler, hedeflerine ulaşmak için sürekli mücadele halindedirler. Fakat yerlerinden edilmiş göçmenler, kimliklerinden dolayı öteki diye görüldükleri ana vatanda hoşgörü ile karşılanmamaktadır. Farklı etnik kimliklere sahip göçmenler, aşağılanmakta dolayısıyla ne kendileri ne de öteki ne ulusal ne de Avrupalı olabilmektedirler. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, kolonileşme sonrası Tayeb Salih'in *Kuzeye Göç Mevsimi* adlı romanında arada kalmış göçmenleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

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Representation of in-Betweenness in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*

Lect. Serdar Takva

Trabzon University, Fatih Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Languages Education,
Department of English Language, Trabzon – TURKEY

Asst. Prof. Dr. Gökşen Aras

Atilim University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of English Language and Literature,
Ankara – TURKEY

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Abstract

European imperialism, dating back to seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has shaped peoples' lives from different parts of the world. The need for raw materials and the competitive atmosphere to gain them caused many countries, primarily England, to start exploitative activities. The economic and cultural subjugation of other nations by force created enslaved and dominated natives who were forced to work for the intruders. They were hegemonized both culturally and economically, thus, second class citizens were created. The economic and cultural exploitation of other people, after colonialism, activated the desire to gain independence and it paved the way for independent countries. After the sovereignty, once dominated countries and people have undergone a new period which is described as postcolonialism. The so-called sovereignty has not ended the sufferings of the suppressed people, on the contrary, it has created lots of controversial issues which are slavery, inferiority, discrimination and in-betweenness resulted from the migration to the motherland. Migrants, forced to leave their homelands due to the various reasons of having a qualified education and earning money, are in a continuous struggle so as to reach their goals. Dream about studying while others struggle to save money. But uprooted migrants are not welcomed in the motherland where they are considered *the other* for their identity. Migrants with different ethnicities are degraded thus, they are neither self nor the other neither native nor European. In this regard, this study aims to scrutinize migrants who are in-between in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* in the postcolonial period.

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial period is the era which followed colonial period and it came into being after the dissolution of the British Empire. Postcolonialism is the result of widely accepted notions of independence, nationalism and liberalism in the formerly subjugated nations. It is a defiance to the colonialism which encapsulates domination, cultural imposition and exploitation of others' resources. The process of postcolonialism is not only a political reaction but also cultural phenomena involving the voices opposing to the authority created during colonialism. Postcolonialism deals with decolonization, imperialism, which is according to Said still casts a considerable shadow over our own times (1994:5) whereas postcolonial literature tackles postcolonial issues such as ethnicity, ambivalence, mimicry, the other, home, in-betweenness and hybridity. Postcolonial writers motivated by the idea to oppose the colonial and imperial ideology, have the tendency to reflect postcolonial ills that are still dominating the suppressed compelled to immigrate to the metropolis. The impacts of imperialism along with its thought still subjugate migrants and as Diana Brydon writes, "Postcolonialism matters because decolonization is far from complete and colonial mentalities, including the inequalities they nurture, die hard" (Kohn and McBride 2011: 8).

Tayeb Salih, raised in Sudan, was one of the prominent representatives of Arab-African literature engaging in the postcolonial experiences of migrants. He -as a Sudanese writer- started his education in his own country but the turning point of his life was to move to London where he completed his degree in international relations. Upon finishing his education in London, he was recruited in different countries among which are Jordan and Qatar. His authorship encompasses *The Doum Tree of Wad Hamid* and *The Wedding of Zein and Other Stories* but *Season of Migration to the North* is the fictive work which made him a great reputation. *Season of Migration to the North* (1966) is a literally successful example of Arab-African postcolonial experiences of migrants from Sudan which was dominated by European imperialism almost for a decade. Depicted in the first person narrator, the novel centers upon two men in the pursuit of knowledge and education in the imperial country and their return to Sudan in which everything has changed. While describing the content of the novel in the introduction part, Lalami states that "the exiles dreams of glorious return are frustrated. The lives they imagined for themselves back home fail to materialize" (xvii).

The novel defined by Idriss; "more than postmodern novel" (2012:117) successfully presents Salih's linear narration at the same time some flashbacks taking the readers to Mustafa Saeed's experiences in Britain. One of the focal figures in the novel- Mustafa Saeed- is educated in one of the missionary schools and sent to Britain to continue his education. In London, he has conflictual relations with Europeans especially with white women. After being sentenced for the assassination to kill one of the women named Jean Morris, he spends a few years in London but finally returns to Sudan and settles in Wad Hamid a small village near the Nile. His arrival to the village ends in a marriage and two sons. Mustafa Saeed leads a quiet life in the village till the narrator arrives. Upon his arrival, Mustafa's life in London is enlightened and what he experienced in the imperial country is brought into surface since the two shared the same destiny. *Season of Migration to the North* "as a sort of counter-text to Western Orientalist or colonial literature" (Daraiseh, Booker, 2018: 52) depicts the close interaction between the narrator and Mustafa Saeed and explains the common background of the two figures. The narrator is also reflected as a Sudanese having been forced to journey to London to study poetry and realizes the changes that have happened in the village after the independence has been gained. The first encounter of the most important personae -the unnamed narrator and Saeed- launches the postcolonial tragic stories of the migrants and the frustration both in the national and the international contexts. Both figures, uprooted from their cultures, are ambivalent, thus in-between neither self nor the other which leads to a tragedy in the postcolonial era.

In-betweenness in *The Season of Migration to the North*

In decolonization period, the subjugated nations tended to struggle against their oppressors which resulted in a triumph. Inspired by the liberal ideas, colonies of imperial powers have begun a new era when independent countries have undergone a very rapid process in which they have gained their freedom by having their own flags and national anthems. But the "the accession to independence of the colonial countries places an important question before the world" (Fanon, 1963:97). The most important problem is the inability of the independent countries to establish a system to feed and educate its people who were asked to take active role to fight against the intruder. The oppressed nations' claim; "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World. The wealth which smothers her is that which was stolen from the underdeveloped peoples" (Fanon, 1963:101), constitutes a base for the migration to the motherland to work and be educated. The immigration to the dominant culture for various reasons, is problematic since it paves the way for inter-racial conflicts which emerge between the white and non-white. Immigrants from the third world countries are neither Asian, African nor Western which leads to in-betweenness. In this context, *Season of Migration to the North*- the narration of postcolonial experiences of migrants who were motivated to study in Britain, engages in the characters' in-betweenness.

In his analysis of in-betweenness, Bhabha contends that it is linked to ambivalence and it is "that ambivalent use of different -to be different from those that are different makes you the same" (2012: 44) and "the contingency of the subject as agent is articulated in a double dimension, a dramatic action. The signified is distanced; the resulting time lag opens up the space between the lexical and grammatical, between enunciation and enounced, in between the anchoring of signifiers" (2012: 186). The two characters of Salih's depiction are not only different from the suppressive western culture but also from their native culture so they may be said to share the same destiny in their postcolonial experiences. Mustafa Saeed as a successful student is awarded to study in a missionary school and then sent to London to study economics. During his stay in London, he improves his intellectuality and occupational skills but he just acts in accordance with the Western stereotypes by seducing white women. While highlighting one of the stereotypical approaches of the western culture, Fanon reflects it as; they have tremendous sexual powers. What do you expect, with all the freedom they have in their jungles! They copulate at all times and in all places. They are really genital" (*Black Skin White Masks*, 2008:175). Mustafa Saeed's association with exotism lures the white women and such a stereotyping turns them into easy preys. Despite his celebrated intellectuality from the schools he attended, he is a womanizer at night and an economist during the daytime.

His vengeful approach to the white women finally leads him to the disaster of murdering his wife. Saeed's violence to the white woman in the motherland may be linked to Fanon's claim that; "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect" (1963: 93). The violence considered to free Mustafa in private and the suppressed in general from the bondage is what lies behind Mustafa's motivation to avenge the oppressor. At the same time, Fanon in his *Black Skin White Masks* claims that the victory of the black man over the white woman on sexual is regarded as a victory towards the colonizer (69). After his sentence in London, he returns to where he was born. Contrary to his radiant career in London, he has a simple way of life with a wife and two sons. Seemingly, Saeed looks like a Sudanese who has not been injected by the European culture but his confrontation with the unnamed narrator unveils his ambiguity as he is now neither Sudanese nor European. Salih explains Saeed's in-betweenness in a meeting when he gets drunk and recites English poetry.

Mustafa sank down into the chair, stretched out his legs, and grasped the glass in both hands; his eyes gave me the impression of wandering in faraway horizons. Then, suddenly, I heard him reciting English poetry in a clear voice and with an impeccable accent. It was a poem which I later found in an anthology of poetry about the First World War (13).

Mustafa Saeed with his mysterious childhood, is the figure travelling between North and South. This continuous journey from Sudan to England creates an individual of duality who cannot establish the sense of home. He neither belongs to Sudan nor London which he presents as; "Here, too, was a desert laid out in blue-green, calling me, calling me. The mysterious call led me to the coast of Dover, to London and tragedy" (24). His life in London is traumatic since he cannot integrate into the other's culture and the same ambivalent situation appears in the small village after his return as he feels alienated and uprooted from his own community. His inability to be a part of the Sudanese way of life and his conscious rejection of the integration with the northern supremacy finally bring about a figure in-between and who can never become an integral part of two different cultures: "When he was in England he was someone who had come from Sudan, from the other side of the world, from a colonial past and when he was in the Sudanese village he was someone who had come from Khartoum with an unknown past (Canlı, 2004: 5).

Salih structures his novel around the dichotomy of self and other and his portrayal of the dual characters- Mustafa Saeed and the narrator- is obvious when the languages they speak are presented. His characters are both speaking English and Arabic which opens the discussion of in-betweenness in terms of the suppressed and the dominant language. Saeed is able to speak English fluently although he does not regard it to be his. The language imposed on him starts to be taught in his early years of childhood but when he hears it from a native speaker he feels estranged and rejects it by saying; "But the language is not my language. I had learnt to be eloquent in it through perseverance" (26). The nameless narrator of Salih's fiction sheds light on the in-betweenness of the protagonist after his death. The narrator is Saeed's trustee and he illuminates his life when he visits his room hidden from everyone. As soon as he enters the room, he accesses the world where the binary oppositions (western and non-western) co-appear. The room is decorated with the Oriental and Occidental elements. On the one side one may see Persian rugs on the other a real English fireplace which sets light to Saeed's ambivalent identity.

The whole floor of the room was covered with Persian rugs. I saw that the wall opposite the door ended in an empty space.... How ridiculous! A fireplace- imagine it! A real English fireplace with all the bits and the piece, above it a brass cowl and in front of it a quadrangular are tiled in green marble; on either side of the place were two Victorian chairs covered in a figured silk material. The books- I could see in the light of the lamp that they were arranged in categories. Thomas Hardy. Thomas Mann. E.G. Moore. Thomas Moore. Virginia Woolf.... Books I had heard of and others I had not (113).

Season of Migration to the North fictionalizing Mustafa Saeed who could not integrate into the European culture, is also a successful depiction of how the narrator is between the two worlds; Sudan and London, respectively. An immigrant, journeying to England to complete his Ph.D. in English poetry, the narrator is exemplified as a person who is kept out. The appetite to learn and speak the imperialist's language according to Fanon is "the key that can open doors which were still barred to him fifty years ago" (2008: 38). Considering the effectiveness of the imperial language and culture, the narrator also

spends his years working on them. The narrator is valued for his studies, which he carried on in London, but at the same time, he is satirized by Mustafa for not studying agriculture or engineering. He, then, reviews his doctorate as; "no more than spending three years delving into the life of an obscure English poet" (9). Similiar to Mustafa Saeed, he travels to north and south which arises the sense of dislocation. After his doctorate studies in London, the unnamed narrator is recruited in his country but the sense of loss, dislocation haunts him which appears as a sign of questioning his belonging. "Was it likely that what had happened to Mustafa Sa'eed could have happened to me? He had said that he was a lie, so was I also a lie? I am from here -is not this reality enough? But I had lived with them. But I had lived with them superficially" (41). Salih's motivation when writing *The Season of Migration to the North* was to reveal his national identity. Although he was equally fluent in English, he used Arabic as the expression of his cultural essence. The emphasis on the national values in the novel is notable but the effects of the domination of imperialism on the migrants are also apparent.

Imperial ideology dictates its ideas and dislocates the natives of the imperialized territories by creating individuals who are squeezed between England and Sudan. The identity of the narrator is not pure and comprises the mixture of Englishness and Sudanese. The confession of such an in-betweenness is articulated by Mustafa Saeed when he meets his comrade who has shared the same experiences. "He greeted me as usual with great politeness and said, "Some of the branches of this tree produce lemons, others oranges" (14). The existence of the imperial powers in the dominated countries is problematic even after their withdrawal. When the independence is gained either through bloody resistance or treaties signed between the oppressor and oppressed, the ills do not end because the imperializer leaves ambivalent, in-between, and dependent nations along with corruption in the national context. Fanon in his *The Wretched of the Earth* pinpoints the drawbacks inherited by the imperialism and colonialism. He provides the strategies to overcome the turmoils and declares the necessity of education and the revival of culture to foster a national identity. But the national parties and the bourgeois' willingness to transfer the imperial legacy and privileges hinder the cultural and economic development of the newly independent countries. (1963: 151). The unnamed migrant with his sharp intelligence feels obliged to serve his people after returning from London. Witnessing the corruption, the educated Sudanese is indecisive to contribute to the growth of his country. He calls himself "that I am continuous and integral. No I am not a stone thrown into the water but seed sown in a field" but contrary to his idealist views he voices the dilemma that he has experienced during his whole life." Turning to left and right, I found I was-half way between north and south"(138). The confusion of the educated man in terms of creating compromise and turning the educational potential into a tool to improve the Sudanese society is hard as it is still in-between modernity and tradition.

The narrator's dilemma echoes the confusion of many Westerneducated Arab men: they returned home equipped with the best educational certificates, bringing with them the gist of the European educational treasures only to find themselves helpless in a society that is still living under the yoke of tradition and myth (qtd.in Al-Shraah, 2015: 151).

The ambivalence of the migrant between two cultures stems from the education he had in the suppressive culture. Not long after he arrives in the village, he realizes that his values are in contrast to the ones peculiar to the village. The contrast becomes clear in his attitude when he hears the forced marriage. Hosna- the pacified female character- is compelled to marry Wad Rayyes after Mustafa Saeed's tragic end. Being alone with two children she is commodified by her father and kept voiceless. The narrator opposes the condemnation of Hosna and defies the injustice which again begets an ambivalent person between modernity and tradition. The narrator defends the woman in Sudanese society and opposes his traditions as;

Hosna wasn't mad, "I said. "She was the sanest woman in the village- it's you who're mad. She was the sanest woman in the village- and the most beautiful. Hosna wasn't mad" is challenged by his friend who he grew up together. "Schooling and education have made you soft. You are crying like a woman (109).

CONCLUSION

Postcolonial literature opposes the single voiced expression of colonialism and imperialism. It puts emphasis on a new representation of migration, imperialism and colonialism through the perspectives of Caribbean, African and Asian writers. In this sense, Arab-African fiction in the postcolonial period engages in post-war experiences of migrants who are forced to immigrate to metropolis. Tayeb Salih ,who was educated in England, concretizes migrant experience in London. *Season of Migration to the North*- the outstanding depiction of Sudanese in London portrays how Mustafa Saeed and the unnamed narrator are dislocated and alienated both in Sudan represented as south and England as north. Both figures are in conflict with English and Sudanese cultures. Their experiences in the capital of the imperializer and Khartoum are contradictory and ambivalent referring to entrapment between two opposing sides (Western and non-Western). Mustafa and the narrator after their returns from London realize the discrepancy since they feel that they are not compatible with the national values of Sudan. Almost all the native values seem altered and the protagonists display the characteristics of in-betweenness which creates hybrid personalities. *Season of Migration to the North* exemplifies migrants who are neither Northern nor Southern in the postcolonial epoch and highlights the traumatic state inherited by imperialism. Salih illustrates the impacts of Imperialism on the Sudanese subjects and explains how they are caught in between and floating between the two opposing cultures.

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